



ISLE OF WIGHT
**FIRE AND
RESCUE
SERVICE**

**Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service
Annual Assurance Statement 2019/20**

April 2019 to March 2020

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Introduction

This statement seeks to provide an accessible way in which communities, central government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of our Fire and Rescue Authority's performance for the financial year 2019/20.

The Isle of Wight covers an area of 147 square miles, with a coastline that runs for 57 miles. The Island features a wide variety of natural, rural and urban landscapes. Over 50% of the Island is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 28 miles of coastline is designated as Heritage Coast. In addition, the Island also includes a very high number of internationally, nationally and locally important nature conservation sites. Whilst the overriding character of the Island is rural, about 60% of the Island's population live within the main towns of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin. Newport is the County Town of the Island and is the main employment centre. Outside of these settlements there are around 30 villages and hamlets.

During the height of the summer season the population can double with visitors to the Island which causes a large volume of vehicles on the roads. It is estimated that 2.34 million people have visited the Isle of Wight in the past year. Newport is the largest county town by population (17,200) and is home to the Isle of Wight Council (IWC), St Mary's Hospital, courts and the headquarters of the emergency services.

The IWC is a unitary authority providing the widest range of local authority services to its residents and businesses. It is also home to Her Majesty's Prison Isle of Wight, which is a category B prison. The prison holds approximately 1,100 prisoners on two sites with central administration. Manufacturing, ship building, agriculture and tourism are among the industries on the Island which is also home to a COMAH site.

Our purpose is *Together we make life safer*, for everyone on the Isle of Wight. We work hard to educate people to take the right action to reduce the risk of fires and other incidents happening. But if they do occur then we ensure we have the best equipment and skilled people available to respond accordingly.

Over the last decade we have successfully driven down the number of fires and fire-related casualties. Despite of this we continue to look for more ways to improve the safety of people on the Isle of Wight as we move towards 2021 and beyond. This is about more than just fire. We are also passionate about collaborating and working ever more closely with our partners to further enhance the safety of the county.

We believe in continuous improvement and constantly look to develop what we do for our communities, as well as ensuring that we provide value for money. To achieve this improvement, we encourage feedback from our communities, staff, partner organisations, and other professionals.

We gather information from members of the public after incidents and undertake a range of audits and assessments, both internally and by external bodies. All of these are used to assist us to understand our strengths and weaknesses and inform our strategic assessment and Service plan.

We are extremely proud of our past performance; but always look for continuous improvement through particular initiatives and seeking ways to deliver the best services with greater value for money.

COVID-19 Response

In response to the emerging pandemic, in February 2020 we set up an Emergency Management Group to cover the Isle of Wight and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services. This group was set up to monitor the situation and ensure appropriate communications, advice and procedures are shared with everyone. As the situation escalated, on the 13th March 2020 the Emergency Management Group agreed to put a Pandemic Management Team together, including representation from a wide range of Directorates and teams, along with the following initial measures:

- **Restrictions to Control to support business continuity:** only Control staff and Control data team having access to Control, unless there is an operational requirement.
- **Safety at stations:** guidance provided to restrict non-essential events activities on station.
- **BA cleaning:** we moved immediately to weekly face seal testing on a Sunday for BA sets as per the current on-call staff position. Following the face seal test, personnel will perform a full station clean. At operational incidents, face masks will become personal for the duration of that incident and until a full station clean can be performed.
- **At incidents:** if someone shows symptoms at an incident, withdrawing to two metres and wash hands, notify Fire Control, as per current Operations guidance.
- **Critical Safe & Well visits:** only undertaking safety critical Safe & Well visits. Before conducting any visits, staff ascertaining if a person is in self-isolation and/or if they are showing any symptoms – persistent cough or high temperature – prior to the visit, over the phone (with the introduction of telephone risk assessments). If there are no symptoms a Safe & Well visit will continue, with a proactive approach to deliver all current outstanding referrals. If people are self-isolating and the visit is deemed necessary, then a full risk assessment being undertaken with Community Safety Officer's to decide the best course of action. The appropriate action being decided on a case by case basis, depending on the risks presented.
- **The creation of an Emergency Staff Cell:** to monitor the impact of staff absences in take action to mitigate any resourcing risks, where required.

On the 19th March 2020, the Local Resilience Forum for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight's Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) declared the Coronavirus outbreak a major incident. This enabled a multi-agency response, with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Headquarters hosting the Strategic Coordination Centre (SCC). In addition, many Officers were deployed into support roles of the SCC or chairing specific cells on behalf of the LRF, such as Logistics, Business Continuity and others. We had already been providing a multi-agency response for a number of weeks, but the declaration moved us to the next phase of our well-rehearsed plans. This ensured all partners, which includes all the emergency services, could use joint-working arrangements to effectively manage, and where possible minimise, the impact of the virus on our population during these unprecedented times.

This in turn prompted a series of measures from us to maintain operational cover whilst increasing further protections to our staff including working from home arrangements for non-operational staff and utilising our new Office 365 platform to maintain business continuity with extremely effective results.

We continue to monitor the situation (and its impacts on our performance and risks) very closely ensuring that we capture lessons from our response whilst also planning our

restoration and recovery. This will enable us to once again respond effectively should a second wave occur.

Governance

The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) is a directorate within the IWC who take decisions in delivery of the Fire Service Act 2004. Councillor Dave Stewart is the Community safety and public protection lead and is the policy and strategy lead for IWFRS within the Cabinet; through a strategic partnership arrangement the council, discharges responsibility for running the IWFRS to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) Chief Fire Officer, Neil Odin who is accountable to the IWC Chief Executive John Metcalfe for the delivery of the partnership arrangements.

To support this, we have a Scheme of Delegation, Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations combined into the IWC's Constitution. The Constitution sets out in a single place and in clear language, how the IWC works with the Service and how it makes decisions.

For more details on our Constitution, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/transparency/The-Council/Democratic-Services/Constitution1>

To support our Constitution, it is essential for us to have an appropriate and robust governance framework. The framework operates with clear reporting lines and streamlines decision making. It also enables us to monitor the achievement of our priorities and to consider whether they have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective and efficient services.

The Isle of Wight Council's local governance framework is designed to be consistent with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government good governance code of practice. The framework summarises the council's internal arrangements that have been put in place to ensure that there is effective governance. The overarching aim of good governance is to ensure that the council always achieves its intended priority outcomes while acting in the public interest.

The details of our framework are presented in our Annual Governance Statement. For more details of our Governance Statement, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Financial-Management/Audit-and-Governance>

Combined Fire Authority (CFA)

We are preparing to combine with the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority. This was agreed by both Authorities on 24th January 2019 and a combination order request was subsequently approved by the Home Office. This was then put forward for any parliamentary objections for a period of 40 days (COVID-19 lead to parliamentary delays) which concluded on the 1st May 2020 with no objections. Now the combination order is in place, the combination can begin from 1st April 2021.

The combination will enhance public safety, support and enable us to make life safer across the geographical areas and work to reduce risk for members of the public. This is the main driver for the initiative, which builds upon an existing partnership which has already delivered benefits across the communities served by both authorities.

There are many benefits that the creation of a new CFA will bring organisationally, both in terms of operational delivery and for the safety of our public.

The new CFA will be one organisation with a single purpose, *Together we make life safer*. Local accountability of the FRS on the Isle of Wight will transfer from the Isle of Wight Council into a larger Combined Fire Authority. This new governing body will have a single focus on fire specific issues for the Isle of Wight (and the other constituent authority areas), rather than a wider range of complex public services for the Council to consider.

A single organisation with a dedicated focus on public safety is better equipped to provide efficient and effective scrutiny around decision-making on fire and rescue related matters.

A new CFA will also create greater resilience, remove duplication, enhance capacity and ensure continuous improvement, whilst enabling a common approach consistently applied across a wider area. Such an approach will offer improved learning opportunities and greater scope for the sharing of specialisms across the area. This will all support improved public safety.

The business case for the proposal was approved by the Home Secretary, and a Shadow Fire Authority was established from April 2020, and the first Shadow Authority held (virtually) in June 2020, with a view to full implementation and ‘Go-Live’ of the new Combined Fire Authority for the areas of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton in April 2021.

Prior to April 2021, progress towards the new Combined Fire Authority is overseen, managed and assured by the CFA Programme Board, which includes a wide range of Accountable Owners who are responsible for ensuring progress in preparatory and alignment activity. CFA Programme updates are also regularly provided to the Executive Group for additional assurance, and an external peer review of the Programme was also undertaken – with the recommendations considered by the CFA Programme Board and the Executive Group, with appropriate action taken in response to the review.

Policy & Planning

Our aim is ‘ensuring communities feel safer’. To deliver on our aim we have an IWC Corporate Plan that was reviewed in 2019 and will launch from April 2020 and run until 2022. This has been supported by several more detailed plans and strategies including an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that has ensured we met our obligations to reduce risk through the delivery of cost-effective services.

Corporate Plan

Our Corporate Plan was refreshed in 2019/20. This refreshed Corporate Plan for the council sets out our new and continuing strategic priorities and direction for the period 2019-2022. The plan continues to set out a clear vision for the council, supports that vision with a description of the outcomes and priorities we aim to achieve and describes the values that underpin everything we do.

Our vision: “*is for the Isle of Wight to be an inspiring place in which to grow up, work, live and visit*”.

Our priorities are to continue to:

- provide sound financial management;
- deliver economic growth and prosperity;
- preserve our environment;
- protect our community;
- plan for our future needs; and
- create opportunities for all.

Our values: We are committed to running a council that puts our community at its heart, delivers value for money, and works with our partner organisations to ensure we focus on what is important to the Island.

These values will underpin the delivery of our priority projects that are set out in more detail in the main body of the plan.

As part of the Community safety and public protection directorate our priority projects are as follows:

- Work with strategic partners and key stakeholders to ensure the Island has effective and robust arrangements to ensure the safety of the community at all times.
- Ensure the smooth transition of the fire service to the new combined fire authority for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, subject to the Secretary of States’ approval.
- Ensure the Isle of Wight’s needs are fully represented by taking a full and active role in the new combined fire authority for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
- Contribute to the development of a new Integrated Risk Management Plan for the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire Authority and scrutinise its delivery.
- Review the work and effectiveness of the Community Safety Partnership.
- Review the delivery of Regulatory Services and their impact in protecting the Island’s community.

For more details please see: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Business-Effectiveness-Unit/Corporate-Plan>

Integrated Risk Management Plan

Our new IRMP was developed in 2019/20 and followed a period of consultation with the public and our own teams, with the IRMP public consultation commencing in the autumn of 2019. This IRMP is a joint IRMP with Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service as we establish greater alignment in preparation for the Combined Fire Authority and is the first joint IRMP to be delivered in the country.

We have purposefully set out our IRMP to firstly explain the current landscape and risks within the Isle of Wight and Hampshire in the context of Places and People. We then explain how we plan to mitigate those risks. We call it integrated risk management planning because it brings together a range of ways we can help make you safer from fires and other emergencies. This starts by understanding the communities we serve.

In this plan we reflect on risks in the community which could make the public susceptible to harm. We focus on people and how their individual needs can be best served. We look at these alongside broader issues in our society such as how population changes and climate affect our communities, fires and our landscape. Bringing all these risks together we then use various analytical tools to work out how many fire stations, firefighters and specialist resources (equipment and teams) we need.

We look at what work we can do to prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies by helping people adopt safer behaviours, and also what we can do to make buildings safer. We consider a number of key components to support our purpose of making the Isle of Wight and Hampshire safer and use the following elements to build our risk management approach:

- Our communities: Analysis of data on age profiles, health indicators and other factors that can impact levels of vulnerability. More information on how we do this is set out in this plan.
- The environment: Buildings in which we live, work, visit and stay. The infrastructure within an area including transport arrangements and our climate and weather which create their own risks and demands on the fire and rescue services.
- Local intelligence: Our staff and teams work and live within our communities and their local knowledge, understanding and information sharing through partnerships is invaluable.
- Community and National Risk Register: Hampshire and Isle of Wight fire and rescue services are a key agency within the Local Resilience Forum. Through that forum a community risk register is established which sets out high level risks or issues that need to be considered and planned for (including large scale events such as music festivals) to ensure our communities are prepared.
- Partners: We work closely with a wide range of partners both centrally at a strategic level and locally.
- Research: Ongoing research locally, nationally and internationally is constantly reviewed, and indeed many of our own staff undertake research, which informs our approach and understanding of risks and issues.
- Learning from each other: We constantly strive to learn from our own experiences and those of others. Lessons learned from incidents are shared nationally and internationally to inform our plans.

To view the IRMP consultation document please see:

<https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alld=96122>

Safety Plan 2020 to 2025

Following the outcomes of the IRMP we have developed the new Safety Plan that not only includes our priorities and commitments as set out in the IRMP but also takes consideration of our organisational risks.

The new Safety Plan (covering both Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service) was developed in 2019/20 and launched on 1st April 2020 following approval by the Isle of Wight Council and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

Our plans and strategies are formed around the large amount of data we collate and analyse. We also review risk regularly, so we can work out how to best protect our communities. This then informed our Strategic Assessment (of risk) which adds context and detail to aid our planning process.

The Safety Plan has been available on our website since the 1st April 2020:

<https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/about-us/safety-plan/>

Policy, Procedure and Guidance

In 2019/20, we launched a new combined Policy Framework with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service following a significant review of our Services' policies. Our Policy, Procedure and Guidance (PPG's) are documents that capture and define the way our organisations operate and how we deliver services and functions.

They ensure our people have the necessary reference tools required to do their job with the information presented and communicated in a way which is simple and easy to use which forms a safe system of work.

- Policies:
 - Are owned by the Services and provide the overarching authority by which the organisation delivers their operations or service's.
 - They are statements of the what and the why, ensuring the Service are compliant with legislation and are non-negotiable.
- Procedures:
 - Are owned by the relevant Directorate and support the policies in place.
 - They are subject to change and continuous improvement and clearly state what individual actions should be taken.
- Guidance:
 - Are owned by the relevant Directorate and provide our people with help and advice on how they can complete tasks.
 - The guidance is more general and can apply to either everyday business or operational incidents.

Other types of procedure or guidance includes:

- National Operational Guidance (NOG).
- Tactical Operational Guidance (TOG).
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

- Additional Hazard Information Sheets (AHIS).

Operations

Whilst our improvement activity is aimed at ensuring communities feel safer, it does so through the delivery of our front-line services. Therefore, to ensure successful outcomes for our communities it is extremely important that we deliver the highest quality services.

Prevent & Protect

Our main operational aim is to prevent incidents from occurring and protect people from harm should an incident occur.

In the workplace, this is the responsibility of the business owners, however, to support businesses we deliver key messages to potentially high-risk business premises. We do this by:

- telling businesses what they need to do to comply with fire safety law;
- helping businesses carry out a fire risk assessment;
- helping businesses identify the general fire precautions they need to have in place;
- challenging all or parts of a fire risk assessment where concerns are identified and;
- taking further action if all the risks aren't considered.

In 2019/20, we carried out 115 fire safety audits of business premises owners fire risk assessments and control measures to ensure compliance with the Fire Safety Order 2005.

To view more information on keeping safe at work please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Business/fire-and-rescue/Business-Fire-Safety/Fire-Safety-Order1>

To help mitigate the risk of fire in homes and the subsequent harm these can cause, our Firefighters, designated Community Safety Officers, Volunteers and partner agencies carry out 'Safe & Well' visits to our targeted risk groups. Recognising that our most vulnerable risk groups align with that of our partners in Health, we have tailored our traditional Home Fire Safety Check to include an intervention on slips, trips and falls as well other potential hazards that may affect our community's wellbeing. Our Safe & Well visits are primarily delivered to individuals who have been referred to us by our colleagues in Adult Services.

In 2019/20, we carried out 506 Safe & Well visits. This would have been greater were it not for the COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in Safe and Well visits having to be significantly down-scaled at the back-end of the financial year to just cover safety critical visits to the most vulnerable. There has been a significant amount of work and engagement activity to drive up Safe and Well visit numbers; however, this work has been (and continues to be) clearly impacted by the COVID-19 situation, which commenced in the last month of the financial year.

To view more information on keeping safe at home please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Business/fire-and-rescue/Home-Fire-Safety-Advice-and-Education/In-the-Home2>

We also deliver a range of interventions through our Children and Young People Teams:

- Fire Education within schools; and
- Range of children and young people initiatives

These initiatives seek to deliver fire safety information but also help build confidence and support wider social issues facing young people today.

We also provide interactive safety messages through our fun and educational website:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Business/fire-and-rescue/Fire-Service-Education/Schools>

Respond

We work hard to keep our communities safe through education and safety measures. However, we accept incidents will still occur and in the event of a call to an emergency, we have effective strategies in place to respond to numerous different types of incidents. Our frontline resources and fire appliance are spread across these stations according to the local risk factors. Based throughout the Island we have ten fire stations with a headquarters in Newport.

Newport Fire Station is a whole-time facility which is crewed 24 hours in addition to a retained duty system crew. Ryde Fire Station has a whole-time crew during the day and a retained duty system at night. All other stations have retained duty system personnel.

As well as our frontline fire appliances, we also have a number of specialist capabilities which assist us in dealing with a variety of different incidents. Our specialist capability teams provide us with an enhanced range of equipment, skills and knowledge for dealing with a wide range of unusual and complex incidents. Specialist capabilities in IWFRS include:

- Rescue Tender
- Water Rescue Units
- Animal Rescue Units
- Water Carriers
- Aerial Ladder Platforms
- Land Rovers

To view more information on our response to emergencies, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Business/fire-and-rescue/Responding-to-Emergencies/Reporting-Incidents1>

In 2019/20 we attended 283 fires, 615 non-fire emergency ('special service call') incidents (such as road traffic collisions) and 1,135 false alarms. Further information on our performance is outlined in our performance reporting into IWC, for more information please see: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/fire-and-rescue-service/Fire-and-Rescue-Service/Performance> and <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Business-Effectiveness-Unit/Performance-Reporting1>.

Resilience

Emergency services are facing an increased variety of demanding situations. Major incidents caused by natural disasters, industrial accidents and the threat of terror attacks are challenges that we need to prepare for at a national level. These incidents could potentially have an impact on our daily lives. For this reason, there is a need for high levels of preparedness by the emergency services and our communities, including improved ability to operate effectively together.

To support our local communities, we are members of the Local Resilience Forum for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum comprises of local Emergency Service Responders (Police, Fire, Ambulance), Local Authorities, as well as associated businesses, organisations and voluntary sector representatives. Through the Local Resilience Forum, these organisations work together to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

For more information on our Local Resilience Forum, please see:
www.hampshireprepared.co.uk

As well as supporting our communities prepare for wide spread incidents through the Local Resilience Forum, we also have an Island Resilience Forum to focus on specific risks that can affect us and our partner agencies on the Island. Through this partnership we have a programme of work, which is achieved through engagement with all internal departments and with our partners across the Island.

For more information on our Island Resilience Forum, please see:
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Emergency-Management/About-the-Emergency-Management-Team>

This work enables the Service to meet its mission critical activities and still respond to the communities of Isle of Wight during periods of disruption and high demand.

Collaboration

We work closely, on a day to day basis, with our blue light colleagues from other fire & rescue, police and ambulance services. We also have excellent relationships with our colleagues across the Isle of Wight Council as we work together to deliver a shared Corporate Plan. As part of the council all of our support services (e.g. payroll, HR, accountants, and property services) are shared with other council services. We believe that through collaboration we can maximise the benefits of our collective offering to the public.

The Isle of Wight has cross border arrangements with HFRS and other neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. Being an island means that we need to maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency, however, being able to call upon our neighbours for additional support and operational assets is a critical part of our emergency response plans should a major incident occur. There are standard agreements in place to formalise these arrangements under the Fire Service Act (2004) and also the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). These plans include our arrangements with the ferry companies to ensure mutual aid can be reached across the Solent.

In 2015 a 'Delivering Differently in Partnership' agreement was put in place to effectively outsource certain aspects of IWFRS to HFRS, in response to the significant financial challenge facing the IWC. This arrangement included the HFRS Senior Officers leading the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) as their Chief Officers. This unique partnership arrangement was the first of its kind in the country. We continue to work closely with HFRS to find new ways of delivering services together more efficiently and support them in dealing with large and complex incidents. One of these ways includes handling 999 calls and mobilising IWFRS appliances through HFRSs Control centre. Further alignment will continue under these arrangements until April 2021, when the two Authorities combine.

We also seek to capitalise on our proven ability to reduce deaths and injuries in fires, by applying the same educational and experiential strengths to the road safety agenda as part

of a partnership approach. We are proud lead the Isle of Wight Road Safety, on behalf of the IWC and other partner agencies.

For more details please see: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/fire-and-rescue-service/Road-Safety/About>

Performance & Assurance

Successful performance management relies on effective monitoring that drives informed decision making. Therefore, we ensure performance is appropriately reported and improvement actions are driven through transparent scrutiny. This starts at a local level with individual performance management supported by a personal development review process. Personal objectives are set against team plans which in turn support the Corporate Plan priorities.

Performance

Our strategic performance is reported to the Corporate Management Team and to the IWC each quarter. This report shows our progress against key performance indicators. These measures are made up of the Service-wide impacts, our response standard to critical incidents and other areas, including staff well-being. These measures help us focus our change activity across all our Corporate Plan priority areas.

For more information on our performance reporting, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/current/allMinutes.aspx?cmteId=142&comName=Cabinet>
and <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Business-Effectiveness-Unit/Performance-Reporting1>

Inspection

In July 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) remit was extended to include inspections of fire and rescue services in England. It is now called Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and they were tasked with providing an inspection programme to begin in the financial year 2018/19. To help us prepare for this inspection we employed a Group Manager to operate as our Service Liaison Officer and provided additional support from various teams across the Service.

Our first inspection took place in June 2018. The inspection looked at three overarching pillars which are supported by many diagnostics and more detailed sub-diagnostics. The outcome of the inspection, reported in December 2018, was as follows in terms of ratings:

- Effectiveness – good
- Efficiency – good
- People – requires improvement

The inspection identified many areas of good practice but also made several recommendations for areas that could be improved. There was one 'cause for concern', which was as follows:

Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service doesn't do enough to be an inclusive employer. We found signs of low morale in the workforce. People have little confidence that they will be treated fairly or that senior leaders have their best interests at heart. By June 2019 the Service should:

1. *Embed a programme to ensure that inclusion, fairness, equalities and professional development are priorities for the service;*
2. *Ensure that its recruitment activities are open and accessible to all of Hampshire's communities;*
3. *Treat employees according to their needs so they feel valued;*

4. *Ensure that each person's potential can be developed so they can perform to their very best;*
5. *Ensure that the chief officer team leads the programme, promoting the values of the organisation; and*
6. *Ensure that everyone knows how they contribute to the values.*

To see the full report, please see:

<https://www.justiceinspectories.gov.uk/hmicfrs/frs-assessment/frs-2018/isle-of-wight/>

Following the publication of the report in December 2018, we were required to submit an action plan to address the 'Cause for concern' by 30 June 2019. Our action plan, which focused on more than just the 'Cause for concern' is monitored at the Executive Group and the IWC Corporate Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

There was a total of 25 actions against 8 diagnostics of the HMICFRS framework. As of March 2020, we have closed all 25 (100%) IWFRS actions with an action plan closure report taken to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 7th July 2020.

The next inspection was planned to take place week commencing the 27th April 2020, however, due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, HMICFRS (in liaison with the Home Office) decided to postpone all further inspection activity until further notice. HMICFRS's Service Liaison Lead does, however, continue to review the documentary evidence and data returns that we provided them with earlier in the year and engagement with the Service Liaison Lead continues to take place.

To view the improvement plan, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/Meetings/committees/Corporate%20Scrutiny%20Committee/9-7-19/PaperC-FireServiceImprovementInspectionPlan.pdf>

Operational Assurance

We have a post incident debrief process, which also includes any significant events that could impact on our service delivery. Feedback is gathered from all those involved, and we analyse any trends. This information is then presented back to the individuals involved to highlight any areas of performance and to discuss potential solutions. This leads to improvement actions at a policy level as well as the identification of possible risks that may occur again should similar incidents occur in the future.

We also support multi-agency exercises as part of our contingency planning and business continuity. By assessing the effectiveness of these exercises, we are able to identify ways of working more effectively with our partners and make the necessary plans to ensure that should a major incident occur, we are able to deal with them accordingly.

To further support the debrief process and multi-agency exercise learning and to widen the potential opportunity for improvements, a new 'Submit Learning' application in 2019/20 for both IWFRS and HFRS. This tool enables any member of staff to provide feedback at any time on a number of different platforms including mobile phones and mobile data terminals in appliances. This enables us to capture real time feedback but also allow people to reflect on situations and feedback at a later time. Since the launch in January 2020, there have been 45 'submit learning' tool submissions from IWFRS personnel (most submissions have multiple comments). These submissions resulted in 17 actions being raised and having received responses from the relevant departments, 14 of these actions have been completed. The tool has been designed to gather feedback in other areas across the

Service, such as Prevention and Protection activity, lessons learned from Project delivery or feedback on HR related investigations. This additional development is planned for 2020/21 and beyond.

We also contribute our learning to the National Operational Learning Group. This Group provide National Operational Guidance to support a common approach across fire and rescue services. We provide our technical expertise to help shape this guidance, which is regularly reviewed and widely adopted. For more details on the National Operational Learning Group, please see: <https://www.ukfrs.com/>

Audit

The IWC is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in advising IWC that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively. Our internal audits are carried out in partnership with Portsmouth City Council (acting for the Isle of Wight Council) who also assist us in the development of future audit plans.

Details of our internal audits are reported through our Audit Committee. This includes the progress of management actions resulting from observations of improvements required, which we monitor closely and also report on internally. Our overall assurance rating for 2019/20 was 'reasonable assurance'. Whilst there were no specific fire and rescue service audits, there were 14 Corporate Services audits and 5 Finance audits, which cover and support all IWC departments.

This is an improved position from the previous year and demonstrates improvements made to our risk management controls. However, if timely implementation of actions are not completed over the forthcoming year, it will have an impact on future assessments, along with any increase in exceptions raised, which may result in a reduction of the assurance level and a move of the overall opinion, to limited for 2020/21.

For more details please see Internal Auditing Service, available at:
<https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Audit/Internal-Auditing-Service>

Transparency

The Local Government Transparency Code 2014 is designed to ensure greater transparency of local authority data. In compliance with this code, we publish the following public data:

- Expenditure exceeding £500
- Procurement card transactions
- Procurement information:
- Contracts register
- Tenders
- Local Authority Land
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Organisation chart
- Trade Union facility time
- Senior salaries
- Constitution
- Pay multiple

We ensure that the publication of any data complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 and future General Data Protection Regulations due to come into effect May 2018.

For more details please see: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/transparency/>

We also facilitate the request for any additional information through a well-managed Freedom of Information request process. For more details on how to make a request for information please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/MyAccount/login.aspx?return=https%3a%2f%2fwww.iow.gov.uk%2fCouncil%2fOtherServices%2fFreedom-of-Information-Requests%2fFOI&serviceType=5>

Feedback

We also encourage feedback from our communities to help us improve our performance. Any issues raised are assigned an investigating officer who carries out a comprehensive investigation to determine the cause and recommend any remedial actions. Learning from this feedback is exceptionally important to us and annual reports are discussed at our Executive Group meeting.

For more details regarding feedback, please see: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Business/Fire-and-Rescue/Fire-and-Rescue-Service/Contact>

People

Our People Strategy described what was required of our employees and aimed to meet the changing needs and expectations of society and future opportunities for IWFRS. The role of the firefighter and indeed of the Service has dramatically changed over the years, we are no longer a one dimensional ‘one size fits all’ Service. The rate of change has particularly sped up in the last couple of years.

Following the HMICFRS outcomes and in support of the new IRMP and subsequent Service Plans that began in April 2020, we developed a new People & Organisational Development (POD) Strategy with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. This strategy encompasses the following areas:

- Culture, Values & Behaviours
- Health and Wellbeing
- Workforce transformation and engagement
- Learning and Development
- Leadership and Management

Inclusion and Diversity is another strand of the POD strategy, however, due to existing arrangements and a well-developed offering, we continue to align with the IWC Equality and Diversity Strategy. Following the combination in April 2021, this will of course transition over. In the meantime, our staff participate in network groups with our Hampshire Fire and Rescue colleagues. There are four active groups that have an Executive Group member and Chief Officer Group member in attendance. These groups are as follows:

- FireAble – supporting those within the organisations who have a disability
- FireInspire – supporting our female members of staff
- FireOut – supporting our LGBTQ members of staff
- FireReach – supporting our religious, ethnic and cultural heritage members of staff

People Performance

We strive for excellence through delivering outstanding training and support people to achieve their full potential. Developing a skilled workforce begins with recruitment, training and development programmes, leading into our Maintenance of Competence Scheme. We ensure our staff competencies are regularly assessed and core competencies such as safe working at heights, the use of breathing apparatus and applying incident command are assured at an appropriate competent level.

To ensure all our operational staff are fit to carry out their duties we undertake two fitness assessments every year. This includes an output test and either a multi stage fitness test / bleep test or a Chester treadmill test.

We also monitor staff sickness through regular reporting and national benchmarking through a joint Health and Safety Committee with HFRS. This Group considers all aspects of Health and Safety and staff wellbeing to ensure teams are appropriately supported and to maximise our availability.

We believe having an inclusive, engaged workforce means better outcomes for our communities. We run annual conferences, staff cultural surveys and focus groups to understand and discuss the issues facing our teams. The results of these help to shape our

People Strategy and provide our leaders with crucial insight into how we can better support and equip our teams.

Finance

Our Medium-Term Financial Plan is regularly updated and reported to the Corporate Management Team and the IWC Cabinet. Progress reports monitor the outcomes of any income generation or cost saving improvements and are used to make appropriate adjustments to future budgets.

For more details on our budget for 2020/21, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Financial-Management/Financial-Planning1>

In addition to this, it is important that public money is used well and appropriately managed. We do this by using proper accounting practice within our own set of Financial Regulations. This means that when we plan our budget or require additional funds, there are protocols to give appropriate scrutiny on how public money is to be used and to ensure there is clear justification to do so. This includes policies and procedures in place for the prevention of fraud & corruption and a Register of Interest and a register of Gifts & Hospitality. These robust systems are used for identifying and evaluating all significant financial and operational risks to the Authority on an integrated basis. Performance against this framework is assessed using an Assurance Framework Survey, the recording and investigation of suspected incidents and a review from our Internal Auditors into directorship of external companies that the IWC has made payments to. Based on these controls, no changes have been made to the strategy, which we have assessed to be working appropriately.

For more details please see: <https://www.iow.gov.uk/Council/OtherServices/Financial-Management/Accounts1>

Financial Performance

Ensuring that funding is appropriately accounted for is vital for all public sector organisations. Our financial performance is reported to the Corporate Management Team and the IWC Cabinet every year.

For more details of our Statement of Accounts, please see:

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/view/draft-statement-of-accounts-2019-20-subject-to-audit->

Summary

2019/20 has been a significant year with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the final quarter of the year. This unprecedented situation has given rise to a challenge faced by all emergency responder agencies to ensure that they can keep communities safe.

The Service has a wide range of assurance mechanisms in place to identify risks, areas for improvement, and good practice to disseminate. As the 2019/20 end of year performance report noted the number of primary fires we have responded to and the number of non-fatal casualties have decreased when compared to last year. We have also made positive improvements in our prevention and protection activity, and in our learning from operational incidents. However, we have further to improve in these areas, which, like many parts of the Service have been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to monitor, and develop our understanding of, the impact of COVID-19 on our services – and will provide additional detail on this in subsequent reports; as well as additional information on how we are performing against the new Safety Plan.

In addition to this, our overall internal audit opinion was ‘Reasonable Assurance’. This is an improvement from the previous year and shows a positive direction of travel. However, there are still some concerns regarding some of our risk management controls within different areas of the Service. As part of our planning cycle, we have implemented a new risk management framework (supported by a suite of policy, procedure and guidance) following the launch of our new Safety Plan.

Our new Safety Plan, covering both the Isle of Wight and Hampshire, was launched in April 2020 and sets our strategic priorities and specific in-year activity objectives to achieve our priorities over the five-year period. In addition to developing our new plans, we will also be reflecting back at our previous Corporate Plans to see what benefits have been achieved and what lessons need to be carried forward into our new planning cycle.

Finally, with the forthcoming new Combined Fire Authority, the activity of the CFA Programme Board, its accountable owners, and workstream leads (and assurance of this activity) will be a crucial part of our preparations for April 2021.