



Assurance Report on Surrey Fire and Rescue Service 29 April 2022

Assurance

Issue & Scope

1. SFRS have asked Brunel University London to review and assure current planning and implementation documents, in the context of SFRS's service-specific report and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services 2021 "State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2021." The aim is to provide an objective, academic and external view of the soundness of planning and to highlight any gaps for consideration. This assurance report aims to inform further implementation of aspects of the Making Surrey Safer Plan, to inform the Services' next community risk management plan, and review lessons learned to date in the previous two assurance phases. The team were asked specifically to:

- a. Review measures and proxy measures used for downstream evaluation of effect, with respect to response Safe & Well visits, and cross-check data gathered since the initial MSS plan, review & recommend any required changes.
- b. Review lessons learned to date.
- c. Provide quality assurance of ongoing SFRS plans, and provide an academic review study and appropriate formal assurance.

Statement of Assurance

2. We have reviewed the documents provided (listed in Annex A) and the data collection plans, and are satisfied (barring caveats below) that SFRS and the Making Surrey Safer Plan are fit for purpose. We can assure the implementation process, subject to the recommendations and comments that follow in this report.

Key Judgements and Recommendations

3. We have reviewed data collection at SFRS, and are satisfied that current data collection frameworks are broadly correct and fit for purpose, with caveats discussed here. This review

makes the following recommendations based upon our analysis of documents listed in Annex A and points of clarification sought from members of SFRS SLT:

- a. For Data Collection, specifically, we identify the following areas for attention:
 - i. SFRS must systematically gather and analyse feedback from staff, including response crews, regarding risk; and
 - ii. Consider whether SFRS should perform data collection through surveys in-house.
- b. For improving on HMICFRS “Requires Improvement” points:
 - i. We recommend that the formal set of Lessons Learned should be incorporated more overtly into the continual improvement of the service.
 - ii. We recommend that all exercises for major incidents produce After Action Reviews to document improvement on response and on working with neighbouring Services on major incidents.
 - iii. For cultural change towards a more Equal and Diverse workforce, we recommend that SFRS make a more comprehensive action plan, and that this plan should be independently assured.

Methodology

4. The Brunel assurance team, drawn from the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences (CBASS) has approached this assurance phase in two steps. According to the terms of reference, the review of data (para 1a above) was the first work package completed. Then 1b and 1c, taken together, were the second work package.

5. In both work packages, the terms of reference were agreed with SFRS, and then the Brunel team were provided with documents directly from the SLT. The SFRS team have been forthcoming on all req

Discussion of Assurance Points

PART 1: SFRS Data



measures and not yet collected/not provided. All of the output measures are relevant and it would be a testament to strong engagement with quality that these are provided. However, it is equally important that there is transparency in how the measures are arrived at. In this regard, it is suggested that SFRS document how the “raw” data are gathered. For those measures that rely on “raw” data, how these measures are constructed should be made clear. For the measures that are not yet collected or have not been provided, it is suggested that these should indeed be measured, as they are clearly relevant and support our general view that there is good engagement with the indicators.

10. **Proxy Measures.** The second part of the Service Evaluation Indicators are the “Proxy Measures”, these are in all cases measures building on the quantitative evaluation indicators and will necessitate an analysis before being presented to stakeholders and the public. In order to ensure full transparency, it is suggested that SFRS create a data guide that clearly shows stakeholders how the proxy measures are constructed, i.e. what quantitative indicators they build upon. We believe that the proxy measures presented by SFRS are relevant for the service and will allow the organisation to monitor its quality.

11. **Qualitative Evaluation Indicators.** The third part of the Service Evaluation Indicators are the “Qualitative Evaluation Indicators”. To a large degree these depend on consumer feedback that is delivered through surveys. A smaller group of indicators is termed “feedback”, for instance from partners, fire response crews or participants/social media. Brunel have not had

we recommend that SFRS create a guide for how to gather and analyse this feedback systematically.

14. Another qualitative indicator relates to social media.

determine the “period of effectiveness” of any intervention (when measured against a control group).



PART 2: SFRS Lessons Learned

18. A strategy is composed of three parts: the *ends* (what you want to achieve), the *ways* (how you will achieve it) and the *means*



recent (March 2022) which contains a significant number of recommendations. In the short time since receipt, we would not yet expect SFRS to have developed action plans to enact any of these recommendations. However, in light of the ongoing comments on HMICFRS, we would recommend that SFRS make a comprehensive action plan in relation to these recommendations, and that this plan should be independently assured. The organisation's culture fundamentally affects whether or not SFRS can deploy the means (in this case, human capital), in new ways of working, to meet its strategic ends as stated in the MSSP.

24. Equality and Diversity is an issue that has been raised by HMICFRS in successive reports. E&D is an aspect of cultural change we have yet to see all the components of a strategy. The "ends" are well understood and articulated honestly in the SFRS People Strategy (document 005c). We have also examined the Recruitment Strategy (005d) which does summarise SFRS' direction of travel and honest interest in improving their workforce diversity. Nonetheless, we note a lack of clearly expressed ways to change recruitment to rebalance the poor representation of minorities in the service, and to better reflect Surrey's diverse population. The plan for "Enhancing and embedding diversity and inclusion in everything we do" has its focus on E&D training for existing staff, who are less diverse than the population by a significant proportion. The SFRS People Strategy 2021-2024 (document 005c) expresses aims and commitments to build a culture more accepting of diversity in the workforce; however, changing internal culture is only part of the solution. The documents we have reviewed can be significantly enhanced by including a description of the ways SFRS will bridge the gap in its hiring. This is described very briefly in the "Attract" section of the Recruitment Strategy (005d) and requires further expansion to detail specific actions. Changing the makeup of the buill



Assurance Report

Annex A: Files Reviewed by Brunel University London as part of Assurance

SFRS Documents Reviewed 1

File Name

