



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE, FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2017

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The National Framework sets out a requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework, for the previous financial year. A copy of the Framework can be found by clicking [here](#).
2. The Statement of Assurance (SoA) for this Authority is based on the principles set out in the department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance.
3. This SoA complements the following document:
 - Northamptonshire County Council Annual Statement of Accounts 2016/17 (this document includes the Annual Government Statement 2016/17)

FINANCIAL ASSURANCE

4. The Authority places significant importance in ensuring that its financial management arrangements are in line with the expectations of a public body.
5. The Authority produces accounts on an annual basis that set out details of its financial affairs. The Annual Statement of Accounts is produced taking account of Codes of Practice issues by professional accounting bodies.
6. The Annual Statement of Accounts is considered and approved by the Authority's Audit Committee prior to being published. These were published on 22 June 2017.
7. The Accounts are audited by independent external auditors who provide a view on the information contained in the accounts being "true and fair". The Auditor considers whether the Authority has demonstrated it has delivered value for money prior to signing the audit statement.

The 2016/17 Statement of Accounts for Northamptonshire County Council can be found by clicking [here](#).

GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE

8. The Authority, as a public body, places significant emphasis on ensuring that effective governance arrangements are in place.



9. Governance is concerned with how the Authority manages its affairs on a day to day basis including its business practices, standards of conduct and overall management procedures.
10. The Authority will prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) signed by the Cabinet Member and Chief Fire Officer which will be submitted to the Audit Committee and the Council for consideration.
11. The AGS includes:
 - an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance and system of internal control;
 - a brief description of the key elements of the governance arrangements including explicit areas within the Statement of Required Practice (SORP) such as internal audit and risk management;
 - a brief description of the process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements;
 - an evaluation of the level of assurance that the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements can provide an outline of the actions taken, or proposed, to deal with significant governance and internal control issues.
12. In reviewing and approving the Annual Governance Statement, members will be provided with detailed information regarding the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and system of internal control and how these address the key risks faced by the Council.

A copy of the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement for NCC can be found on as a sub section of the Statement of Accounts document by clicking [here](#). A copy of the LGSS Internal Audit Annual Report 2016/17 can be found by clicking [here](#).

OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE

13. The Fire Authority has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate. The key documents setting this out are:
 - [the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
 - [the Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
 - [the Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
 - [the Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)
 - [the Localism Act 2011](#)
 - [the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)
 - [the Health and Safety Act at Work etc Act 1974](#)
14. Whilst the Authority is primarily a locally based service, mutual aid arrangements are in place with other services to provide resilience for large scale or complex incidents where additional resources need to be called on. The Authority



contributes to national resilience and can make a number of its assets available to support a national emergency.

15. The Authority has robust Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans in place which are integral to our strategy in managing corporate risk and to provide, in the event of a major disruption, a fire and rescue service to the community.
16. The Authority publishes an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), known as the Community Protection Plan, that sets out details of its operational service provision and improvement plans at a local, regional and national level, together with individual delivery plans. The current Plan covers the period 2017 – 2020.
17. The consultation process involves:
 - website consultation questionnaire
 - consultation with internal stakeholders
 - direct engagement events in town centres
 - consultation with representative bodies
 - consultation with business and community groups
 - media releases including the use of Social media outlets
 - consultation with all local councils
 - consultation with partners and stakeholders
18. Information to support the consultation process is provided in hard copy and electronic formats and is also available in alternative formats on request.

A copy of the current IRMP, consultation summary report and related documents can be found by clicking [here](#). It is also available at all public libraries and council offices by appointment.

OVERALL ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

19. The assurance arrangements that the Authority had in place are considered to meet the requirements set out in the National Framework.

DECLARATION

I certify that this Statement of Assurance gives a true and fair view of the financial, governance and operational arrangements that Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Authority had in place for the period 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. I am satisfied that, in all significant respects, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Authority ensured that its business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Signed:

Handwritten signature of André González De Savage in black ink.

André González De Savage

Deputy Leader
Cabinet Member for Public Protection

Handwritten signature of Damon Lawrenson in black ink.

Damon Lawrenson

Chief Executive
Northamptonshire County Council