



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Overview and Audit Committee, 19 July 2023

Report title: Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Lead Member: Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee

Report sponsor: Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance
Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

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Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 be approved.
 2. That the progress on the implementation of recommendations of the previous Annual Governance Statement (Appendix A to the Annual Governance Statement) be noted.
 3. That the priorities for 2022/23 (Appendix B to the Annual Governance Statement) be agreed.
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Executive summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement (appended as Appendices to the report) for approval. It contains the progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement and recommendations for 2023/2024.

CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) published a revised framework document on governance: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 (2016 Guidance). This was a significantly revised version of the previous 2012 guidance. The new framework is taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/International Federation of Accountants 2014).

The framework envisages that delivering good governance will be a continuous process of seven principles with a core of principles A and B permeating principles C to G.

The Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 has been formatted to reflect those principles.

The seven principles are:

Principle A - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Principle D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Principle E - Developing the Authority's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Financial implications: There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The proposed areas for improvement can be accommodated within existing budgets.

Risk management: One of the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework is the management of risk through robust internal control and strong public financial management. The Annual Governance Statement details the management arrangements in place, as well as highlighting recent improvements and plans for future areas of development.

Legal implications: Regulations 6(1)(b) and 6(4)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Committee to approve an annual governance statement which must accompany the statement of accounts and be approved in advance of the approval of the statement of accounts.

While the 2016 Guidance is the product of CIPFA and SOLACE, it amounts to statutory guidance as Regulation 6(4)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Annual Governance Statement to be prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts.

Privacy and security implications: There are no privacy issues or security implications that need to be considered and assessed.

Duty to collaborate: No direct impact. Each public body is required to approve its own Annual Governance Statement.

Health and safety implications:

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from the report.

Environmental implications: Following a review undertaken by CIPFA and SOLACE, in 2016, the ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework’ was reissued. The document was based on the ‘International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (2014)’ which included sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes as a key focus for governance processes and structure. CIPFA/SOLACE therefore revised its 6 principles to create 7 new principles which included specifically ‘Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits’.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Consultation and communication:

The officers with responsibility for functions across Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service have been responsible for supplying the information and responses necessary to compile the Annual Governance Statement.

The draft Annual Governance Statement was considered at the Performance Monitoring Board on 1 June 2023 for recommendation to the Chief Fire Officer at the Strategic Management Board on 20 June 2023.

Progress monitoring

Progress against the areas identified to be addressed in 2023/24 will be monitored through the internal boards and the Overview and Audit Committee.

Background papers:

CIPFA / SOLACE ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government - Guidance Notes for English Authorities’ 2016 Edition, copyrighted document is accessible by this [link](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.	None
1A	Progress against recommendations from the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.	None
1B	Recommendations for Priorities for 2023/24.	None