



# STAFFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

## Governance – Community Safety Plan

Internal audit report 4.22/23

Final

25 October 2022

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.  
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Why we completed this audit

The Fire and Rescue National Framework requires that every Fire and Rescue Service must produce a high-level Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which outlines how a Service uses their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area. As a result, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS, the Service) has a Community Safety Plan 2020-2024 Plan in place which was approved by the Commissioner in the summer of 2020. The Service's Community Safety Plan 2020-2024 directly aligns with the Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024.

The Plan sets out the Service's priorities which also outlined the objectives of the Plan and how the Plan is going to be implemented. The four priorities outlined within the Plan are:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention;
2. Protecting Staffordshire and its people;
3. Public Confidence; and
4. Service Reform.

The preparation of the Plan involved consultation internally with departments and externally with local communities, partner organisations, businesses as well as community groups, however due to the Covid-19 Pandemic it was recognised this consultation activity was not as extensive as desired.

As part of our audit, we have reviewed the Community Safety Plan 2020-2024, consultation activity, governance, and reporting arrangements in place that the Service utilises to gain assurance regarding the Service's performance against the Plan at both an operational and strategic level, and the management of the Plan as well as the planning processes for future updates to the Plan.

## Conclusion

The Service has robust procedures in place regarding the development of the Community Safety Plan and the corresponding governance arrangements in place for the monitoring of performance against the Plan.

Performance Dashboards, prepared by the Performance and Assurance Team are consistently reported to the Service Delivery Board (SDB), Service Management Board (SMB) and Strategic Governance Board (SGB) for review and scrutiny of department and directorate performance.

Furthermore, opportunity is provided within the Staffordshire Commissioner Police, Fire and Crime (PFC) Panel meetings for the Commissioner to provide comment and feedback against performance of the Plan.

We noted one area of improvement in relation to the Service Performance Management Framework which had not yet been formally approved at the time of audit. Therefore, one '**low**' priority management action has been agreed.

### Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified area are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively.



## Key findings

The following areas of improvement were noted for the established control framework:

### Service Performance Management Framework



A draft Service Performance Management Framework is in place which outlines the roles and responsibilities in relation to performance management for a variety of staff levels from individuals through to Principal Officers.

However, the document is currently in draft and is expected to be formally approved at the Strategic Level to ensure the document appropriately aligns to the current governance processes and structures in place. **(Low)**

The following aspects of the control framework were found to be operating effectively:



### Community Safety Plan 2020-2024

We confirmed through review that the 2020-2024 Community Safety Plan is available to all staff via the intranet and is available externally on the Service's website.



### Consultation Report for the Community Safety Plan 2020-2024

Through review of the Consultation Report we confirmed internal and external consultation activity had been carried out by the Service which included, but was not limited to, surveys, dedicated web pages, social media updates and media releases.

It was also recognised the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team was heavily involved in the process ensuring that the process was impact assessed to meet EDI requirements, and that any

documents or strategies resulting from the consultation and Safety Plan were also people impact assessed.

### Staffordshire Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024



We confirmed through review that each of the priorities detailed within the Service's Community Safety Plan align to one of the four priorities included within the Staffordshire Commissioner's Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024.

### Annual Statement of Assurance 2020/21 and 2021/22



We confirmed the 2020/21 Statement of Assurance had been approved by the SGB on 15 November 2021 and is available to all on the Service's website. The draft 2021/22 Statement of Assurance is scheduled for review and approval by the SMB on 11 October 2022. This will be reviewed and approved by the SGB following SMB approval.

### Strategic Departmental Plans



A new requirement was introduced in June 2022 whereby all departments were required to set their own annual Strategic Departmental Plans, ensuring they align with at least one of the four priorities included within the Community Safety Plan.

Our review confirmed that these Departmental Plans were in place across the Service.

### Operational Level Performance Management



Through discussion with the Performance and Assurance Manager it was recognised that each department is responsible for monitoring themselves against their own Departmental Plans, often via informal performance meetings that are not formally recorded.

To aid this, the Performance and Assurance Team provide each department with regular centralised performance reports which report on the department's performance against their set KPIs which are aligned with the Community Safety Plan. These reports are then discussed within the relevant performance meetings.

### **Bi-annual Corporate Planning Meetings**

Bi-annual Corporate Planning meetings with Services Protection Officers are in place to discuss progress of all Departmental Plans against the Safety Plan priorities. These meetings are currently not minuted and therefore formal documentation of the review of such Plans was not obtained. However, we were informed by the Performance and Assurance Manager that a new system is being designed to capture the data and progress made by departments against these Strategic Departmental Plans, to be discussed within Corporate Planning meetings.

### **Performance Monitoring by the Directorate Board**

The Directorate Board has recently undergone a restructure whereby the overarching Directorate Board has been split into separate Boards as follows:

- Prevent and Protect Board;
- Response Board; and
- Workforce Planning Board.

Tailored performance reports are presented to the Prevent and Protect Board and the Response Board by the Performance and Assurance Team and, if any issues are identified, members of relevant departments and directorates are invited to the meetings to discuss the issues.

### **Performance Dashboards**

All members of the SDB, SMB and SGB have access, via a link, to the Performance Dashboards which are prepared and published by the Performance and Assurance Team. The Dashboards outline the Service's performance against the Community Safety Plan priorities.

Access is provided to tailored Dashboards ahead of each meeting.

### **Performance Monitoring by the SDB**

The Performance and Assurance Team present the progress of directorates individually against the Community Safety Plan priorities, to the SDB. Where any issues are identified, members of relevant directorates are invited to the meetings to discuss the issues.

Review of minutes for the last SDB meeting held on 13 June 2022 confirmed a performance dashboard was discussed and scrutinised by the Board.

### **Performance Monitoring by the SMB**

The SMB receive updates from the Transformation Board regarding progress of the Transformation Programme, which links to priority four (Service Reform) of the Community Safety Plan.

Review of the April, June and September 2022 SMB meeting minutes confirmed that a Transformation Board Update was provided at each meeting by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer which prompted discussion about the Transformation Programme at each meeting.

### **Performance Monitoring by the SGB**

Review of the minutes for the 3 May 2022 and 27 July 2022 meetings confirmed that a performance dashboard report was presented by the Performance and Assurance Team which provides a high-level overview of progress.

Through review of the discussion regarding the performance dashboard report recorded within the minutes of both meetings, we confirmed that consideration for the impact of such performance on the Community Safety Plan and its supporting priorities were embedded throughout.

We also confirmed that at the May and July 2022 SGB meetings, an update paper from the Transformation Board was presented which summarised the discussions regarding the Transformation Programme at SMB level.

#### **Performance Monitoring within 2:2 Meetings**

We obtained a copy of the last Public Performance Meeting report, which was provided to SGB members, via email and was discussed at the May 2022 meeting, the purpose of which is to allow the Commissioner to scrutinise performance against the Community Safety Plan.

Meetings are held between the Service CFO/DCFO & Staffordshire Police and Fire Commissioner / Deputy Commissioner. Review of the report confirmed it contained the following areas which directly linked to the priorities within the Community Safety Plan:

- Current Areas of Priority: Service Transformation Update (links to priority four: Service Reform);
- Providing a Flexible & Responsive Service, where KPIs directly link to priority three (Public Confidence);
- Protecting people and places, where KPIs directly link to priority two (Protecting Staffordshire and its people);
- Helping people most at risk from Fire, where KPIs directly link to priority one (Prevention and Early Intervention); and

- A Fire & Rescue Service for Tomorrow update which included an update on the replacement programme, particularly regarding Enhance Rescue Pumps (links to priority four: Service Reform).

#### **Performance Monitoring within Commissioner PFC Panel Meetings**

We obtained a copy of the SFRS Safety Plan 2020 – 2024 Update Report presented by the Commissioner to the PFC Panel at their 14 February 2022 meeting. Review of the report confirmed that it provided updates regarding the progress to date for each priority (Prevention and Early Intervention, Protecting Staffordshire and its people, Public Confidence, and Service Reform).

These updates provided specific examples of Fire Standards, Strategies, Partnerships, Public Performance meetings, Staff Surveys, Statement of Assurance 2020/21, Projects and Work in Progress, together with supporting KPIs.

#### **Annual Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)**

Through review of the 31 January 2022 SGB minutes, we confirmed the draft Fire Revenue Budget Report 2022/23 and MTFS were discussed, scrutinised and ratified by the SGB under agenda item 4a.

The budget report and MTFS were subsequently presented at the Staffordshire PFC Panel meeting by the Commissioner on 14 February 2022 for scrutiny. Review of the minutes confirmed the Panel wholly support the proposed budget and 1.99% increase in the Fire and Rescue Authority Precept for 2022/23 and the MTFS.

### **Monthly Management Accounts/ Finance Reports**



Monthly management accounts/finance reports are circulated to members of the SDB and are also published to all staff on the intranet. Budget monitoring is considered by the SGB on a quarterly basis as part of the finance report which are consolidations of the three-monthly management accounts/finance reports for the quarter. Review of the minutes for the 27 July 2022 SGB meeting confirmed the finance report was presented as part of agenda.

### **Community Safety Plan 2024-2028**

We were informed by the Insights and Engagement Manager that as part of the new Plan's consultation process, the intention is to engage wider members of the community who were not previously engaged in the current 2020-2024 Plan.



To do this, a new Community Networks Programme is currently being implemented (currently in its trial stage) in collaboration with the Prevent and Protect Department, where individual fire stations are being given more autonomy over their community engagements so that firefighters can visit/do activities with community groups on a monthly basis to build a deeper relationship and sense of trust with a wider range of communities. The aim of this is to help the Service identify new risks and allow for further consultation with communities, to receive more detailed feedback.

The planning and consultation for the 2024-2028 Community Safety Plan is currently in its very early stages and therefore testing on this has not been completed as part of this review.

### **Community Risk Management Plan Strategy and Framework**



We were informed by the Safety Plan Manager that there are plans to create a framework document on how to build a Safety Plan, which will be the base for future Safety Plans.

Through review, it was recognised the 2024-2028 Plan timetable states that the Community Risk Management Plan Strategy and Framework is due to be finalised in December 2022 and approved by the SDB in December 2022 and the SMB in January 2023.

## 2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Area: Service Performance Management Framework				
<b>Control</b>	A draft Service Performance Management Framework is in place which outlines the way in which performance is measured and monitored by the Service throughout all levels of the Organisation.			<b>Assessment:</b>
			<b>Design</b>	✓
			<b>Compliance</b>	-
<b>Findings / Implications</b>	<p>Review of the draft Performance Management Framework confirmed that reference to the Community Safety Plan was made throughout the document which included, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles and responsibilities regarding performance management (from individuals through to Strategic Level);</li> <li>• Roles in relation to defining organisational objectives within the Community Safety Plan;</li> <li>• Consultation and agreement of objectives and KPIs with the Staffordshire Commissioner for Police and Fire Authorities and other stakeholders;</li> <li>• Requirement to report KPIs via the Performance Dashboard for the Service on a quarterly basis to Strategic Boards;</li> <li>• Significance of aligning KPIs and individual and team objectives to the Safety Plan; and</li> <li>• Existing governance structure from operational performance monitoring at Directorate Board level, in an upwards trajectory towards the Strategic Levels of the organisations, was outlined within a visual diagram with supporting narrative.</li> </ul> <p>However, the document is currently in draft and is expected to be formally approved at the strategic level to ensure the document appropriately aligns to the current governance processes and structures in place. There is a risk of inconsistent working practices if the document is not finalised and disseminated to all relevant staff members.</p>			
<b>Management Action 1</b>	The Service Performance Management Framework will be formally approved. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose. The Framework will then be made available to all staff.	<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Priority:</b>
		Assistant Chief Fire Officer	31 March 2023	Low

## APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

### Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

Area	Control design not effective*		Non Compliance with controls*		Agreed actions		
					Low	Medium	High
Governance – Community Safety Plan	0	(13)	1	(13)	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>					<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.



## APPENDIX B: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

### Scope of the review

The internal audit assignment has been scoped to provide assurance on how Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Services manages the following area:

#### Objective of the area under review

The Service effectively demonstrates accountability regarding the delivery of the Community Safety Plan and how the priorities are being measured and reported.

#### When planning the audit, the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

The Service's Safety Plan for 2020–2024 sets out our priorities for protecting Staffordshire over the next four years. The audit will consider the following;

- The Safety Plan will be reviewed to ensure it has been maintained up to date and is easily accessible for staff members and the general public.
- We will ensure that the Plan clearly sets out defined objectives and set deliverables.
- We will ensure that clear monitoring mechanisms are in place for the Plan and that roles and responsibilities for monitoring and tracking for individual priorities have been clearly defined.
- Reporting of progress against the Plan will be reviewed in relation to the Service's formal governance structure.
- We will review the four Priorities in the plan and review at a departmental level how these are being managed, monitored, reported and escalated upon etc:
  - Priority One – Prevention and early intervention and Priority Two – Protecting Staffordshire and its people. – we will review work completed by the Prevent and Protect Department and progress tracking against these two priorities. Additionally, we will review the processes in place for progress to be fed up the governance chain via directorates (SDB, SMB and PFCC Board etc). Consideration will also be given to the revised performance measures which are currently being implemented and how these link to the priorities.
  - Priority Three – Public confidence. We will engage with the Strategy Intelligence Department regarding the work completed in this area and public transparency reporting etc.
  - Priority Four – Service reform. We will review work completed by the Transformation Board in this area. Consideration will be given to the 17 transformation workstreams. Additionally, we will consider public performance meeting outcomes and wider reporting from the Transformation Board into the formal governance structure boards.
- Monitoring and reporting of funding/spend elements of the Plan will also be considered to ensure transparency and timely completion.

- Finally, we were informed as part of scoping that plans are currently being developed to begin consultation for the revised Plan in around 12 months-time. We will consider how the consultation process is intended to be conducted for this process to ensure far reaching input from the public and staff members at all levels. As part of our fieldwork, we will also ascertain how key departments linked to the current priorities intend to contribute to this process to ensure the new Plan is fit for purpose.

**Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:**

- The governance framework for the monitoring and reporting of the Community Safety Plan will be reviewed; however, we will not confirm on the suitability of the Plan's contents or confirm/guarantee that the Plan and its deliverables will be achieved by the Service.
- The results of our work are reliant on the quality and completeness of the information provided to us.
- Our work will not provide an absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

**Debrief held** 7 October 2022  
**Draft report issued** 7 October 2022  
**Responses received** 24 October 2022

**Internal audit Contacts** **Daniel Harris – Head of Internal Audit**  
[Daniel.Harris@rsmuk.com](mailto:Daniel.Harris@rsmuk.com)  
+44 (0)7792 948767

**Angela Ward – Senior Manager**  
[Angela.Ward@rsmuk.com](mailto:Angela.Ward@rsmuk.com)  
+44 (0)7966 091471

**Final report issued** 25 October 2022

**Client sponsor** Michelle Hickmott, Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
**Distribution** Michelle Hickmott, Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
David Greensmith, Chief Finance Officer

## **rsmuk.com**

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.