

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	06 JUNE 2024	REPORT NO:	CFO/29/24
PRESENTING OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	MIKE REA	REPORT AUTHOR:	MIKE REA
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/2024		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	2023/2024 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to Members the Authority's Annual Governance Statement. This statement fulfils the Authority's statutory requirement to prepare a statement of internal control in accordance with proper practices, and to present an annual review of the effectiveness of the current system.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members approve the 2023/2024 Annual Governance Statement.

Introduction and Background

3. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is the formal statement that recognises, records, and publishes a Council or Authority's governance arrangements. Attached as Appendix A to this report is the 2023/2024 AGS for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, which explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the Authority to carry out its functions effectively. The AGS also links into the Annual Statement of Assurance by providing assurance about the Authority's governance framework.
4. The CIPFA/SOLACE – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework, is deemed to represent best practice in relation to governance and the internal control systems and processes. The CIPFA/SOLACE framework recommends that a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control should be reported as part of the AGS. A review of the effectiveness of the Authority's 2023/2024 internal control system has been undertaken and, in accordance with the CIPFA guidance, incorporated in the attached AGS. The AGS identifies the ways in which the Authority has ensured that its control mechanisms are adequate during the year, including the work undertaken by

internal and external audit. The overall conclusion of the AGS is that the system of internal control is adequate (any control system can provide only reasonable assurance and not absolute assurance).

5. Members are asked to approve the 2023/2024 AGS attached as Appendix A to this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6. Good governance and sound internal control includes having effective practices to manage equality and diversity issues.

Staff Implications

7. There are no staff implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

8. Regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 requires that the relevant body must conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to prepare an annual governance statement. Regulation 6(2) require that the findings of a review of an organisation's system of internal control is to be considered by a committee of the relevant body, or by members of the body meeting as a whole, once a year. The AGS fulfils that obligation.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

9. A sound system of internal control is essential for the overall control of the Authority's finances. There are, however, no direct financial implications arising from the Statement.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

10. Good governance and sound internal control arrangements will ensure the Authority's policies, procedures and objectives are being fulfilled.

Environmental Implications

11. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Contribution to Our Vision: To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.

Our Purpose: Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.

12. Good governance and sound internal control arrangements will ensure the Authority's vision is known by all and drives and directs the Service outcomes.
13. Merseyside communities are safer and the firefighters who serve Merseyside are safer and more effective because the Authority has effective leadership and

makes decisions that deliver strong financial management and efficient and effective service delivery. Robust and comprehensive governance arrangements are integral to this performance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/020/17 Code of Corporate Governance, Policy and Resources Committee 23rd March 2017.

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Guidance Notes for English Authorities, C.I.P.F.A. (2016)

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Framework, CIPFA/SOLACE (2016)

Account and Audit (England) Regulations 2015

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AGS Annual Governance Statement

CIPFA Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

MFRA Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority

SOLACE Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers