



WARWICKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service

Annual Statement of Assurance

2021/22

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1. Foreword

WFRS is here to provide the best possible service to the communities of Warwickshire and keep people safe:

- At home
- At work
- When travelling in and through Warwickshire
- When enjoying the county of Warwickshire

It is essential that our communities are assured that WFRS delivers what it says it will deliver in relation to finance, governance, and operational matters. This Statement of Assurance aims to provide the necessary assurance to the people of Warwickshire that we are delivering against these expectations. It covers three main areas:

- making sure our governance arrangements are delivering our services effectively and efficiently,
- ensuring our financial arrangements are in order and providing good value for money, and
- organising our services to make sure risks are well understood and we have the right resources in place to tackle them effectively and safely.

The Statement includes links to relevant documents published on our website and elsewhere, which will help you to further assess our effectiveness.

This statement primarily covers our work in the year to 31st March 2022, but we also comment on our future direction. We hope this statement provides you with the assurance that we are meeting our statutory duties and working to make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for the future.



Andy Crump
Cabinet Member for Fire & Community Safety









Ben Brook
Chief Fire Officer

2. About Us

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) is a County Council Fire and Rescue service, which discharges fire and rescue functions on behalf of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WFRA). The service is also supported by key specialist services which are gathered into WCC Resources Directorate.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Profile

	We have 17 fire stations.
	We have a fleet of 37 response vehicles, of which 23 are fire engines.
	We employ approximately 500 people, of which 390 are operational firefighters.
	Warwickshire is strategically located, covers 1,975 sq. km, and has a population of 596,773.
	The county has an extensive road network spanning 4,130 km, including 140 km of motorways.
	Our operational budget for 2020/21 is £22.3m, of which £19.8m is spent on our people.

During 2021/22 our total activity undertaken was 48,207 which includes 3,647 incidents attended. The infographic below features some of our statistical highlights over the year. More details about us, our resources, risk and performance can be found on our [Integrated Risk Management 2020-25 page](#).

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS 2021-22



48207

TOTAL ACTIVITY
undertaken in the Warwickshire community

Prevention

41,515

12,917 (20/21) ↑



Contacts - 24,929
9,910 (20/21)



Safe and Well Checks - 4,413
1,330 (20/21)



Road Safety activities - 878
362 (20/21)

Protection

1,617

1,079 (20/21) ↑



premises influenced by Fire Protection



People school programmes - 11,295
1,315 (20/21)

Response

3,647 incidents attended

3,473 (20/21) ↑



False Alarms 1,598

44%

28% Fires 1,032

18% Special Services 643

10% RTCs 374

27% of the 1,032 fires were deliberate
1,048 fires (2020/21) ↓



Hospital to Home

1,428

1,497 (20/21) ↓



Hospital to Home collections

Emergency calls

10,236

9,784 (20/21) ↑

Total emergency calls received by WFRS



96%

The average **wholtime** appliance availability was 96% for 2021/22



62%

The average **on-call** appliance availability was 62% for 2021/22

Availability

Response time

Average time taken to respond to a life risk incident for the first attending appliance*

8 mins
28 secs

Fire incidents

10 mins
36 secs

Road Traffic Collisions

6 mins
58 secs

Special Service incidents



Casualties

26 fire related injuries

23 (20/21) ↑

4 fire related deaths

1 (20/21) ↑

Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)

Attended
168 ADFs

91%

confined to room of origin

168
104 (20/21) ↑

Emergency calls

88% of life risk and property emergency calls handled within **90 seconds**



*WFRS have a target to respond to 75% of calls within 10 minutes. This target was not met in the 2021/22 financial year when 68% of appliances arrived at life risk or property incidents within the 10 minute target.

Data sources: Firecrest, Fire Service Rota, Vision, WFRS Prevention Team & WFRS Performance Tracker. Report produced by the Business Intelligence Team.

3. Governance

Governance is about how we ensure we do the right things, in the right way, at the right time to deliver our priorities. It is made up of all the systems, processes, culture, and behaviours which direct and control the way in which we work. It demonstrates how we engage with our communities and our accountability to them.

The Service's overall governing body is WFRA. The Authority makes sure the Service carries out its statutory duties as set out in the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#), and the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#).

The Authority sets the budget and approves the overall direction for the Service. It also appoints the Chief Fire Officer and makes sure the Service has the right resources to deliver our services effectively and efficiently in the best interests of the communities of Warwickshire.

The WFRA has a responsibility to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is used efficiently and effectively and properly accounted for. This is detailed within the [Code of Corporate Governance](#) which is aligned to the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016).

The Governance Framework comprises the Governance principles, systems, processes, culture, and values by which the Council is directed, controlled and through which it is accountable to and engages with the communities of Warwickshire.

The framework allows us to monitor how we are achieving our strategic aims and ambitions, and to consider whether they have helped us deliver appropriate services that demonstrate value for money. To review the effectiveness of the code, the Council has the following arrangements in place:

Figure 1. Warwickshire County Council Governance Framework



Underpinning the Council’s governance framework is our service governance framework. This provides a structure for the service to review the effectiveness of our IRMP, and progress against the delivery of our IRMP Action Plan.

Figure 2: Oversight of WFRS Governance Framework

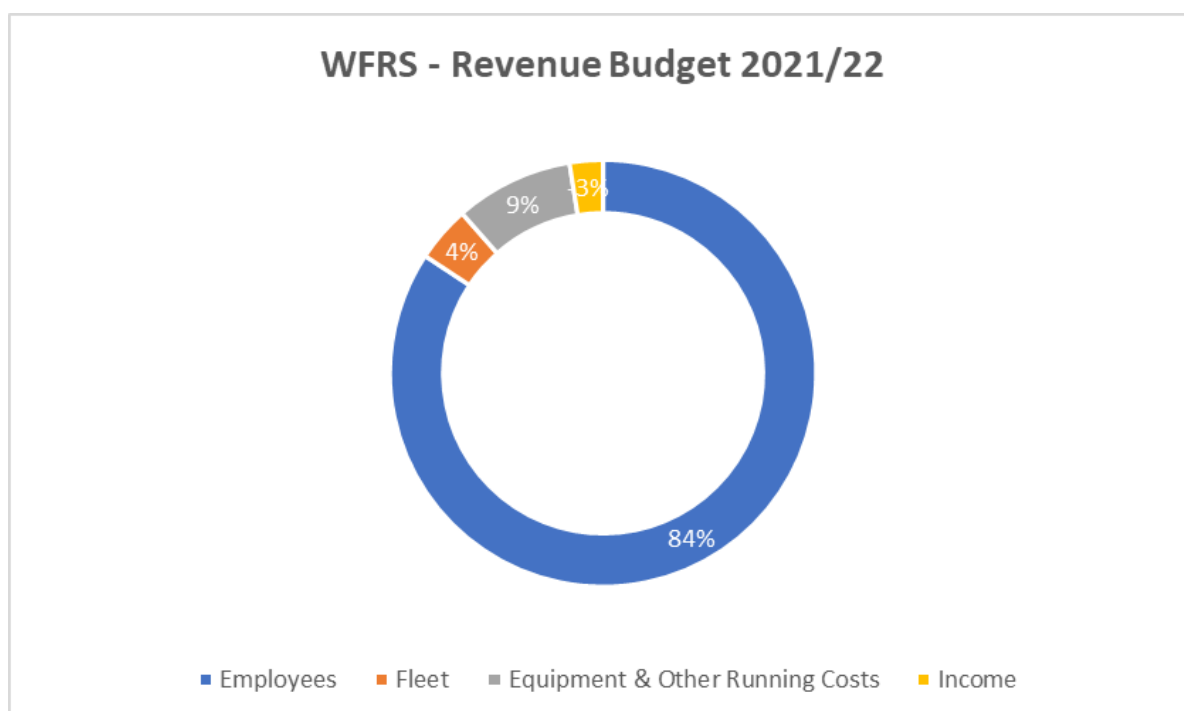


Each year the Authority prepares an [Annual Governance Statement \(AGS\)](#) this is contained within the Annual Statement of Accounts. The Statement provides an overall assessment of the Councils Corporate Governance arrangements and its adherence to the Governance standards and principles. Evidence to support the assessment is gathered, reviewed, and analysed to assess the robustness of the governance arrangements.

4. Finance

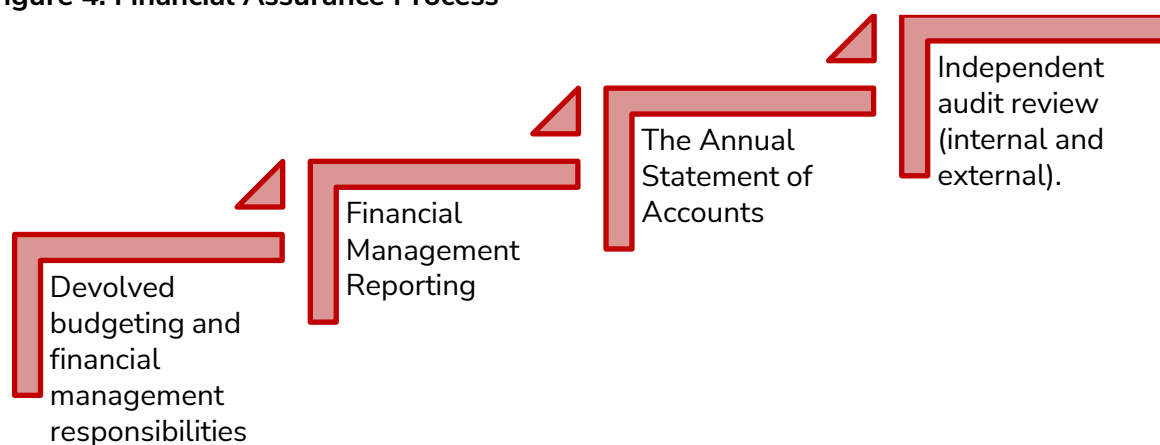
The Service operates within the [WCC Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) and The Authority approves a medium-term financial plan each year. This sets out the resources needed to deliver our services and agrees an annual budget. WFRS is an integrated part of WCC and receives a range of services provided via central corporate functions or procured contracts. The service's net controllable revenue budget for 2021/22 is £22.3m (excluding central support services) and through prudent financial management the service concluded the financial year with a small underspend of £45k, 0.2% of the net budget.

Figure 3. 2021/22 Revenue Budget



We follow an annual financial cycle that provides assurance that our financial management arrangements meet the highest standards. This assurance is provided through the following approach (figure 4).

Figure 4: Financial Assurance Process



We operate **Devolved Budgeting** as we believe those who are closest to the point of service delivery are best placed to make informed financial decisions. Budget Managers are required to review their financial position regularly and prepare a monthly forecast. To ensure those with financial responsibilities are equipped with the right skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities, the service is supported by the local finance team and accompanying guidance and information is provided on the [Finance & Commercial](#) intranet page.

Financial Management reports are produced on a regular basis and presented to the Fire Leadership Team, the Directorate Leadership Team, and quarterly reports are also presented to Cabinet. This process offers a route for escalation, ensures scrutiny, and provides the necessary information to enable informed decision making.

The Annual Statement of Accounts is produced in line with the accounting codes of practice, it is scrutinised by independent governance, audit, and scrutiny committee, approved by WCC, and currently audited by Grant Thornton UK LLP. This provides an independent assessment of the Fire Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Independent review and audit provide further assurance. A programme of audits is carried out by WCC Internal Audit Services annually. This programme of works will vary year upon year depending on the nature and severity of risk. In 2017 the HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service, this inspection also provides an assessment of our efficiency, effectiveness, and people.

5. Service Assurance

FRA's operate within a clearly defined statutory framework and there are key legislative documents defining these responsibilities.

Statutory	Purpose
Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	Sets out the responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Authorities. There are 4 key responsibilities that we must make provision for. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extinguishing fires in our area• protecting life and property in the event of fires in our area• rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision, and• rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies.
Civil Contingencies Act 2004	Provides a clear framework that sets out the roles and responsibilities of organisations with a role to play in preparing for and responding to emergencies in the UK. Fire & Rescue Authorities are a Category 1 responder under the Act.
Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005	The Order is designed to provide a minimum fire safety standard in non-domestic premises. Any person who exercises some level of control for premises (the 'responsible person') needs to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire and ensure that people can escape safely if a fire does occur.
Fire and Rescue National Framework for England	The national framework sets out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. The government has a duty to produce the framework and keep it current. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the framework in carrying out their duties.
Integrated Risk Management Plan	The IRMP identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our community, looks at the resources we have in place and the activity we need to undertake to meet these risks and improve safety.
Local Resilience Forum	A requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on communities.

In summary these statutory requirements set out the FRA's responsibilities for.

- Provision of fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- Emergency preparedness and multi-agency response.
- Fire safety advice and law enforcement.
- Assessment and management of risk
- Accountability

Integrated Risk Management Planning Process

Making sure our firefighters and communities are kept as safe as possible is at the heart of everything we do. We constantly assess the level of risk across the county and each year we follow our Integrated Risk Management Planning Process. This process is integral to our organisational assurance and ensures that we understand risk within Warwickshire. This process drives the assessment of our risk, the delivery of our services, evaluation of our outcomes and provides our service assurance.







5. WFRS Integrated Risk Management Planning Process



We continually monitor and review our risk profile and any changes in risk, and associated control measures are captured within our risk register. The Service Risk Register is managed by Risk Owners and where necessary, risks can be escalated to the Integrated Risk Management Board and further escalated onto the Strategic Risk Register (SRR). The SRR is reviewed quarterly at WCC Corporate Board and Cabinet and is reported annually to the Audit and Standards Committee.

Our [IRMP Action Plan 2021/22](#) sets out our key objectives for the year with clear outcomes which enable us to assess our performance against our actions. These measures are reviewed on a regular basis and progress is reported initially through our Risk, Performance, Escalation and Finance Group and then by exception to the IRMB.

6. IRMP Objectives 2021/22

Objective		Outcomes
Objective 1 	To ensure our workforce and ethos reflect the diverse communities we serve.	<p>14.3% of our Wholetime employees are female.</p> <p>2.2% of our Wholetime employees are Black/Black British, Asian/Asian British, or Mixed.</p> <p>5.9% of our On-call employees are female.</p> <p>Further work is being undertaken to ensure that we understand our diverse workforce and we attract, recruit, and select the most talented.</p>
Objective 2 	Assess our capabilities to improve our ways of working in response to any future pandemics.	Business continuity plans and ways of working now reflect the potential of a pandemic and the need to maintain services to our communities.
Objective 3 	Assess our overall resource capacity to ensure our personnel and physical assets are in the right place at the right time to deliver our statutory duties.	Enhanced resources have been put into our protection team to ensure that the outcomes of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry are used to improve the safety of the built environment in Warwickshire.
Objective 4 	Develop further opportunities to support the wider community health outcomes and help to protect Social Care and the NHS.	Our Hospital to Home service remains a highly effective initiative in partnership with Health. During 2021/22 we carried out 1,428 collections from hospital. This initiative enables us to identify and deliver a safe and well check to those at risk from fire and other incidents. It also increases bed availability in hospital earlier than would otherwise be achieved.
Objective 5 	Implement digital solutions to enhance our service delivery.	Office 365 has been rolled out across the service enabling people to work more flexibly and effectively.
Objective 6 	Deliver continuous improvement activity as identified through the HMICFRS Inspection Programme.	An action plan is in place to ensure that progress is made against all areas that have been raised through the HMICFRS Inspection Programme. Further work is ongoing in this area.

Independent Assurance

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service and we are now assessed on efficiency, effectiveness, and people. The service was inspected for the second time during March and April 2021, this inspection was conducted virtually during a time when we continued to navigate through the challenges of the COVID Pandemic. The outcome from the inspection moved WFRS from a previous judgement of "good" (2018/19) to "Requires Improvement" (2021/22).

Naturally, we are disappointed in this assessment and whilst the inspection positively recognised our contributions to our communities during the pandemic, the service was issued with three causes of concern in June 2021. In response to the inspection outcomes, and as part of our overall improvement journey we developed an action plan to address the recommendations made by HMICFRS.

We were re-visited by the HMICFRS during February 2022 to further review progress and whilst the HMICFRS were unable to close the causes of concern at this stage, they did recognise our direction of travel and the good progress that we are making. You can read the full inspection report and progress update [here](#).

Our Operational Performance During 2021/22

Our year end is concluded with a look back over the year and our 2021/22 Performance Report is presented to The Resources & Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We currently prepare two performance reports, our [2021/22 Performance Report \(pg55\)](#) this report includes performance against our key business measures, historical trends as well as current year performance. The second report is our [Operational Benchmarking Performance Report 2021/22](#) which compares our performance to the other 43 English FRSs.

Positively, Warwickshire has improved its ranking for 3 of the 8 key incident categories in comparison to the other 43 English Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). It has remained best performing FRS for the rate per 10,000 population for accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) in 2021/22 and is now the best performing FRS for total incidents attended per 10,000 population, too. In addition, it is the second-best performing FRS for the rate per 10,000 population for Special Services incidents. It is worth mentioning that the COVID-19 pandemic has directly influenced these figures.

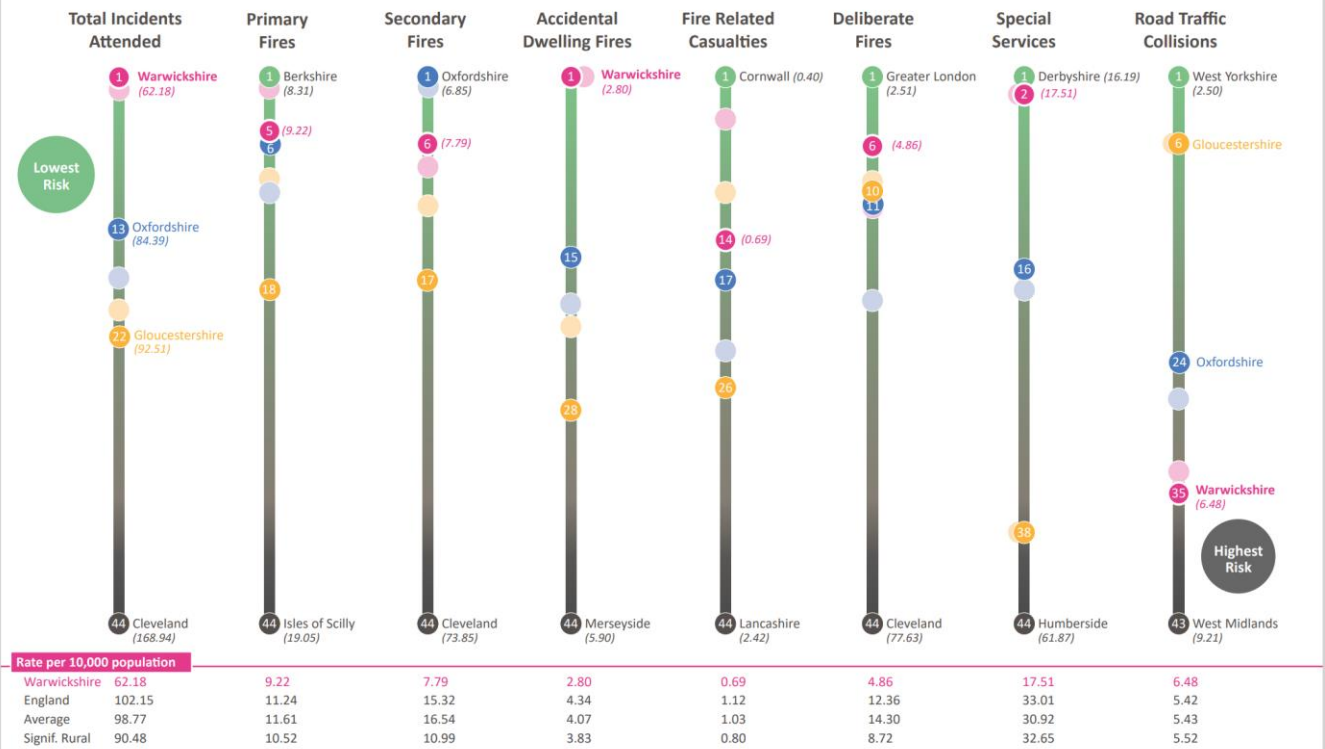
Benchmarking Operational Performance 2021/22

WFRS remains ranked 1st (best performing) for Accidental Dwelling Fires and for 2021/22 ranks 1st for the total incidents attended



Summary of where Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service ranks against certain key incident categories, in comparison to the other English Fire & Rescue Services. Information for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 has been taken from multiple sources; please see full report for more information. Warwickshire has improved its ranked position for 3 of the 8 key incident categories, and maintained the same ranked position for 2 of the 8 key incident categories.

2020/21 rank for comparison



*Not all other 43 FRS provide their information.

Source: 2021-22 Operational Performance of Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (Business Intelligence). Fire & Rescue incident statistics (England) YE March 2022 (Home Office).

6. Conclusion

2021/22 continued to present challenges due to the overwhelming impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Our People have continued to work through these challenges remaining ready to respond to all emergencies and provide preventative activities using flexible and alternative methods. The pandemic has undoubtedly tested our service arrangements and a service debrief will be conducted and lessons learnt incorporated into our improvement journey.

As we emerge from the pandemic and conclude the 2021/22 financial year, we are beginning to reinstate familiarity and already plans are afoot to start the development of our Community Risk Management Plan 2022-27. This will include the development of our new Prevention, Protection and Response Strategy 2022-2027 and we look forward to engaging with our communities as we conduct a twelve-week formal consultation period.

We welcome any views you may have on the content of this Statement of Assurance. If you have any comments or would like to contact us about any issue, please visit our [website](#) where you will find full contact details along with links to further information about our services and activities.

Signed



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Andy Crump
Cabinet Member
for Fire and Community Safety



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Ben Brook
Chief Fire Officer