

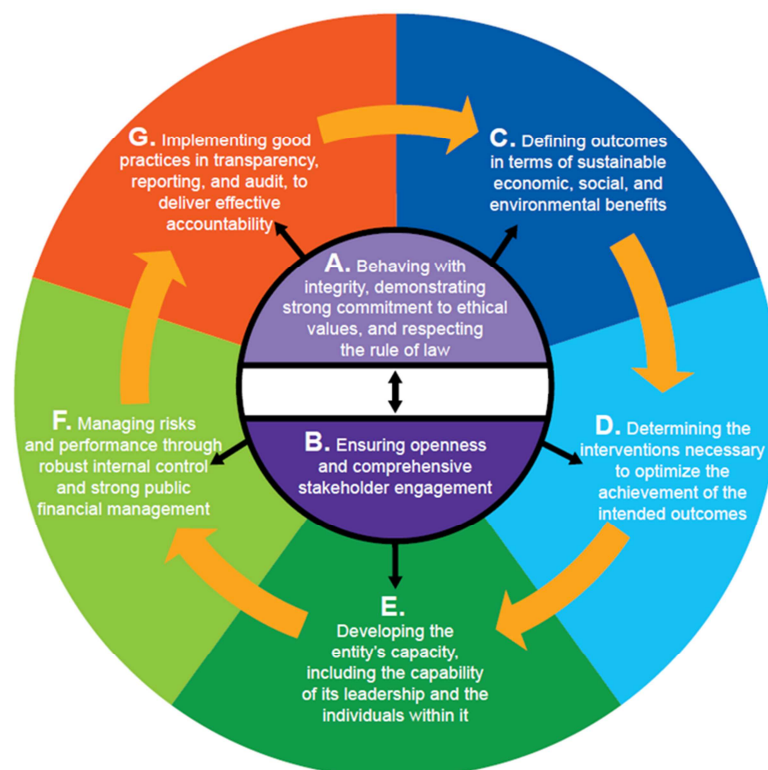
MERSEYSIDE FIRE RESCUE AUTHORITY

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Governance is: “the system by which local government directs and controls their functions and relate to their communities.”

1. The general public have a right to expect the highest standards of conduct from its community leaders and institutions. This includes Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority.
2. Three fundamental principles underpin Corporate Governance:-
 - ☞ Openness
 - ☞ Accountability
 - ☞ IntegrityThe concept of leadership overarches these three fundamental principles.
3. The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 2016 expands the fundamental principles to define seven detailed principles of good governance. These core principles and sub principles for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government were interpreted from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector, published by CIPFA in association with the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) in July 2014.
4. The 2014 International Framework places the attainment of sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes as a key focus of governance structures and processes and stresses the importance of taking account of the impact of current decisions and actions on future generations.
5. This Local Code of Corporate Governance has been devised by the Fire and Rescue Authority to reflect those seven principles, which are:



PRINCIPLE 1 – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

- Behaving with integrity
- Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values
- Respecting the rule of law

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Behaving with integrity		
1 Ensure members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation	Officers and Members communicate effectively and openly and work together towards the achievement of the Authority's Mission. A Constitution, Financial Regulations, Procedural and Contract Standing Orders, a range of policies, codes of conduct, Standard Operational Procedures and Service Instructions refer to the way in which the organisation should be led and governed.	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group (SMG) Legal Director Democratic Services
2 Ensure members lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and staff and that they are communicated and understood	Annual and medium term plans are underpinned by Value for Money Principles, Planning Principles and organisational and personal Values.	
3 Lead by example using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions	Committee agendas and reports (including the documents referred to above) are sent to all Members and representative bodies and are available on the website www.merseyfire.gov.uk . All are invited to attend committee meetings.	
4 Demonstrate, communicate and embed the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes, reviewed regularly to ensure they are operating effectively	The Chief Fire Officer carries out Leaders' briefing sessions Extensive information is published on the Authority's internet and portal sites and in the ModernGov information management system The Authority has in place consultation and negotiation procedures and local Joint Secretaries agreements.	

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values			
1	Seek to establish, monitor and maintain MFRA's ethical standards	A Code of Conduct for Members is approved by the Authority and a Standards Committee is in place to deal with relevant issues referred to it by the Standards Board. A Code of Conduct for staff is also in place, together with relevant policies such as Bullying and Harassment, Appraisals, Conduct and Capability and Discipline. A Governance Statement is published annually which demonstrates compliance with relevant ethical standards Policies, Service instructions, plans and other reports are underpinned by Equality Impact Assessments.	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2	Underpin personal behaviour with ethical values, ensuring they permeate all aspects of our culture and operations		
3	Develop and maintain robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values		
4	Ensure that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with MFRA ethical standards		
Respecting the rule of law			
1	Ensure members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations	Codes of conduct, procedural, contract and financial standing orders set out the requirements. At the commencement of Authority meetings Members are asked whether they have any interests to declare. Registers of gifts, hospitality and Members' and Officers' interests are maintained, reviewed and reported on to the Standards Committee. Reminders of the need to make disclosures are issued to all staff and Members. Guidance on Members' interests is issued annually, and training is provided. The Director of Law is appointed as the Monitoring Officer and is responsible to the Authority for ensuring that all applicable law is complied with. The Treasurer is appointed as the officer having responsibility for the Authority's financial affairs under s.73 of the Local Government Act	Fire Authority Strategic Management Group
2	Create the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders, and members, are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements		Monitoring Officer
3	Strive to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders		Monitoring Officer
4	Deal with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively		Monitoring Officer
5	Ensure corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively		

PRINCIPLE 2 – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- Openness
- Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders
- Engaging with individual citizens and services users effectively

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Openness		
1 Ensure an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating MFRAs commitment to openness	<p>The Integrated Risk Management Plan, Statement of Assurance, Service Delivery Plan, Functional Plans, Community Safety Plans, partnerships with local councils and other partner agencies all set out accountability and effectiveness of relationships.</p> <p>A Service Instruction covering Assurance and Transparency brings together the ways in which the Authority promotes and delivers openness in relation to its activities.</p> <p>All Authority meetings are public meetings. Occasionally specific items will be exempt and require the exclusion of public and press but these are kept to a minimum.</p> <p>During consultation the reasoning and evidence for decisions are clearly explained and illustrated through presentations, historical/predicted data and literature.</p> <p>The Communication and Consultation approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community forums and focus groups - Web based surveys - Public meetings - Postal surveys - Communication with staff through regular Principal Officer briefings and through Joint Secretaries - District community safety staff engage with hard to reach and at risk communities - Senior Officers engage with partner agencies through attendance at statutory and non-statutory partnerships 	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group Strategy and Performance Function
2 Make decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If this is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided.		
3 Provide clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. Ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.		
4 Use formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/course of action		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A biannual staff survey - Social media - Traditional media <p>Comments from consultation are fed back through stakeholder meetings, reports to the Authority and its committees, the website, social media, traditional media and emails. Changes made to proposals as a result are reported through Authority reporting processes and published on the website</p>	
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Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

1	Effectively engage with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably	<p>The Integrated Risk Management Plan, Functional and Station Plans, annual reports and statutory partnership plans and reports all set out accountability and effectiveness of relationships</p> <p>The Communication and Consultation approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community forums and focus groups - Web based surveys - Public meetings - Postal surveys - Communication with staff through regular Principal Officer briefings and through Joint Secretaries - District community safety staff engage with hard to reach and at risk communities - Senior Officers engage with partner agencies through attendance at statutory and non-statutory partnerships 	
2	Develop formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively		<p>Chief Fire Officer/Political Group Leaders</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group</p> <p>Strategy and Performance Function</p> <p>Community Risk Management Function</p>

6. Ensure that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change, a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit	<p>A biannual staff survey</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Traditional media</p> <p>Involvement with statutory and non-statutory partnership is based on organisational need and value. The arrangements are formally managed within the Community risk management Function and incorporate close working relationships with other departments.</p>	
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Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

1 Establish a clear policy on the type of issues that MFRA will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes	Common processes are applied to all consultation and engagement exercises and a Service Instruction establishing these processes is in development.	Strategy and Performance Function
2 Ensure that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement		
3 Encourage, collect and evaluate the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs	Outcomes from stakeholder consultation and engagement (as detailed previously) are fully considered in the development of plans and strategies.	Strategy and Performance Function
4 Implement effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account		
5 Balance feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity		
	The full details of all consultation feedback are included in Authority reports to assist the Members make fully informed decisions.	
	Feedback from after the incident questionnaires is considered by a dedicated Performance Management Group of officers from across	

	<p>the Service. Work is ongoing to broaden the range of this user feedback work.</p> <p>All Authority reports and minutes are published on the website prior to meetings and are circulated widely to partners and stakeholders.</p>	
Take account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users	A five year financial plan and regular updates on performance against that plan consider the budget implications for future generations of the decisions taken by Members.	Treasurer

PRINCIPLE 3 – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

- Defining outcomes
- Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Defining outcomes		
1 Have a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of MFRA purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for MFRA overall strategy, planning and other decisions	<p>The Integrated Risk Management Plan, Service Delivery Plan, Functional Plans and Station Community Safety Plans clearly state our priorities, plans and expected outcomes.</p> <p>Every plan has an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure all our communities receive fair and sustainable service delivery.</p>	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2 Specify the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users.	Plans are based on known and anticipated budget risks and focus	Strategic Management Group

3	Deliver defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resource that will be available	on the Planning Principles and Value for Money principles. The proposals contained within the plans are developed following consideration of numerous options, selecting the options that are considered to provide the best services within the available resources.	Strategic Management Group
4	Identify and manage risks to the achievement of outcomes	The Authority maintains a Corporate Risk Register which is regularly updated and reported upon. A Community Risk Register is maintained by the Local Resilience Partnership of which MFRA is a contributing member.	Strategy and Performance Function Operational Preparedness Function
5	Manage service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available	Stakeholders are consulted at a formative stage when the key plan (the IRMP) is being prepared and again during the 12 week consultation on the draft IRMP.	Strategy and Performance Function

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits		
1 Consider and balance the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision	All reports to the Authority (which includes policies and plans) consider the financial, equality and diversity and environmental implications as well as the implications for staff and in relation to risk management. Every report requires the author to consider the way in which the content of the report will assist the authority in achieving its Mission.	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2 Take a longer term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between MFRA's intended	The IRMP covers a 3 year period, considers longer term budget or political implications (where these are known) and is reviewed regularly.	

<p>outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints</p>	<p>The production of a rolling 5 year financial plan ensures the longer term financial strategy determines the financial decisions made rather than short term benefits or solutions.</p>	
<p>3 Determine the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs</p>	<p>Consultation Forums explore the challenges and future opportunities for the Authority and these and contribute towards the development of future plans. Extensive consultation using a number of different techniques and channels then consider those plans.</p>	
<p>4 Ensure fair access to services</p>	<p>MFRA use the nine protected characteristics with addition of a tenth 'socio-economic disadvantage', as guidance when planning. Equality impact assessments are completed for any policies, service instructions, plans and proposals</p>	
<p>5 Manage service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available</p>	<p>Formative consultation helped MFRS develop its Planning Principles. The Integrated Risk Management Plan (and other plans) then reflect these principles.</p>	

PRINCIPLE 4 – Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- Determining interventions
- Planning interventions
- Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Determining interventions		
1 Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided	IRMP (and other planning) consists of analysis of intelligence and the consideration of many different options. Decision makers are presented with the most feasible options in order to determine which best meet VfM and planning requirements. Financial saving options and the financial strategy take into account what impact they would have on on the safety of the Merseyside Community and the Authority's firefighters.	Strategy and Performance Function Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2 Consider feedback from citizens and services users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts	Extensive consultation takes place early in the planning process when proposals are being developed and once they have been developed and included in the IRMP. The Medium Term Financial Plan is linked to the development of the IRMP and vice versa.	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
Planning interventions		
1 Establish and implement robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets	Plans are developed on a regular cycle: MTFP – 5 year IRMP – 3 year Functional, Station and Service Delivery Plans – 1 year Monitoring and management of performance against plans also takes place regularly.	Strategy and Performance Function Treasurer

2	Engage with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered	Extensive consultation takes place early in the planning process when proposals are being developed and once they have been developed and included in the IRMP. The Medium Term Financial Plan is linked to the development of the IRMP and vice versa.	Strategy and Performance Function People and Organisational Development Function
3	Consider and monitor risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risk	Community Risk Register Any joint projects are project managed and this includes a risk register Partnership arrangements are formalised and include consideration of risks.	Strategic Management Group
4	Ensure arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances	Plans are adaptable if necessary. Intelligence is used to develop and amend plans in relation to changing risk and resources.	Strategic Management Group
5	Establish appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured	Key performance indicators are published in the annual Service Delivery Plan. They are reviewed annually and scrutinised and reported to Performance Management Group monthly and the Community Safety and Protection Committee c4 monthly.	Fire and Rescue Authority, Strategic Management Group Strategy and Performance Directorate
6	Ensure capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly	A dedicated planning and performance management system (PIPS) allows joined up and dynamic review in addition to facilitating the production of business intelligence.	
7	Prepare budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan	Two Authority Strategy days are held before each Budget cycle to discuss and prioritise spend and to identify areas that would deliver any required savings. All interested parties are invited to the strategy days.	Treasurer
8	Inform medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy	A rolling 5 year medium term financial plan is maintained and savings and efficiencies are identified to maintain a balanced plan. Priority is given to protecting front line services. A rolling five year capital	Treasurer

	programme is maintained in order to maintain the Authority's infrastructure and investments. The programme takes into account the approved Asset Management Plan proposals and IRMP required investment. Any prudential borrowing is assessed for affordability and sustainability.		
Optimising achievement of intended outcomes			
1	Ensure the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints	The protection of front line services to ensure the Merseyside Community and Firefighters safety is given priority when allocating resources. The Authority has a long record of robust financial planning and making the required decisions to deliver the long term savings that are required as Government funding is cut.	Treasurer
2	Ensure the budgeting process is all inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term	The financial plan takes account of the revenue costs associated with capital investment requirements over the five year plan period. Most revenue expenditure relates to staff in particular firefighters and the Plan takes account of future retirements and recruitment requirements.	Treasurer
3	Ensure the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage	The single biggest external influence is the level of support the Authority receives from the Government. The financial plan builds in all known funding changes and makes prudent assumptions about funding and expenditure changes that may be reasonably expected over the financial plan period. Quarterly financial reviews go to the Authority for consideration and take account of any changes to the Plan's assumptions and the report identifies amendments to bring the plan back into a balanced position if required.	Treasurer
4	Ensure the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning	Plans are entirely focused on providing social value as the Mission is "Safer, stronger communities – Safe, effective firefighters"	Strategic Management Group

PRINCIPLE 5 – Developing MFRA capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

- Develop MFRA capacity
- Develop the capability of MFRA's leadership and other individuals

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Develop MFRA capacity		
1 Review operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness	<p>Regular reports on performance against objectives, asset management plans, financial reporting, risk register, internal audit are considered by the Authority.</p> <p>Performance Management Group considers performance against performance indicators monthly.</p>	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2 Improve resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently	<p>The Authority regularly shares and generates best practice and seeks advice from other FRS and partner organisations when developing plans.</p> <p>Simulation and mapping software are extensively used to model response options, creating a number of options to be considered as potential proposals for inclusion in plans.</p>	Strategic Management Group
3 Recognise the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved	There are blue light collaborative partnership on fire stations and an organisational approach to partnership working. There is a standardised approach to setting up and monitoring the value of partnership working.	Strategic Management Group Community Risk Management Function
4 Develop and maintain an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources	A workforce development strategy is in development.	People and Organisational Development Function

Developing the capability of MFRA’s leadership and other individuals			
1	Develop protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	Authority and Service roles and responsibilities are set out in: - Constitution - Procedural standing orders - Role maps - Job descriptions - These are all reviewed annually	Monitoring Officer
2	Publish a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body	Schemes of delegation to committees and officers are reviewed annually at the AGM	Monitoring Officer
3	Ensure the leader and chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other’s authority	Procedural standing orders detail the terms of reference of each Member on a committee. The Chief Fire Officer and other officers have delegated powers that are set out in the Scheme of Delegation. All of which are reviewed each year.	Monitoring Officer
4	Develop the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by: - Ensuring member and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is acceptable and encouraged - Ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis	Training and development strategies exist for Members and Officers including: - Seminars - Formal training - Informal training - Mentoring Training and development strategies exist for Members and officers. One to ones and appraisals assess individual training and development needs. Training is tailored to role and annual appraisals identify additional training needs for officers. All new Authority Members and staff receive an induction. Functional plans include consideration of training needs arising from new objectives.	Monitoring Officer Member Development Group People and Organisational Development Function

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external 		
<p>5 Ensure that there are structures in place to encourage public participation</p>	<p>External stakeholder consultation is part of the Diversity and Consultation Manager role. This includes a range of approaches to consultation including a Diversity Forum and close working with the Police is intended to combine resources.</p>	<p>Strategy and Performance Function</p>
<p>6 Take steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections</p>	<p>FRA participate in Peer Reviews and annual audit provided by Liverpool City Council officers</p> <p>All Senior and Principal Officers have individual appraisals.</p>	<p>Strategic Management Group</p>
<p>7 Hold staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs</p>	<p>Every member of staff has an annual appraisal meeting to identify development and training needs</p>	<p>Strategic Management Group</p>
<p>8 Ensure arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing</p>	<p>MFRA Occupational Health team offer extensive support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physiotherapy Counselling Stress risk assessments Flu vaccinations Occupational health nurse and doctor support Fitness and health assessments Online and telephone services Puffell portal <p>The Conduct and Capability policy includes a structured support plan for employees returning from sickness absence.</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development Function</p>

PRINCIPLE 6 – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

- Managing risk
- Managing performance
- Robust internal control
- Managing data
- Strong public financial management

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Managing risk		
1 Recognise that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making	<p>IRMP planning fully explores all risks to MFRA and the communities we serve. When planning for changes to the Service, due to budget cuts, we fully explore the impact on vulnerable groups, our communities and staff. With the ultimate aim of maintaining our response standard to attend all life risk incidents within 10 minutes. We fully consult with all stakeholders.</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register – action owners are identified and they manage the risk, provide updates and review annually. New risks can be added as required</p> <p>Annual Service Delivery Plan also addresses risk and incorporates KPI/LPI's and Functional Plan actions which are updated regularly and report to Authority. These updates are available to view on the website</p> <p>All reports to Strategic Management Group and Authority consider risk as a standard item.</p>	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2 Implement robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensure that they are working effectively		
3 Ensure that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated		

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Managing performance		
1 Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review	<p>IRMP planning takes place every three years and Service Delivery Planning is an annual activity. SMG members, Senior Officers and station crews plan each functional and station plan with specific priorities for their area.</p> <p>Managers use both historical and estimated data to decide priorities and set targets.</p> <p>Monthly station performance is monitored closely by Senior Officers and performance is reported to and considered by Performance Management Group.</p> <p>Service Delivery and Functional Plan updates are reported to Strategic Management Group and Committee quarterly.</p> <p>Scrutiny is provided during all decision making processes; for example reports are examined by Strategic Management Group (including the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer) before submission to Committee. Agendas and reports are sent to all Members and representative bodies. They are invited to attend every Committee meeting and offer challenge during the decision making process.</p> <p>All meetings are minuted and contain supporting evidence of decisions. These are available via our website. Meetings are recorded, these recordings are available on request.</p>	Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group
2 Make decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in MFRA's financial, social and environmental position and outlook		
3 Ensure an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which provides constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing MFRA's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible		
4 Provide members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement		<p>Audit and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Monitoring Officer</p>
5. Ensure there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (eg		Treasurer

financial statements)	approved plan. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders exist to ensure the legitimacy of spend against the budget plan	
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Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Robust internal control		
1 Align the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives	A regular review of the risk register is carried out and shared with SMG / Members for consideration. Any identified risk is then assessed and mitigating actions identified to reduce the risk	Strategic Management Group
2 Evaluate and monitor risk management and internal control on a regular basis	The Corporate Risk Register is fully reviewed annually and updated then reported to Authority quarterly.	Strategy and Performance Function
3 Ensure effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place		Treasurer and Monitoring Officer
4 Ensure additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by internal auditors	<p>Statement of Assurance and Corporate Risk register are being audited by Liverpool City Council Auditors at our request.</p> <p>SMG and Members approve the Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>Effective Internal Audit is procured via a Service Level Agreement with Liverpool City Council. The annual audit plan is agreed by SMG and Members and this plan includes annual reviews of fundamental systems and any project work based on service priorities. Updates on actual performance against the plan are brought to members for consideration during the year and at the year-end.</p>	Strategic Management Group, Treasurer, Internal Audit
5 Ensure an audit committee or equivalent group/function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an 	The Authority has an Audit sub committee which fulfils this purpose.	Monitoring Officer

<p>effective control environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That its recommendations are listened to and acted upon 		
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Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Managing data		
<p>1 Ensure effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data</p>	<p>The Authority has a Senior Information Risk Owner and other roles relating to Protective Security including Information Asset Owners and Service Security Officer.</p> <p>There are a suite of policies and SIs relating to information security, governance and management.</p> <p>Protective marking (Govt. Security Classifications) has been adopted.</p> <p>Information security audits take place.</p> <p>Information security is considered as part of the Protective Security and ICT and Information Management meetings.</p>	<p>Senior Information Risk Owner</p>
<p>2 Ensure effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies</p>	<p>All Information Sharing Agreements are written/considered by the Corporate Information Sharing Officers and signed off by the SIRO and relevant departmental managers (where appropriate).</p> <p>Privacy Impact Assessments are completed for information sharing</p> <p>Secure methods of transferring information are used.</p>	<p>Senior Information Risk Owner</p>
<p>3 Review and audit regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring</p>	<p>Arrangements for assessing data quality are subject to local departmental arrangements. Work will take place during 2017/18 to review these.</p>	<p>Senior Information Risk Owner</p>

Strong public financial management			
1	Ensure financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance	A robust five year medium term financial plan and annual budget is produced, implemented and monitored regularly. Resources are allocated out based on the service priorities and needs. Any key performance failures would be assessed and if needed resources would be realigned.	Fire and Rescue Authority Treasurer Strategic Management Group
2	Ensure well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risk and controls	A comprehensive integrated financial system exists. The Treasurer has sufficient staffing resources to enable financial support to be given to all cost centre managers and the senior management team. The finance system ensures no spending commitment can be made without sufficient financial resources being available. Reserves have been established for those activities or financial assumptions that are deemed to carry a significant risk. Members receive quarterly financial reports on financial performance against the financial plan and strategy during the year.	Treasurer Strategic Management Group

PRINCIPLE 7 – Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

- Implementing good practice in transparency
- Implementing good practices in reporting
- Assurance and effective accountability

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
Implementing good practice in transparency		
1 Write and communicate reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensure that they are easy to access and interrogate	A standard template is used for all reports to Authority, with glossaries included where required. Officers aim to write public reports and documents using plain English.	Director of Legal, Democratic and Procurement

2	Strike a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand	<p>All information required by the Transparency regulations is provided. A Service Instruction sets out what is provided.</p> <p>Officers seek to provide performance information in an accessible format eg the Corporate Risk Register and Service Delivery Plan reporting formats have been modified over the years to make them easier to understand.</p>	Strategic Management Group
3	Ensure that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated	The Corporate Risk Register clearly identifies risk owners and those risk owners put in place mitigation and report back to Authority on those risks.	Strategic Management Group Strategy and Performance Function
Implementing good practices in reporting			
1	Report at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way	Reports on all these subjects are considered by the Authority at least twice a year.	Strategy and Performance Function Treasurer
2	Ensure members and senior management own the results reported	<p>All reports are owned / prepared by the relevant lead officer.</p> <p>Members, if required, are asked to approve any recommendations contained in a report.</p>	Strategic Management Group
3	Ensure robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this framework have been applied and publish the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the annual governance statement)	The Annual Governance Statement is prepared each year and considered by the Authority.	Treasurer Strategy and Performance Function
4	Ensure that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate	N/A	
5	Ensure the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared	The Narrative report that accompanies the Statement of	Treasurer Strategic Management Group

<p>on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations</p>	<p>Accounts allows the reader to consider the Authority's performance.</p>	
<p>Assurance and effective accountability</p>		
<p>1 Ensure that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon</p>	<p>Reports on the outcomes of internal audit work are regularly considered by the Authority with proposals for action included where required.</p>	<p>Fire and Rescue Authority Strategic Management Group</p>
<p>2 Ensure an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon</p>	<p>Internal audit is provided by Liverpool City Council. The lead auditor regularly reports back to the Authority on audit findings. An audit plan, progress report and year-end report are prepared for members' consideration.</p> <p>Liverpool's Internal Audit Service meets the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and an external assessment of the internal audit function is carried out once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team.</p>	<p>Treasurer Head of Internal Audit</p>
<p>3 Welcome peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations are acted upon</p>	<p>An action plan is produced when an audit, peer review or inspection has been completed and actions are required.</p>	<p>Strategic Management Group</p>
<p>4 Gain assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement</p>	<p>Annual Governance Statement</p>	
<p>5 Ensure that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met</p>	<p>There is a partnerships process in place which considers all aspects of governance.</p>	<p>Community Risk Management and Strategy and Performance Functions</p>

