



**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Fire and Rescue Declaration

Annual Statement of Assurance 2021/22

June 2022

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Service Area Overview	3
1.2 GMFRS Overview	4
2. OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE.....	5
2.1 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)	5
2.2 Operational Assurance	8
2.3 Active Monitoring System (AMS).....	8
2.4 Mutual Aid Agreements.....	9
2.5 National Resilience	9
2.6 Response to Terrorist Attacks / Marauding Terrorist Attack	9
2.7 Joint Operational Learning (JOL).....	10
2.8 National Operational Guidance (NOG) and Learning (NOL)	10
2.9 Business Continuity.....	10
3. PREVENTION AND PROTECTION	12
3.1 Prevention.....	12
3.2 Protection	14
4. FINANCIAL ASSURANCE	16
4.1 Financial Reporting and Audit	16
4.2 Medium Term Financial Strategy.....	16
4.3 Reserves.....	16
4.4 Collaboration	17
4.5 Research and Development	18
4.6 Shared Interest.....	18
5. GOVERNANCE	19
5.1 Governance Arrangements.....	19
5.2 Assurance, Scrutiny and Accountability.....	21
5.3 Transparency	22
5.4 Performance Management.....	22
5.5 Internal Audit arrangements	23
5.6 Inspection.....	23
6. WORKFORCE	25
6.1 People Strategy.....	25
6.2 Operational Training.....	26
6.3 Safety, Health & Wellbeing.....	26
6.4 Environment.....	28
7. ASSURANCE OPINION & DECLARATION	29

1 Introduction

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (the Framework) mandates each English Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to produce an Annual Statement of Assurance (ASoA).

The statement outlines the way in which the authority and its Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) has regard, in the period covered by the document, to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and to relevant strategic plans.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), produces an independent Declaration, supporting the revised arrangements whereby our Annual Governance Statement (AGS) forms part of the governance reporting of the GMCA. The Declaration has been produced in line with the requirements and guidance contained in the revised National Framework, published by the Home Office in May 2018.

This statement will identify the measures of assurance in place for operational activities (response, prevention, and protection), finance, governance and workforce and finishes with a statement from the Mayor for the GMCA and the Chief Fire Officer as to the adequacy of assurance measures.

The published guidance sets out compliance requirements under five broad headings:

- Operational Assurance
- Prevention & Protection
- Finance
- Governance
- Workforce

1.1 Service Area Overview

GMFRS is one of the largest fire and rescue services in England, covering an area of 493 square miles and serving a population of 2.85 million residents, with many other people working or visiting the region.

Of that population of 2.85 million there are:

- 451,000 over 65s (set to increase 31% by 2043)
- 55,000 over 85s (set to increase 70% by 2043)
- 100,000 people receiving disability allowance
- 551,000 people living with long-term health conditions
- More than 200 different languages spoken, making Greater Manchester one of the most linguistically diverse cities in Europe

GMFRS protects 1.22million households, a quarter of which are in areas that are in the 10% most deprived nationally. We attend thousands of incidents every year including fires, road traffic collisions, flooding, and rescues. Greater Manchester is linked by a complex transport infrastructure; including roads, rail and trams, with the centre surrounded by the M60, one of three orbital motorways in the UK, and an international airport.

GMFRS has to plan for and mitigate numerous and complex risks including:

- 743 high-rise buildings (residential and commercial)
- 39 Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites
- 130 miles of railways, 62 miles of Metrolink tracks, 468 miles of canals, ten motorways, Manchester International Airport (MIA)
- 57 town and city centres
- 1000s of acres of moorland
- Businesses, universities, and internationally renowned research facilities.

1.2 GMFRS Overview

The Service is spread across 45 sites including a Training and Safety Centre, Training and Development Centre (TDC), Technical Services Centre, our headquarters in Swinton, and 41 fire stations aligned to the ten local authorities that fall within the GMFRS boundary split into five area teams, shown in Figure 2.

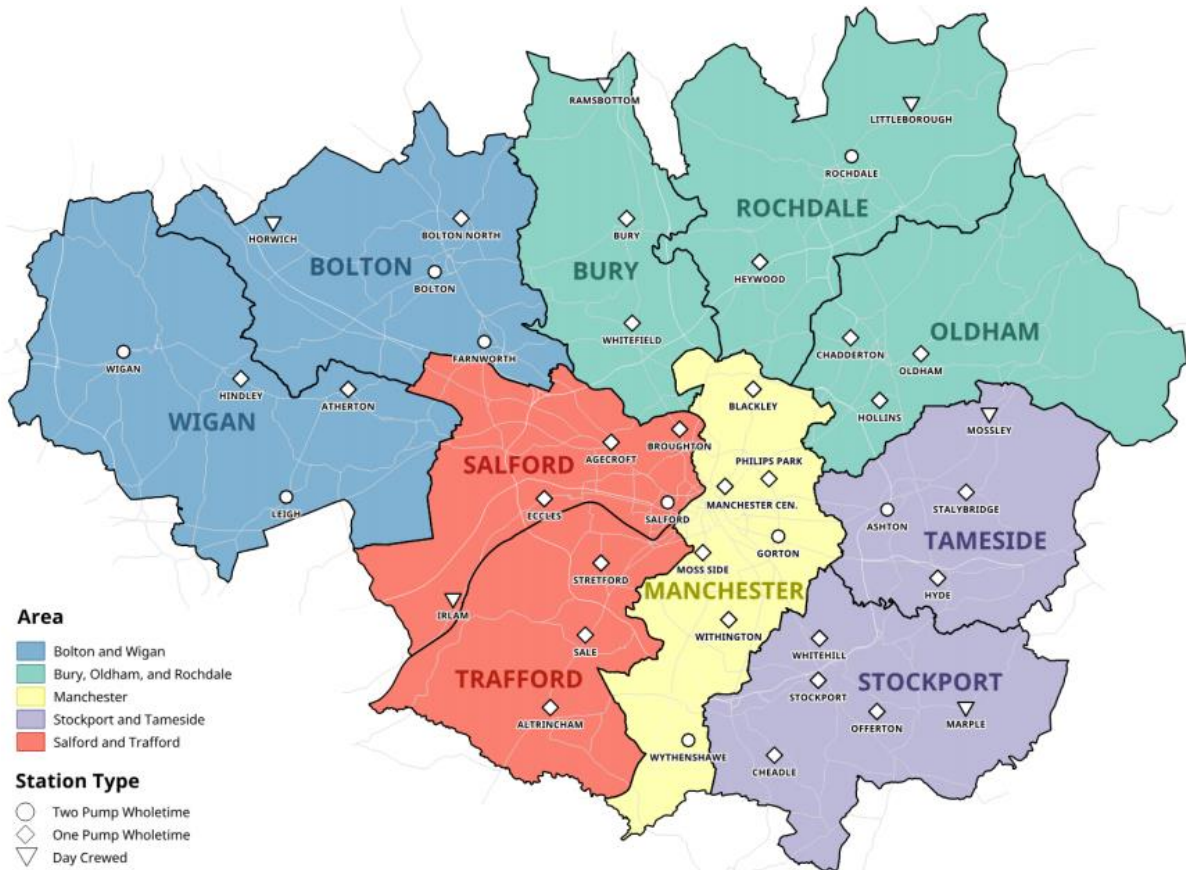


Figure 2: Overview of GMFRS stations and areas



Figure 3: GMFRS overview 2021/22

2 Operational Assurance

The National Framework outlines the requirement of FRAs to provide assurance on operational matters. It does not prescribe how this assurance is provided, stating that operational matters are best determined locally by FRAs working in partnership with communities, local citizens, businesses, civil society organisations and others.

FRAs function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. The key legislative documents defining these responsibilities are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Service (Emergencies)(England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) Order 2017
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018)
- Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

The purpose of this section is to provide assurance that our service is delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities and in consideration of our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and local strategies including cross-border, multi authority and national arrangements.

2.1 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Our integrated risk management planning activities help us to understand the risks facing our communities and how we can safely and effectively respond to them. The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018 places statutory responsibility on GMFRS to ensure we identify and assess the risks facing our communities and constantly evolve to respond to these effectively.

Our Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) supports the process by considering all potential and foreseeable risks and ensures our planning, policies and decision-making is focused on risk and how mitigate them. This document details and analyses a wide range of information, providing an evidence base to support our decisions, allocate resources appropriately and inform the development of our Fire Plan and Annual Delivery Plan

The Fire Plan sets out our priorities for the next four years, of which there are six.

1. Provide a fast, safe, and effective response.
2. Help people reduce the risks of fires and other emergencies.
3. Help protect the built environment.
4. Use resources sustainability and deliver the most value.
5. Develop a culture of excellence, equality, and inclusivity.
6. Integrate our services in every locality with those of partner agencies.

Within each of these priorities are a series of commitments from the Service to our residents, businesses, and partners. The plan provides details of how we will continue to prevent, protect, and respond efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of our communities, and it also explains how we will help deliver the wider Greater Manchester Strategy.

Our Annual Delivery Plan is developed to support the delivery of the Mayor's six strategic priorities. It details our new Mission, Vision and Values, our Equality Objectives and it sets out our delivery roadmap for the year, detailing where we will focus our resources and efforts. Over the course of the Fire Plan 2021-25, we will produce a total of four Annual Delivery Plans.

The Fire Plan, alongside the Annual Delivery Plan, combine to form our CRMP, which is underpinned by our annual Strategic Assessment of Risk, and copies of these documents can be found via the links below:

- Fire Plan / ADP - [Fire Plan - Greater Manchester Fire Rescue Service](#)
- [Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk](#)

** updated copies awaiting publishing on internet – ADP 22/23 / SAoR 21/22*

At GMFRS we have historically incorporated Integrated Risk Management within our Strategic Plan and combined Corporate and Integrated Risk Management to ensure we deliver our core purpose in the most effective way.

Greater Manchester's economic importance, diversity and infrastructure makes for a complex picture in terms of the risks that GMFRS has to plan for, help prevent and look for opportunities to improve. Risk is an inherent part of being an emergency service and we manage risk in two broad ways

Integrated Risk Management is supported by the use of risk modelling, this is a process by which data is used to assess the likelihood of Fire and Rescue related incidents within Greater Manchester. We produce an annual Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR) document, which enables us to create an accurate and up-to-date picture of the potential threats facing our communities and how these are considered in the production of our plans. This information is then used to identify geographic areas at higher risk where a combination of prevention, protection and response activities would have the greatest impact.

Corporate Risk Management is a wider process, used to identify all the significant opportunities and threats that might affect our ability to meet the Service's priorities and commitments. All potential risks are continuously identified, assessed, and managed through a range of mitigating actions. The Corporate Risk Register is utilised to capture information relating to these risks, and how these are prioritised and managed. The register is regularly reviewed and presented monthly to Performance Board. Directorates each have their own risk register monitored through their functional boards, and where appropriate, risks can be escalated onto the Corporate Risk Register.

Consultation is an essential part of the development of a CRMP, and for each one produced, the Service uses stakeholder analysis to develop a proportionate consultation plan. This analysis enables potential stakeholders to be consulted, on proposals to ensure where appropriate, their input is incorporated into the final version.

A consultation exercise on the Fire Plan 2021-25, was carried out between February and March 2021, and feedback was received from a range of internal and external stakeholders, all of which was considered in the final version of the Plan.

Individual consultation exercises are undertaken on key projects that will impact on communities to gather feedback ahead of any final decisions.

2.2 Operational Assurance

Operational Assurance (OA) as part of an overall GMFRS Service Assurance function adheres to both Legislation and National Operational Guidance. We define these responsibilities as:

- A service assurance function that provides an effective balance of support and 'independent check and challenge', that is aligned to the expected service standards; and ensures all systems and internal controls are fit for purpose.
- Embedding a learning culture in the Service that supports and encourages both individuals and the Service to increase knowledge, competence, and performance levels on an ongoing basis to promote continuous improvement.
- A new assurance approach to focus on self-assessment and validation that encourages self-awareness, and ensures high standards are met and maintained.

By maintaining an effective provision of Operational Assurance, GMFRS aims to;

- Identify good operational practice, using it to improve safety and efficiency.
- Recognise the implications of significant single high consequence events or high potential events that could impact service delivery or safety.
- Recognise trends and multiple events that identify potential issues that should be addressed.
- Assure the continued effectiveness of internal controls.
- Guide investment in equipment, research, and development.
- Change practice in relation to customer welfare and support customer journey mapping

2.3 Active Monitoring System (AMS)

Active Monitoring is a fundamental element to support organisational learning and service improvement. It is used to consider the widest possible evidence base to capture notable practice and highlight where improvement or change is needed at a local level. The output of active monitoring informs action within GMFRS to drive continual improvement in the quality of service delivered to our communities. This is also supported by formal governance arrangements following the introduction of the Organisation Learning Group (OLG), that will provide an overview of internal and external operational learning, and identify, allocate and track progress of areas for improvement and notable practice within GMFRS.

2.4 Mutual Aid Agreements

GMFRS holds formal, mutual agreements for reinforcements with all its surrounding fire and rescue authority areas (Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, and Derbyshire). In addition, we have an agreement with Manchester International Airport to provide initial operational response to domestic incidents at the airport. All of these agreements are reviewed on a regular basis as part of our corporate planning cycle.

2.5 National Resilience

A national protocol provides support and resilience to GMFRS. The protocol sets out the terms under which FRSs may expect to request assistance from or provide assistance to each other, in the event of a serious incident such as a terrorist attack. It is aimed at the deployment of specialist resources hosted by FRSs across the country. The support provided by GMFRS for National Resilience is comprehensive and widespread and includes the provision of specialist teams and equipment to support the response to a wide range of incident types.

2.6 Response to Terrorist Attacks / Marauding Terrorist Attack

GMFRS is prepared and has the ability to respond to a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA), by hosting a bespoke capability to work within hazard zones, utilising trained personnel across four operational fire stations, wearing dedicated Personal Protective Equipment.

The GMFRS MTA capability undertakes regular training with partner agencies, to ensure an effective response is achieved during an unfolding dynamic incident, as detailed within the MTA Joint Operating Principles (JOPs).

GMFRS is working to further improve upon the capacity and capability of its response to an MTA or mass casualty rescue event by equipping every fire appliance and training every firefighter to respond to these incidents.

2.7 Joint Operational Learning (JOL)

JOL has been established as a key part of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) to provide a consistent national system to address common multi-agency learning areas.

Through collaboration with Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, GMFRS has developed a multi-agency training strategy as a framework to ensure an appropriate level of delivery and support is provided in the commissioning and delivery of training and exercising linked to partnership activities. The strategy assists the Local Resilience Forum to deliver the statutory requirements under the CCA 2004 for the provision of exercising and training of staff.

Adoption of the Multi-Agency Training Strategy and utilisation of the debrief process supports the requirement within the National Resilience Standards with regard to Interoperability between all emergency responder and partner organisations or more specifically, the extent to which Greater Manchester Partners work together coherently as a matter of routine.

2.8 National Operational Guidance (NOG) and Learning (NOL)

NOG was set up to replace the FRS National Generic Risk Assessments. We use NOG as the basis for our own operational procedures and guidance as stated in our NOG and NOL Policy.

NOL forms part of the maintenance process for the NOG products, the aim of NOL is to capture operational learning from UK FRSs and the wider International Fire and Rescue Sector and share the learning across UK FRSs.

GMFRS utilises the NOL process by receiving information and action notes and comparing them against GMFRS operational procedures and guidance, making changes where necessary. We contribute to the NOL process by sharing our own learning and gather and act upon learning from other FRS through the NOL process.

2.9 Business Continuity

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an integral part of our Corporate Risk Management process. In relation to the BCM processes and procedures, all FRAs have to

satisfy the requirements of both the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 and Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) Act 2004.

We are required to write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Service is able to continue its core functions.

In order to ensure that GMFRS complies with the CCA and the FRS Act, our BCM aligns to the Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guidelines (BCI GPG) and includes:

- Identify critical processes through business analysis.
- Assess and embed internal and external risks which may impact GMFRS.
- Produce a Business Impact Analysis which will form the overarching risks and critical functions of GMFRS.
- Strategic, Tactical Plans and Policies are produced in line with the BCM and Degradation Policy
- Arrangements are made to test the BCP including audits, exercises, and assurance.
- All key personnel are trained to understand their role within the plan and each Department/Borough has a BCM reference holder.
- BCM responsibilities are clearly identified and assigned.

Each year the plans are reviewed and tested to ensure they are current and fit for purpose. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated GMFRS's ability to deal with a Major BCM Incident, whilst at the same time maintaining the ability to respond to other emergencies, as well as assisting the Local Resilience Forum in the wider COVID response work.

Throughout this period we have continued to test these plans across a range of planned and no notice exercises, ensuring any opportunities to improve are identified and implemented.

3 Prevention and Protection

3.1 Prevention

GMFRS operates a risk-based approach to Prevention activity, balancing delivery against national and local incident data. Various activities are designed to reduce the risk and harm of fire and other emergencies to the residents and visitors to Greater Manchester.

GMFRS operates a network of teams across the ten metropolitan areas of Greater Manchester and integrates with locality teams to share information and support community cohesion, while looking to reduce the incidence of fire and other emergencies.

To enable general safety and advice, communications with the public and visitors GMFRS maintains a website, delivering advice and information to reduce the risk of fire and other emergencies. We also undertake a series of prevention campaigns, including press releases, video content and events, throughout the year in support of national and local themes, aimed at providing information and advice designed to encourage behavioural change and prevent injuries and harm.

During the impact of the Pandemic, GMFRS put in place measures to balance keeping households safe from fire whilst limiting the exposure of our operational staff to the COVID-19 virus. We have and continue to update our website with key messages and social media alongside other channels, with an increased focus on fire safety in the home messaging, recognising that increased numbers of people are spending extended periods in the home.

We recently launched a new online home fire safety check – an online tool which will enable any resident of Greater Manchester to undertake a simple and intuitive assessment of the fire risk in their own home (or for someone else). If the outcome shows low risk the resident will receive personalised online advice and guidance. Anyone recording higher levels of risk having completed the online check will be entered into the GMFRS systems to be referred for a Home Fire Safety Assessment (HFSA) where a physical visit will be undertaken by fire fighters or prevention staff.

The new intervention process will be targeted at those most at risk, be person centred and aligned to a nationally recognised standard that has been specifically designed to reduce the risk from and impact of fire in the home.

It will ensure households where the risk of fire is deemed to be lower are able to access important safety advice, whereas those identified as higher risk will receive a physical visit.

Where an individual under the age of 18 is identified as displaying a specific vulnerability or behaviour leading to the risk of injury by fire, we operate a Firesmart intervention, aimed at providing information and advice designed to induce behavioural change.

Education continues to be a priority in GMFRS, and we operate a number of Cadet Units across the Service, in prioritised areas. Utilising the Fire and Rescue Service 'brand' to recruit young people between 14 and 18 years in a disciplined and structured programme designed to provide personal development and engender societal responsibility, while creating community ambassadors for GMFRS values.

GMFRS also operates a facility at Bury Training and Safety Centre, where young people and other age groups can undertake a structured visit to increase awareness of fire and other emergencies, within an immersive environment designed to induce behavioural change.

As a delivery partner for the Prince's Trust, GMFRS also supports community cohesion and resilience by supporting young people between the ages of 16 and 25, who are not in education, employment, or education (NEET) on a 12-week personal development programme designed to increase qualifications and employment.

GMFRS provides monitoring and assurance against attendance, retention, achievement, and completion rate in respect of educational programmes. Quality assurance on accredited work is submitted to external partners as required.

As a member of the Safer Roads Greater Manchester Partnership, GMFRS actively supports the wider campaigns and specifically the coordination of Safe Drive Stay Alive GM, a performance-based road safety intervention aimed at school and college aged young people, designed to positively influence the attitudes and behaviours of learner and novice drivers, to reduce the risk of road traffic collisions.

As well as general and localised campaigns designed to reduce the risk of drowning, GMFRS staff also participate in localised safety groups designed to increase water safety awareness and reduce the number of water-based emergencies GMFRS attends.

3.2 Protection

FRAs must make provision for promoting fire safety, including fire prevention, and have a locally determined risk-based inspection programme in place for enforcing compliance with provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in premises to which it applies.

The core purpose of our Protection teams is to ensure the safety of the public and firefighters by identifying, investigating, and reducing risk. We work with others to identify risks and develop solutions to improve safety through engagement, advice, and enforcement and this underpins the delivery of our services.

GMFRS is committed to developing a highly skilled Protection workforce to ensure we are equipped to deal with the challenges we face in relation to the Built Environment in Greater Manchester and is investing significantly in training of our Fire Safety Regulators in line with the Competency Framework

We are committed to supporting businesses to comply and are working hard to increase the information available to businesses through a variety of media. GMFRS actively participates in the Primary Authority Scheme through the Greater Manchester Centre of Regulatory Excellence and provides extensive support to our Primary Authority Partners to give tailored fire safety advice including the provision of assured advice. In this way we contribute to a consistent and coordinated regulatory environment.

Our Area Based Fire Safety Teams carry out our regulatory inspection functions through a combination of our Risk-Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) and responding to complaints and intelligence. We audit premises in line with national guidance using appropriately qualified fire-safety officers for the premises type. Our officers provide advice on compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and will take enforcement action where this is necessary to protect the public.

We are committed to ensuring the safety of buildings from design through to occupation and have improved our systems for recording statutory consultations to ensure we can monitor our response times and take action to ensure we are able to respond in a timely manner.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, the Greater Manchester High Rise Task Force was established to provide assurance to residents as quickly as possible, that their homes are safe.

We have a dedicated High Rise Team which works under the GM High Rise Task Force to work with housing providers and managing agents and other partners to ensure that high rise buildings are inspected and where necessary action is taken to ensure the safety of residents. The High Rise Team works closely with residents and has developed a range of prevention messages to support those who live in high rise buildings to reduce the risk of a fire in their home.

Our specialist Petroleum and Explosives Team oversees the licensing of premises storing explosives and the issue of petroleum storage certificates. Inspections are undertaken by qualified fire safety inspectors who have received additional training and been appointed under the Health and Safety at Work Act to carry out these functions. We have developed and implemented a Risk Based Inspection Programme for the inspections of these sites.

Fire investigation is an integral part of the Service's Prevention and Protection activities. The main purpose of fire investigation is to determine the origin, cause, and development of a fire and to contribute to organisational learning. All fires attended will be investigated to establish the cause of fire, with front line officers trained to investigate fires and a dedicated team to lead on the more complex investigations.

Investigation outcomes will be used increasingly to inform future prevention and protection activities and we actively support Greater Manchester Police to contribute to the prevention and detection of crime.

GMFRS has an Operational Risk Information Team (ORIT) dedicated to improving how we collect and use accurate risk information of buildings to ensure our response to emergencies is as safe and effective as possible, with our inspection programme targeting the buildings which pose the highest risk in the event of a fire. The ORIT complements the work undertaken by our front line operational crews, across their Boroughs.

We have a dedicated Water Team who work to ensure that we have adequate water supplies for firefighting for new and existing buildings to ensure the safety of the public and our firefighters.

.

4 Financial Assurance

4.1 Financial Reporting and Audit

All local authority accounts are required to adopt 'proper accounting practice' based on either statutory requirements or the code of practice on local authority accounting. These specify the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts that 'present a true and fair view'.

All Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority (GMFRA) assets were transferred to the GMCA with effect from 8th May 2017. The accounts relating to the fire and rescue service for the year ending 31st March 2021 form part of the accounting arrangements for the GMCA.

The Treasurer to the GMCA provides publicly available annual accounts which are approved by the GMCA Audit Committee. A copy of the latest audited GMCA statement of accounts for 2020/21 can be found at the link below:

An independent audit of the accounts is undertaken by an external auditing body, Mazaars. The external auditor undertakes a review of the accounts and forms an overall opinion which is published in annually – [Audit Opinion](#). A copy of the Audited Statement of Accounts is available on our website – [2020/21 Statement of Accounts](#).

4.2 Medium Term Financial Strategy

The GMCA published a medium-term financial strategy which includes funding and spending plans for revenue and capital, the requirements for GMFRS are included within the Mayoral General budget. The strategy takes into account multiple years, the inter-dependencies of revenue budgets and capital investments, the role of reserves and the consideration of risks and is aligned with the integrated risk management plan.

4.3 Reserves

The medium-term financial strategy takes into account the planned role of reserves and is aligned with the IRMP. The details of current and future planned reserve levels are published, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve that is held for each year, with reasons and justification for the amounts held.

- [Medium Term Financial Plan \(MTFP\)](#)

4.4 Collaboration

GMFRS works collaboratively with other regional FRSs, namely Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire, Cumbria, Northern Ireland, and the Isle of Man, to aggregate procurement demand and standardise specification requirements wherever possible, to ensure that we continually strive to deliver and evidence value for money.

We participate in national collaborative procurement opportunities. Within Greater Manchester we work with other partners and agencies, e.g., the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), Greater Manchester Police (GMP), Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Waste (also part of GMCA), North West Ambulance Service, and others, to review and evaluate collaborative opportunities to achieve efficiencies.

GMFRS is a key contributor and collaborator with the Greater Manchester High Rise and Building Safety Task Force. Supported by GMFRS, the Task Force has overseen the response within Greater Manchester, to ensure preparedness in the event of a similar incident to the fire at Grenfell Tower. It has taken action to ensure safety of premises and provides reassurance to residents in high rise accommodation. The Task Force also ensured robust contingency plans are in place in the event of a similar fire occurring within Greater Manchester.

At a national level, GMFRS is collaboratively engaged in responding to the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry. GMFRS is leading the NFCC's response with particular respect to the theme of 'evacuation' and is directly informing the Government's own responses to the recommendations placed upon it.

GMFRS works collaboratively with bordering FRSs and in particular those served by North West Fire Control in order to achieve convergence of operational service delivery where possible / practicable.

GMFRS and GMP have collaborated to position a GMFRS Officer within GMP's Force Operations Centre. This provides the benefit of rapid information sharing, being in a position to share current situational reports to the Incident Commander to support any JESIP liaison whilst on scene. Additionally, a GMFRS Officer is currently seconded into the GM Local Resilience Forum, reviewing, and coordinating the delivery of a Multi-Agency Training Plan.

4.5 Research and Development

GMFRS is actively looking forward with regards to emerging and future operational risks, to ensure our operational crews are able to deal with the risks they face. For example, this currently includes trialling of additional equipment in order to deal with the threat of electrical vehicle fires and other hazards posed by lithium-ion batteries.

GMFRS is directly involved on behalf of the NFCC with the Joint Home Office (HO) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Technical Steering Group, set up to support a research project which aims to review means of escape provisions in blocks of flats including the use of the 'stay put' strategy and evacuation.

Furthermore, GMFRS is the FRS sector lead with respect to the research and development of operational evacuation strategies.

4.6 Shared Interest

GMFRS has a shared interest in North West Fire Control (NWFC) Limited, a public sector company set up to jointly handle all 999 emergency calls with responsibility for mobilising fire engines to incidents in Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, and Cheshire. North West Fire Control Ltd is a local authority controlled company governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from each respective FRA.

5 Governance

5.1 Governance Arrangements

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) Order 2017 (the Fire Order), which came into force on 8th May 2017 transferred overall responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the FRS in Manchester to the Mayor of Greater Manchester. The Combined Authority is the FRA for the area and the fire and rescue functions of the Authority are exercisable by the elected Mayor with all staff, properties, rights, and liabilities transferring to the GMCA.

Under Article 6, of the Fire Order, the Mayor is required to exercise certain functions personally and those function are:

- a. The power to enter into arrangements under sections 13, 15 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (reinforcement schemes etc.)
- b. Appointing, suspending, or dismissing the person responsible for managing the FRS i.e., the Chief Fire Officer, approving the terms of appointment of the Chief Fire Officer, and holding the Chief Fire Officer to account for managing the FRS.
- c. Approving the local risk plan – CRMP
- d. Approving the fire and rescue declaration – Annual Assurance Statement
- e. Approving Business Continuity Management plans
- f. Approving any arrangements with Category 1 and Category 2, under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) (Amendment) Order 2020 (the Amendment Order) came into force on the 26th June 2020. The Amendment Order allowed the Mayor to make arrangements for fire and rescue functions to be exercised by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

The Mayor has delegated all fire and rescue functions to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, with the exception of those functions that cannot be delegated (set out in Article 6 and referred to above) and the functions delegated to Chief Officers under the Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers.

The Deputy Mayor is responsible for ensuring Fire and Rescue Services in Greater Manchester are efficient and effective and prepares the local risk plan (CRMP) and the Annual Declaration for approval by the Mayor.

The Amendment Order also amended the remit of the now Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken in connection with the discharge of fire and rescue functions. In addition to the general review and scrutiny of decisions, the Panel has the following specific functions:

- a. Scrutiny of the local risk plan
- b. Scrutiny of the fire and rescue declaration
- c. Scrutiny of the proposed allocation of budget for fire and rescue functions
- d. Scrutiny of the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer
- e. Scrutiny of suspension and dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer

Decisions relating to the Service are otherwise subject to the governance arrangements of the GMCA with reporting and scrutiny on financial, performance, operational and other matters. The GMCA's Code of Corporate Governance sets out how the GMCA operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent, and accountable to local people. Each year the GMCA publishes an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) to accompany the Statement of Accounts. It provides an overall assessment of the GMCA's corporate governance arrangements.

It also describes how it meets the requirements of regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Annual Accounts. It is a document which looks back retrospectively over the past year and identifies where the GMCA has demonstrated good governance and looks forward as to areas where focus should be given in relation to governance over the coming year. The GMCA's corporate governance framework is structured around the seven good governance principles set out in the 2016 CIPFA guidance.

The Annual Governance Statement demonstrates how the GMCA is delivering its services in the right way in a timely, inclusive, and accountable manner and will be certified by the GMCA Chief Executive and the Mayor, after consideration of the draft by the GMCA Audit Committee.

GMCA's external auditor reviews the Annual Governance Statement as part of the assessment of their value for money conclusion. A copy of the latest Annual Governance Statement can be found via the link below:

- [Annual Governance Statement 2020/21](#)

5.2 Assurance, Scrutiny and Accountability

The assurance and scrutiny arrangements for GMFRS now form part of the GMCA governance and reporting structure, notwithstanding these arrangements the Service retains robust assurance arrangements in compliance with the National Framework, which include:

- Strategic aims and values embedded in the Service Planning, Delivery, Risk Management, and Performance Management Frameworks.
- A Monitoring Officer responsible for ensuring the legality of Service actions.
- A management structure governed by the Executive Board and Service Leadership Team responsible for overseeing the running of GMFRS.
- The Fire Executive Board report into the GMCA Chief Executive's Management Team (CEMT) via the Chief Fire Officer who is a member of the CEMT, and is also accountable to the Deputy Mayor, who holds officers to account through regular Deputy Mayor Executive meetings.
- The provision of a robust and credible Operational Assurance function to assist in achieving the aims identified within the Mayoral Fire Plan and seeks to ensure that: -
 - a) the service delivery elements of the organisation are working effectively to fulfil the detailed requirements of the Annual Delivery Plan
 - b) the service has a safe, well-trained, and competent workforce.
- A comprehensive budget setting and monitoring framework with clearly defined guidelines and responsibilities with frequent budget management reporting.
- Support and ability to call on Local, Regional and National Resilience Arrangements.
- An Internal Audit function that meets all professional standards, supports the Service in the achievement of its improvement agenda and has responsibility for the continual review of major financial controls and the wider internal control environment.

- A GMFRS Corporate Risk Register is approved and monitored by SLT and the Deputy Mayor. This is supplemented by a GMCA wide Corporate Risk Review Group, which reviews strategic risks across the GMCA. The group meets quarterly to provide ongoing assurance over the management of high-level risks facing the GMCA, as well as all of its key functions, including Fire and Rescue Service.
- Published Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Whistleblowing Policy, and Fraud Prosecution Policy to ensure correct reporting and investigation of suspected fraudulent activities. [Report fraud and corruption - GMCA](#)
- A comprehensive Performance Management framework with clearly defined performance management targets, that measures financial and other performance data linked to the Service strategic priorities and outcomes.

5.3 Transparency

The GMCA publishes senior salaries, register of interests, staffing, income and expenditure, property, rights and liabilities, and decisions of significant public interest.

- [Gender Pay Gap - GMCA](#)
- [Transparency Reports - GMCA](#)
- [Procurement Transparency Reports - GMCA](#)

5.4 Performance Management

As part of the annual Corporate Planning Process the Service sets out the Corporate Key Performance Indicators, which measure the delivery of its strategic priorities and provides business intelligence, to help target prevention and protection activities. Targets are set where appropriate to support continuous improvement and learning. Progress against these indicators is monitored monthly through Performance Management Working Group and scrutinised quarterly by SLT and at the Deputy Mayor's Fire Executive meeting.

- [Measuring Progress – Performance Report](#)

5.5 Internal Audit arrangements

Internal Audit undertake a key role in assessing our assurance related activities, a significant proportion of the Annual Audit Plan is focused on providing assurance that operational and strategic risks are effectively managed to ensure the Service's core purpose and aims are achieved and quality services provided. Internal Audit report directly into the GMCA Audit Committee who approve the internal audit work plan, oversee audit activity, and review outcomes from the work undertaken.

The Head of Internal Audit has provided an opinion of moderate assurance in relation the arrangements in place for governance, risk management and internal control in 2021/22. This is an improvement from the previous year when a limited assurance opinion was given.

The latest reports are available via the following link: - [Annual Assurance Documentation](#).

5.6 Inspection

Following the introduction of the mandate for all English FRSs to be inspected, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) has carried out two full inspection of GMFRS.

The inspections are designed to promote improvement and identify all aspects of the work undertaken by FRSs. Using experts from across the sector to deliver the inspections, the methodology considers three broad pillars, namely:

- **Efficiency** – How efficient are we at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- **Effectiveness** – How effective are we at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- **Leadership** – How well do we look after our people?

Since our first inspection we have been working to deliver improvements, with progress reported and monitored through our governance arrangements. Our most recent inspection confirmed we are an evolving and improving Service and inspectors reported a positive shift in the Leadership and Culture of GMFRS. Our activities to address the areas of improvement identified in our inspection report will be delivered as part of our improvement programme.

Alongside this is the review of our level of compliance against the new Fire Standards, published by the Fire Standards Board, to ensure any gaps identified are addressed and compliance levels met.

All our inspection reports can be found on the HMICFRS website, with links below to the most recent:

- [GMFRS Inspection Report 2021/22](#)
- [GMFRS COVID Thematic Inspection 2020](#)
- [Fire Standards Board](#)

6 Workforce

6.1 People Strategy

The GMCA People Strategy is currently under development and will replace the historical GMFRS People and Organisational Development Strategy. The People Strategy will be a key document that brings together the strategic workforce objectives for GMCA (including GMFRS), establishing a clear link to the Greater Manchester Strategy, Fire Plan and Annual Delivery Plan and setting out how we seek to attract, retain, support, and reward our people in order to achieve excellence in providing services to the residents of Greater Manchester.

The strategy will be co-developed through consultation with our workforce and will have inclusivity and health and well-being of our workforce at its heart. We will continually measure progress against the GMCA People Strategy's objectives using a variety of means, including our staff surveys and a dashboard of KPIs.

We recognise that our workforce is one of our greatest assets and in order to meet the new challenges and opportunities ahead it is vital that we have the right people, in the right jobs with the right skills at the right time. One of the key pillars supporting our People Strategy is the way we attract and recruit organisationally, especially our operational staff comprising the largest component of our workforce. In 2022/23 we will refresh our four-year Firefighter Recruitment and Attraction Strategy, which supports the development of a progressive, diverse, and well qualified operational workforce. This four-year strategy sets out how we will meet both current and future workforce requirements including how we maximise overall efficiency in a cost-effective way.

Our Learning and Development Strategy sets out a transparent and coherent training offer for all our staff, providing training plans to ensure staff understand and acquire the skills they need to successfully do their job.

Further talent management initiatives include development of an organisational Recruitment and Selection Framework that embraces overall recruitment and selection to all staff groups. A modern and progressive promotion process for operational staff, aligned to the establishment of a 4-year Leadership Development Programme.

6.2 Operational Training

GMFRS's Operational Training Strategy (OTS) outlines the approach to ensuring that its operational staff are trained and competent in order to fulfil the various operational demands placed upon them. It demonstrates the commitment of the Service to deliver corporate operational training.

The OTS also involves demonstrating the ability to work with others in a coherent and uncomplicated way, with other emergency services in accordance with the principles of JESIP.

The OTS does not sit in isolation, and when the Service plans and prepares annually to meet its operational training demands, it considers and analyses a wide range of internal and external influences and drivers ensuring that these are all fed into the decision-making process when the annual operational training planning cycle commences.

The delivery of the OTS establishes a mechanism, to ensure that the Service has in place Incident Command and operational training programmes being delivered by competent Instructors to its operational staff. These programmes are then reviewed in order to confirm their continued effectiveness, quality, and relevance.

The Training Team work in conjunction with other Departments within the Service, such as the Operational Assurance Team, Operational Information Team and the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing Team to provide training, development, and assessment for all members of the Service.

6.3 Safety, Health & Wellbeing

The GMCA has overall accountability for the safety, health, welfare and wellbeing of its workforce; the Chief Fire Officer is responsible for delivering this within GMFRS.

Health and safety performance is regularly reviewed to improve organisational learning and a safe working environment, and is regularly shared with representatives from our trade unions.

Health and Safety, Audits and Inspections measure the compliance and quality within the Service, with the aim of continuous improvement, to establish:

- Appropriate management arrangements are in place
- Adequate risk control systems exist, are implemented, and consistent with the hazard profile of the Service

- Appropriate workplace precautions are in place.

Workplace inspections are regularly scheduled, and these are undertaken with the aid of a checklist and recognised as an active monitoring tool intended to:

- Identify existing and potential hazards
- Determine the underlying cause of hazards
- Recommend corrective actions
- Monitor effectiveness of hazard controls
- Provide an opportunity for the employer and workers to communicate
- Maintain a safe and healthy workplace

These audits and inspections inform our working practices. All health and safety documents and any proposed changes that impact on the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of our employees are presented for consultation and/or engagement via the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

The Service has introduced a peer led and peer supported wellbeing programme, that will more effectively support colleagues exposed to trauma. Where required, colleagues are also offered access to qualified counsellors and an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is a confidential support line for all employees across the organisation. The EAP offers impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of work, personal and family issues. The service is available 24/7, 365 days of the year and there is no limit to the number of issues employees can gain support on.

During the pandemic additional control measures were put in place to support staff, whilst adapting to the changing situation and new working arrangements. Support was provided to ensure COVID secure assessments were completed and acted upon, and colleagues from across the GMCA were supported whilst working away from their usual place of work

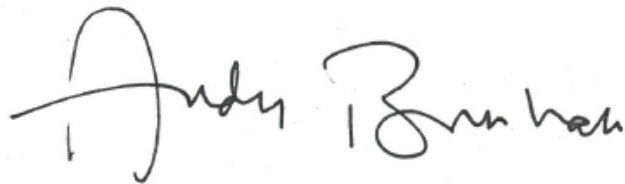
6.4 Environment

Overall governance of sustainability comes via an ISO 14001 certified environmental management system (EMS). The EMS ensures that GMFRS identify and manage the most important environmental aspects, helps improve efficiency, ensures compliance with environmental legislation and other requirements as well as ensuring that we continually improve environmental performance. ISO 14001 certification requires a number of clauses to be met in order for a system to be deemed effective with leadership being one of the clauses. GMFRS comply with this clause through leadership resource assigned to oversee the EMS, as well as an annual management review process that takes place with Senior Leaders.

- [Environmental Sustainability Policy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/environmental-sustainability-policy)

Assurance Opinion & Declaration

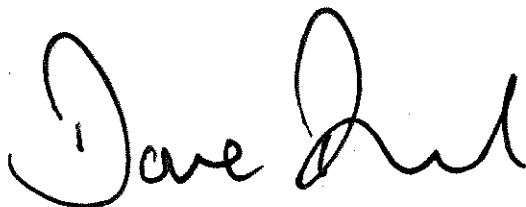
The Mayor for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Chief Fire Officer of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service are satisfied that the Service's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate and are operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework.



Signed:

Andy Burnham, Mayor for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 8th July 2022



Signed:

Dave Russel, Chief Fire Officer, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Date: 17th June 22