

Statement of Assurance

2014/15



**South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE**

www.syfire.gov.uk

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Introduction

The [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) states that:

“Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in this Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance”

As part of the Government’s commitment to unburdening local government; eliminating top-down bureaucracy and increasing local flexibility, the revised National Framework and the [Localism Act 2011](#) help fire and rescue services to run their services ‘as they see fit’. However, this freedom and flexibility means that fire and rescue services need to demonstrate that they are accountable to their communities and transparent.

It is intended that this Statement of Assurance will provide an accessible way for our communities, Government, local authorities and other partners to make an informed assessment of our performance.

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue’s (SYFR’s) Statement of Assurance follows the guidance set out in the [Department for Communities and Local Government’s ‘Guidance on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England’](#). Much of the information given in the report is already contained in other documents / reports. Instead of repeating existing material, the report contains hyperlinks to direct the reader to this information.

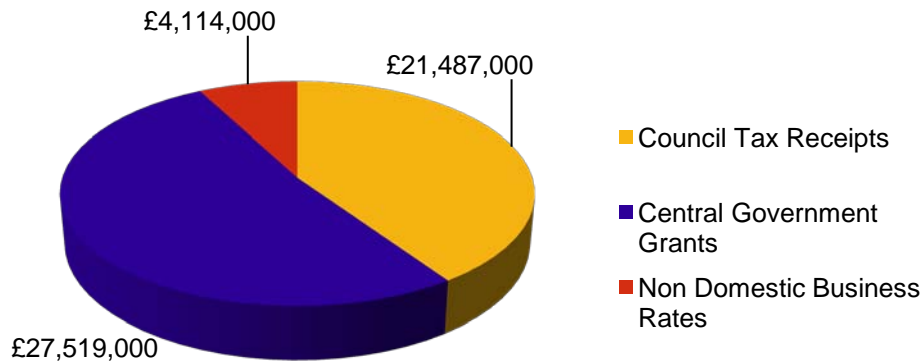
In December 2013, SYFR published its Strategic and Operational Plans for the period 2013 to 2017. The [Strategic Plan](#) sets out our vision for the future of the Service and the [Operational Plan](#) is our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which focuses planning around the needs of our communities. The Operational Plan sits below the Strategic Plan.

Financial

As a Fire and Rescue Authority we are responsible for ensuring that our business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. We must ensure that public money is properly accounted for and that it is used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The majority of the Fire Authority's funding is provided directly by the Government in the form of Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates. The remainder is raised via the precept which forms part of the council tax bills issued by the District Councils. However, the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) only sets its budget after taking account of the Government's regulations on excessive council tax increases, the reserves it has available and any income that it generates. The pie chart on the next page gives a breakdown of the sources of funding for 2014/15.

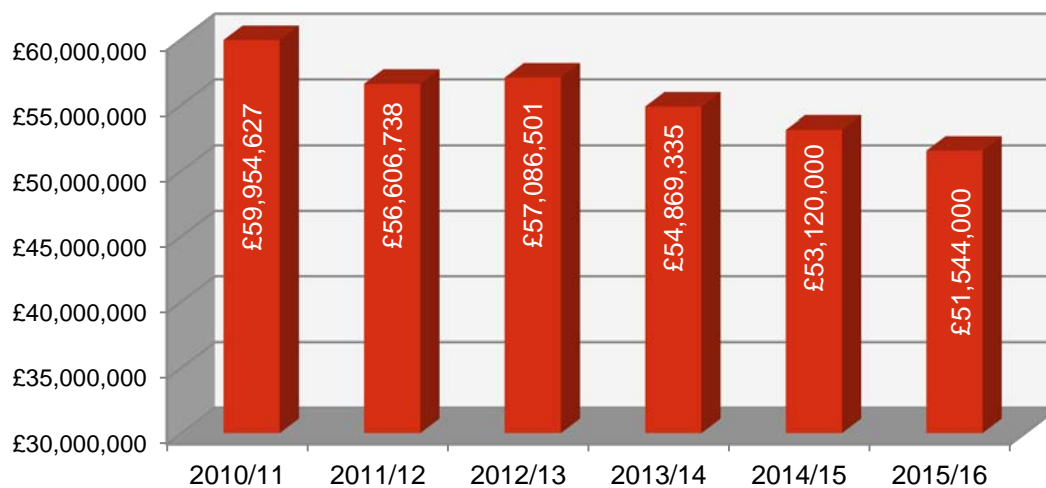
2014/15 Funding



The budget for 2014/15 was set in February 2014 against a continuing uncertain future funding position for the Authority. The final grant settlement was £2.6m less than in 2013/14. A further reduction of £2.8m is proposed for 2015/16. This brings the total reduction in grant for the four year Comprehensive Spending Review period to £9.6m.

The chart below shows how SYFR's funding has changed since 2010/11.

Total Funding Figures by Year

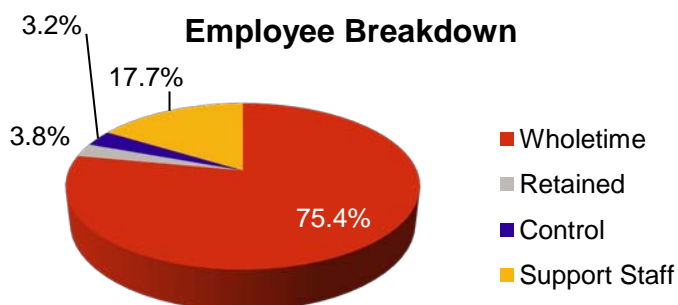
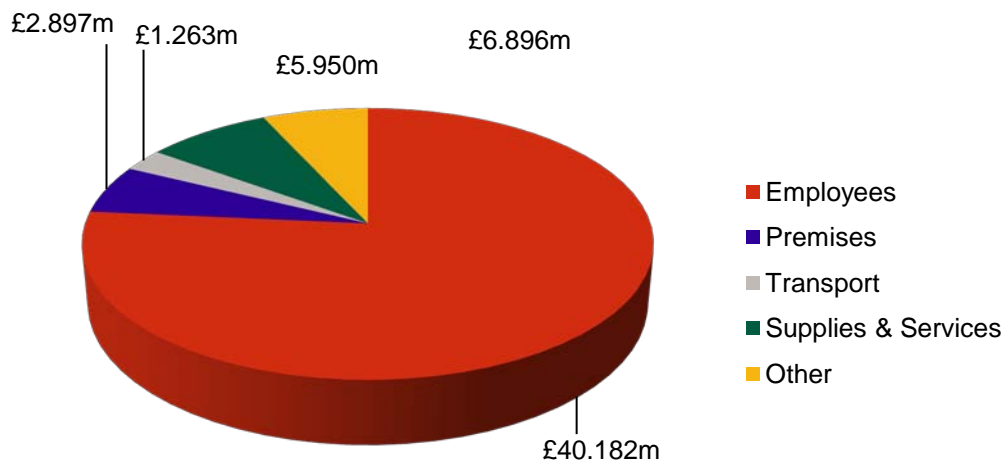


The Authority approved an operating budget of £51.608m in 2014/15, and approved the use of £4.476m of reserves to fund a number of one-off schemes. This resulted in an approved revenue budget of £56.084m.

The Authority received regular monitoring report during the year. The final revenue outturn figure reported in June 2015 was £53.188m. Much of the underspend relates to delays in the completion of the schemes that were funded from the reserves figure.

The diagram below shows the Outturn Budget broken down into each of the five budgetary areas. The budget for employees is further broken down into each of the four categories of staff.

Outturn Budget - 2014/15



For more detail on how we spent our budget, please see the [Statement of Accounts](#).

The Statement of Accounts is a statutory publication required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations and prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2012 (the Code), published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The Code specifies the principles and practices of

accounting required to give a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position at the end of the year and the transactions of the Authority during the year.

SYFRA publishes the pay details of all senior officers with a pro-rata salary of more than £50,000 in its annual Statement of Accounts. The [Pay Policy Statement](#) brings the information on remuneration into a single document for public information and to meet the obligations of the Localism Act 2011.

In summer 2010 the Government announced its intention that all public bodies should publish details of all its expenditure over £500. SYFR publishes [lists](#) of all invoices paid over that amount on a monthly basis ^{*1 See Below}.

The Authority's [Financial Regulations](#) are provided on its website.

*1 - The publication of further information relating to the pay and employment of senior staff and to procurement spending is a requirement of the new [Local Government Transparency Code 2014](#). (Introduced May 2014)

Governance

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

SYFRA is a statutory body made up of 12 local Councillors from the District Councils of Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley.

The primary responsibilities of the Authority are laid down in legislation including the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Local Government Act 1999 to provide an effective, economic and efficient Fire and Rescue Service.

The Authority funds SYFR and works with the Chief Fire Officer. The Authority's Vision is 'Working for a Safer South Yorkshire' and this is delivered through a range of Priorities and monitored via business plans and performance measures.



The [Fire Authority's Constitution](#) sets out the roles and responsibilities for Members and the procedures used to ensure that decision-making is efficient, transparent and accountable to local residents. There is a Code of Conduct for [Members](#), with an [Appeals and Standards Committee](#) responsible for monitoring and reviewing Councillor conduct. This includes co-opted Independent Members who act in an advisory capacity. These Independent Members are 'shared' with the constituent Councils of Sheffield and Barnsley to ensure the revised expectations on standards outlined in the Localism Act are addressed consistently and effectively. There are

also three independent members on the Audit Committee.

The Authority has the following Committees and other forums:

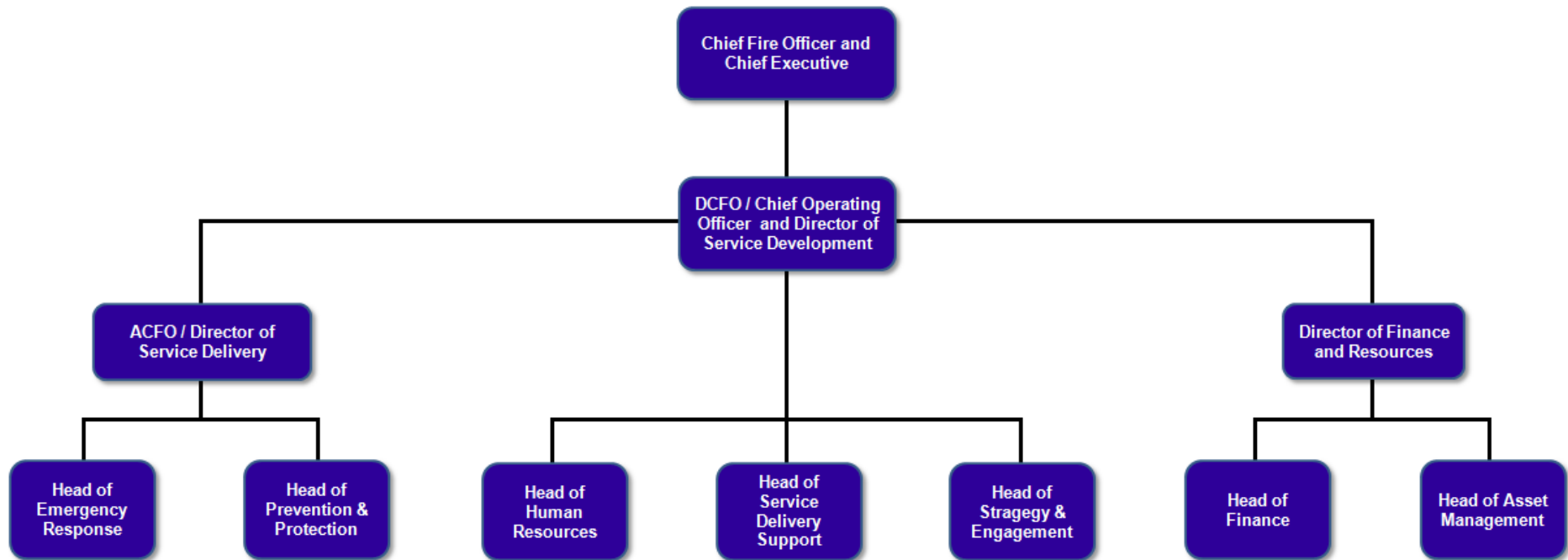
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Policy Development Group
- Audit Committee
- Appeals and Standards Committee
- Appointments Committee
- Principal Officers Review Committee.
- It also has a separate Scrutiny Board, and a Stakeholder Engagement Board to provide additional overview and scrutiny across all services and functions, but particularly in the areas of consultation, partnerships and workforce development (including equality and inclusion).
- The Fire Authority established the Scrutiny Board in 2008, to provide a dedicated scrutiny function. This fulfils the requirements of the National Framework Document for FRAs to have a separate scrutiny function. Its remit is to ensure that the Authority's business is subject to effective scrutiny, and to provide constructive, robust and purposeful challenge to strategic areas of corporate operation.
- The Board meets on a quarterly basis, with the option of meeting more frequently dependent on the issue under scrutiny. It receives timely performance reports on a range of agreed performance measures / targets.
- In addition, all boards of the Authority have a work programme and provide a scrutiny and challenge function. Whilst the scrutiny function does not replicate the arrangements within a primary authority, it nevertheless provides for chosen areas / functions to be examined in more depth and detail with a view to recommending improvements.

Staff of the **South Yorkshire Joint Authorities** are now integrated within Barnsley MBC. However, those employees supporting the Joint Authorities will continue to provide independent and impartial advice to the Joint Authorities including South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue. This includes managing elements of their financial, legal and wider governance responsibilities.

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue

The Senior Management Structure of the Service comprises the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Officer and Director of Finance and Resources, supported by a number of Heads of Function, who jointly make up the Corporate Management Board (CMB).

Senior Management Team Structure



There are two main decision-making bodies within the Service structure, which are:

- Executive Team Meeting
- Corporate Management Board

Below this level, a number of other meetings take place, some of which have some limited decision-making power, but all of which are responsible to the Executive Team or CMB:

- Change Programme Board
- Service Delivery Senior Management Team Meeting
- Partnerships Board
- Operational and Technical Services Projects Board
- Volunteer Board

The Fire Governance Board is a joint board of the Authority and Service.

Further details of the meetings and decision making structure can be found in [Part 4 of the Fire Authority's Constitution](#).

There is also an Employee Code of Conduct which is available on request.

Annual Governance Statement

The Authority has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to 'a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness'.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and including arrangements for the management of risk. A copy of the [Risk Management Policy](#) is available on the SYFRA website.

The Authority has approved and adopted a [Code of Corporate Governance](#), which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

The [Annual Governance Statement](#) explains how the Authority has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, in relation to the preparation of an Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement also sets out how the Authority reviews the effectiveness of the governance framework and the system of internal control.

Transparency

In September 2011, the Government introduced a [Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency](#). The Code sets out key principles for local authorities in creating greater transparency through the publication of public data ^{*2 See Below}.

The SYFRA strives to be transparent in the way it makes decisions and the monthly Fire Authority Meetings are webcast and available to view live, or after the meeting, on the Authority's website. Members of the public can also attend in person at the offices of the Joint Secretariat in Barnsley, and are able to submit questions to the Fire Authority in advance of the meetings. Full details can be found on the SYFRA's [website](#), along with copies of the agendas, reports and minutes for the Fire and Rescue Authority and Audit Committee meetings.

The [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) (FOIA) gives rights of public access to information held by public authorities. Section 19 of the FOIA requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which has been approved by the Information Commissioner, and to publish information in accordance with the scheme. SYFRA has adopted the Model Publication Scheme approved by the Information Commissioner, which is valid from 1 January 2009 ^{*3 See Below}.

We have used the definition document for joint authorities and boards. All the information in our publication scheme is either available on the [SYFRA](#) website; on the [SYFR](#) website; or in the form of a hard copy upon request.

Most of the information listed in our publication scheme is available free of charge. If there is a charge then this is highlighted.

*2 - In November 2014 Parliament approved the Government's Local Government Transparency Code 2014. The Code lays out requirements for local authorities in creating greater transparency through the publication of specified public data. This data will be available on the Service's website from 31 December 2014.

*3 - The South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Publication Scheme was updated on 16 June 2014.

Audit

SYFRA is subject to both internal and external audit. Both functions have distinct roles and responsibilities which, together, provide a comprehensive audit function.

Internal Audit is an independent function responsible for the effective review of all aspects of risk management and control through the Authority's activities, in order to give an annual opinion on the internal control arrangements.

The Internal Audit function is provided by Barnsley MBC's Internal Audit Team for the Police and Crime Commissioner, the South Yorkshire Joint Authorities (Fire and Pensions), the Combined Authority and the Police, SYFR and Pensions services. Details of the Team's roles and responsibilities are contained on the South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat website and in the [Internal Audit Charter and Strategy](#) published on the Internal Audit page of the Authority's website.

The [Internal Audit Annual Report for 2014/15](#) can be found on the Authority's website.

External Audit is responsible for the statutory audit of the Authority's accounts and financial statements, including giving an annual opinion on them and also providing a conclusion on the value for money arrangements.

The External Audit function is provided by KPMG.

The Annual Audit Letter 2013/14 shows that KPMG issued an unqualified value for money (VFM) conclusion for 2013/14, on 25 September 2014. This means that they were satisfied that the Authority has proper arrangements for securing financial resilience and challenging how we 'secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness'. KPMG have produced an [Audit Progress Report and Technical Update](#) in May 2015. An [Interim Audit Report 2014/15](#) was issued in July 2015. KPMG will issue a VFM conclusion for 2014/15 by 30 September 2015.

Operational

Statutory Duties

South Yorkshire is responsible for carrying out the statutory duties contained in:

- [The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)
- [The Localism Act 2011](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

Integrated Risk Management Plan

The Fire and Rescue National Framework states that:

“Each fire and rescue authority must produce an integrated risk management plan that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The plan must have regard to the community risk registers produced by Local Resilience Forums and any other local risk analyses as appropriate.”

In December 2013, SYFRA published its [Strategic](#) and [Operational](#) (Integrated Risk Management Plan) Plans for the period 2013 to 2017. The Strategic Plan sets out SYFR's priorities and how we plan to deliver these. It provides the overall direction for the Service and informs the Operational Plan. An [Operational Plan update](#) is published on an annual basis to inform how we are progressing against the commitments that were made.

Before the Strategic and Operational Plans were written, extensive research was carried out. The objective was to provide a broad range of Service Delivery modelling options, for

consideration by the Senior Management and Fire Authority. This enabled them to make a decision on the optimum configuration of the Service by 2017, against a backdrop of a reduced budget. The aim was to minimise the impact on the communities of South Yorkshire as far as possible.

The Operational Plan considers a wide range of risks from fire and other emergencies to our communities in South Yorkshire, and sets out how this informs our prevention, protection and response activities, drawing on a wealth of research and analysis.

Operational Assessment (OpA) and Fire Peer Challenge

SYFR underwent a Fire Peer Challenge Review from 29 April to 2 May 2014. The Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge, is a sector led improvement tool developed by the Local Government Association (LGA) in association with the Chief Fire Officers' Association.

The OpA process is designed to form a structured and consistent basis to drive continuous improvement within the Service, and provide elected members of FRAs and Chief Fire Officers with information that allows them to challenge their operational service delivery to ensure it is efficient, effective and robust. Undertaking a peer challenge is voluntary and is managed and led by the fire sector.

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, [Fire Peer Challenge Report](#) was published in September 2014.

The Peer Challenge Team reported that SYFR:

- Is highly regarded by its partners,
- Has strong leadership from the Chair and the Fire and Rescue Authority,
- Is taking a proactive approach to succession planning and identifying future 'talent',
- Has employees that appear to be committed to and very proud of the Service,
- Is a learning organisation that provides high quality training across a range of core skill subject areas,
- Has a commitment to effectively manage Health and Safety practices in the workplace in order to ensure the ongoing safety of staff, and,
- Has effective local leadership in relation to Call Management within its Control Room.

An action plan has been developed to take forward the Peer Challenge Team's recommendations. This is reviewed by the Scrutiny Board.

Business Continuity

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the core functions of the Fire and Rescue Service. These are fire safety, fire-fighting, road traffic accidents and emergencies. Failure to deliver any of these functions would have a catastrophic effect on the communities of South Yorkshire. The potential for disruption to these core public safety functions has been identified as a statutory duty in the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) (Part 1. Para 2(1) (C). It is a duty under the Act for all Category 1 Responders to maintain plans for the purpose of

ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs they can continue to perform these functions.

Business Continuity Plans for South Yorkshire have been developed over a number of years. The Civil Protection Group coordinates this function across the organisation and is responsible for overseeing the training in, and testing of our Business Continuity arrangements. This function is carried out in conjunction with our multi-agency partners and our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services.

SYFR Business Continuity Plans are aligned to the International Standard for Business Continuity, ISO22301. This provides a structure which will ensure that we are resilient to interruption to the delivery of our core public safety functions. The Civil Protection Group carries out internal audits of all SYFR Business Continuity Plans.

Mutual Aid Agreements

The Fire and Rescue National Framework states that fire and rescue authorities must make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents and emergencies within their area and in other areas in line with their mutual aid agreements, and reflect this in their integrated risk management plans.

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provide clear instructions for fire and rescue services in regards to mutual aid and the discharge of functions by others.

SYFR has Section 13 agreements in place with all our neighbouring fire and rescue services in respect of arrangements to support each other where an incident location makes this sensible. We also have similar agreements to support each other in the event of a major incident.

SYFR has a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with both fire and rescue services and other partner agencies. These include MoUs with:

- Fire Services in the Yorkshire and Humberside region for Fire Investigation,
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service – Hazardous Area Response Team (HART),
- Several with South Yorkshire Police, such as business continuity for SYFR Gold Command Team and adverse weather conditions,
- Peak District Mountain Rescue teams.

Our mutual aid documents with our neighbouring fire and rescue services are reviewed on an annual basis.

Our Performance

SYFR has a suite of performance indicators, which are reported to the Scrutiny Board and the Fire Authority on a quarterly and annual basis, for analysis, challenge and comment. The Annual Corporate Performance report for 2014/15 can be viewed by clicking on the [link](#).

SYFR also benchmarks against the other Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services, using a suite of performance indicators. A [benchmarking report](#) is submitted annually to the Scrutiny Board.

The benchmarking report focuses on the following three areas:

- Fleet & people comparisons
- Incident comparisons
- Financial comparisons.

SYFR uses a number of data sets for the report, including incident data captured within the Incident Recording System (IRS), the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Returns and Fire of Special Interest (FOSI), fires on Crown premises. This data is collated, verified and released into the public domain at different intervals by the [Department for Communities and Local Government](#).

Health and Safety Audit

SYFR has made huge improvements to the auditing of its Health and Safety (H&S) management system through the introduction of an audit process. This has provided a prioritised and targeted improvement plan covering all aspects of H&S and links to the 2013 – 2015 H&S Strategy.

National Framework Requirements

The new [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#) was published in July 2012. SYFR carried out a gap analysis against the priorities and objectives within the National Framework. An update on SYFR's compliance with National Framework requirements is presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority in June each year.

Our Future Plans

Stronger Safer Communities Reserve

The Authority has set aside £2m from its reserves in support of its objectives of protecting the most vulnerable in our communities. These projects further promote the Community Fire Safety agenda; enhancing partnership working and the sharing of data amongst partners. This will enable a focus of resources on priority areas and individuals. The Authority must be able to demonstrate that it has robust and proportionate governance arrangements so as to ensure its objectives are met and tangible outcomes are achieved. For further information regarding the approved projects please click on the [link](#).

Future Planning

We are currently developing a vision for 2025. If we are to succeed in continuing to provide the best possible services to the public, in the most effective and efficient way, we need to plan now for our future - what sort of organisation we want to be, what services we want to provide, and what kind of staffing and other resourcing implications arise from these issues.

In early 2016, we will use the outcomes of these discussions to start developing our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2017 onwards. This will set out the first steps on our journey to ensure we are still responding to community needs in providing excellent public services in 2025.

Authorisation

This Statement of Assurance is signed on behalf of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, as approved at the Audit Committee meeting on Monday, 21 September 2015.

Councillor Jim Andrews
Chair of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority