

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>30 JUNE 2026</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>MO/12/2627</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER RIA GROVES, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT MIKE REA</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>MONITORING OFFICER, RIA GROVES</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE, DEB APPLETON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/2026</b>		
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A:</b>	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/2026</b>	

### **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 2025/2026 Annual Governance Statement.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. The Annual Governance Statement is the formal statement that recognises, records, and publishes a Local Authority's governance arrangements.
4. The Annual Governance Statement also links into the Annual Statement of Assurance by providing assurance about the Authority's governance framework.
5. 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 Annual Governance Statement.

6. A review of the effectiveness of the Authority's 2025/2026 internal control system has been undertaken and, in accordance with the CIPFA guidance, incorporated in the Annual Governance Statement.
7. The Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 is contained in Appendix A to this report which details the outcome of that review. It focuses on key developments in the Authority's governance arrangements during the year and identifies areas where arrangements can be further strengthened.
8. The Annual Governance Statement 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 Annual Government Statement is that the system of internal control is adequate (any control system can provide only reasonable assurance and not absolute assurance).
9. Members are asked to approve the 2025/2026 Annual Government Statement attached as contained in Appendix A to this report.

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#### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

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

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#### **Staff Implications**

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

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#### **Legal Implications**

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12. 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.
13. The Regulations require that the findings of a review as contained in an annual governance statement are considered by Members.

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#### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

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14. There are, however, no direct financial implications arising from the report however the annual governance statement provides further assurances as to the sound systems of internal control and measures in place to ensure good governance of the Authority's financial position.

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#### **Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

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15. Good governance and sound internal control arrangements will ensure the Authority's policies, procedures and objectives are being fulfilled and any risks identified can be mitigated accordingly.

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## **Environmental Implications**

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

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**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.*

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17. Ensuring good governance and transparency of the same allows the Authority to deliver a robust and effective service to its community whilst remaining accountable for the measures it puts in place to deliver it.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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**NONE**

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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**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