

Report to	<b>North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority</b>
Date	<b>15 July 2024</b>
Lead Officer	<b>Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer</b>
Contact Officer	<b>Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation</b>
Subject	<b>Draft Annual Governance Statement</b>



## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To present to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) the draft Annual Governance Statement, as required by The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. This draft was submitted to Audit Wales prior to 31 May as required by the aforementioned legislation.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 requires the Authority to publish an Annual Governance Statement to demonstrate that;
  - Business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations
  - Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for;
  - Resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.
- 3 The draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 is set out in Appendix 1 and has been prepared in accordance with the principles set out in the CIPFA/Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016). The forward work programme for 2024/25 is contained within the draft Annual Government Statement.
- 4 The Annual Governance Statement will be published as part of the production of the statutory financial statements for 2023/24. An assessment will be made by the external auditor to confirm whether it is consistent with the financial statements and has been produced in line with the Framework.
- 5 Following this assessment, a final version of the Annual Governance Statement will be presented to the Authority for approval and subsequent internal and external publication

## **OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE**

- 6 As this is the draft it has not been through Audit Committee or Executive Panel. However, the final version will be presented to the full Authority meeting in October for ratification.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 7 Members are asked to:
- i) note the governance arrangements outlined within the draft 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement;
  - ii) note the forward work plan for 2024/25; and
  - iii) approve the draft 2023/24 Annual Government Statement.

## **BACKGROUND**

- 8 All local government bodies are required, by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, to prepare an Annual Governance Statement which is published as part of the Statutory Accounts.
- 9 The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to assess and demonstrate that there is a sound system of corporate governance throughout the organisation.

## **INFORMATION**

- 10 In 2016, CIPFA and Solace published a new governance framework, Developing Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (the Framework). The Framework is structured around seven principles of governance which enables the Authority to demonstrate its overall arrangements and set out how it has discharged its responsibilities.
- 11 The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to set out the Authority's arrangements to ensure that:
- business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations;
  - public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and
  - resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.
- 12 The draft 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement is set out in Appendix 1. It provides an overview of the governance arrangements and confirms the work plan for 2024/25.

- 13 The Annual Governance Statement is reviewed by Audit Wales to confirm that it is consistent with its knowledge of the Authority and the financial statements.
- 14 Once published, performance against the forward work plan 24/25 will be monitored through the Service Leadership Teams' Performance Board on a quarterly basis.

## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	No implications
Budget	No implications
Legal	Preparation and submission of the Annual Governance Statement to the Auditor General, is in compliance with The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014
Staffing	No implications
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	Compliance with Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards is explicitly referenced in the Statement.
Risks	No implications