

## Statement of Purpose

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is a Metropolitan Authority created as a body corporate by the Local Government Act 1985 with 22 elected Councillors appointed by the County's five District Councils who are collectively responsible for the democratic oversight of the Authority and the determination of its overall strategic direction.

This Statement of Purpose reflects the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the National Framework in setting down West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's commitments and expectations through its strategic priorities and objectives.

The primary legislation associated with fire and rescue services in England and Wales is The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This is an Act to make provision for fire and rescue authorities and their functions and about employment by fire and rescue authorities and the powers of employees. The Act also makes provision about receipt of emergency calls, education and training, firefighters' pension schemes, the supply of water, dealing with false alarms of fire and the funding of advisory bodies, and for connected purposes. Also, the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007, which is an order made under the Act, gives fire and rescue authorities mandatory functions in connection with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear emergencies (CBRN emergencies) and emergencies requiring the freeing of people from collapsed structures or non-road transport wreckages (urban search and rescue, or USAR emergencies).

The Authority is responsible for enforcing fire safety regulations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Authority is also the licensing authority and enforcing authority for the storage of petroleum and explosives under the Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928 and the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005.

Another important piece of legislation directly associated with the functions and expectations of the Authority is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Civil Contingencies Act, and accompanying non-legislative measures, delivers a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom.

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act, the Government will issue a Fire and Rescue National Framework which sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. The Framework sets out high level expectations. It does not prescribe operational matters. These are to be determined locally by fire and rescue authorities, working in partnership with their

communities; local citizens, businesses, civil society organisations and others. Key priorities for fire and rescue authorities in the Framework include:

- Identifying and assessing the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their area faces.
- Making provision for prevention and protection activities and responding to incidents appropriately.
- Working in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service.
- Being accountable to communities for the service they provide.

In addition to the key pieces of legislation described above, there are other statutory requirements imposed on the Authority, for example through the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations and employment law. Further, there are many other pieces of legislation that place direct or indirect obligations on the Authority.

## Functions of the Fire and Rescue Authority

The Authority has a number of statutory responsibilities, the most important of which are:

- **Promoting Fire Safety** - The provision of information, advice, and encouragement on prevention of fires, restricting spread of fires in buildings and means of escape from fires.
- **Emergency Response and Rescue** - The extinguishment of fires, protecting life and property in the event of fires and rescuing of people trapped or injured from road traffic collisions and other emergencies. The Authority also provides the capability to respond to major emergencies arising from terrorist attacks and other events such as flooding and chemical release.
- **Fire, Petroleum and Explosives Regulatory Enforcement** – as referred to above, the enforcement of fire safety regulations in nearly all premises other than single private dwellings and enforcement of regulations and licensing associated with the storage of petroleum and explosives.

## Structure and governance arrangements

The Authority is a corporate body with the legal responsibility for making decisions about all matters concerning the functions, powers, duties and responsibilities of the Authority which are invested in it by statute and/or common law.

There is an agreed constitution which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local citizens. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Authority to determine and the Authority will publish an Annual Governance Statement setting out its governance framework.

The Authority discharges its responsibilities through delegation to officers led by a Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive who has executive management responsibility for overall service delivery and management of the fire and rescue service.

## **Access to information**

The Authority makes information publicly available and promotes a spirit of openness and accessibility adopting an approach of making information available and a commitment to sharing information whenever it is appropriate in line with legislation.

## **Ambition and aim**

The Authority's Ambition is 'Making West Yorkshire Safer' and the Aim is to 'Provide an excellent fire and rescue service working in partnership to reduce death, injury, economic loss and contribute to community well-being'.

## **Core values**

The Authority seeks to promote the following core values in its delivery of services to the community:

***Service to the Community*** - We value service to the community by...

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

***People*** - We value all our employees by practising and promoting...

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

***Diversity*** - We value diversity in the service and the community by...

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

**Improvement** - We value improvement at all levels of the service by...

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

## Strategic direction

The Authority has approved the following key strategic priorities, underpinned by a series of published objectives, to guide the management of service delivery:

- ***Deliver a proactive community safety programme.***
- ***Deliver a professional and resilient emergency response service.***
- ***Provide a safe skilled workforce that serves the needs of a diverse community.***
- ***Provide effective and ethical governance and achieve value for money.***

## Service Delivery Strategies

The Authority will approve a range of strategic plans and other documents which provide greater clarity in relation to the delivery of the strategic priorities and objectives. One of the most important of these documents is the **Service Plan**, which is produced periodically to set a wide range of outcome based targets to achieve the ambition of 'Making West Yorkshire Safer'. These targets are set by the Management Board, approved by the Authority and delivered through District Risk Reduction Plans. The Service Delivery Board, made up of senior officers, monitors progress and allocates resources to achieve the targets. Performance is monitored by the Authority's Community Safety Committee, Audit Committee and by the full Authority.

Another important document is the **Community Risk Management Strategy**, which provides the methodology for determining where, when and what resources are deployed in West Yorkshire to have maximum effect. This document includes the risk assessment methodology used as the starting point for all our work and provides a business case, risk assessment and outline of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process. IRMP covers Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience strategies which reflect the risks and threats posed to members of West Yorkshire's communities as well as the associated demands placed upon the organisation, its employees and its management. Most importantly, the methodology outlined in the Community Risk Management Strategy ensures an equitable service across West Yorkshire based on need.

The Authority has approved a set of **Risk Based Planning Assumptions (RBPA)**, which determine the standard of emergency response service for any area in West Yorkshire. Operational policies underpin the RBPA, ensuring resources are in the right location at the right time to deliver the highest possible emergency response performance.

**The Fire Safety Strategy** outlines how the Authority will comply with its statutory duties for fire prevention and fire protection, including its regulatory enforcement role. The Authority approves a risk based inspection programme on an annual basis and allocates sufficient resources to deliver risk based and proportionate enforcement and licensing under these regulations. The Authority is also consulted on fire safety matters by virtue of regulations enforced by other agencies, for example Building Regulations and Liquor Licensing applications. The fire safety strategy includes reference to the wide range of community safety activities that will be undertaken in pursuit of the Authority's ambition.

Each year an annual IRMP **Action Plan** is approved by the Authority which provides information on major projects, tasks and activities of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, to be delivered within the year.

## **A modern Fire and Rescue Service**

The Authority expects its fire and rescue service to be adaptable, flexible and to keep pace with the changes and challenges of a modern world. This modernisation philosophy is simple and supports the on-going ambition of 'Making West Yorkshire Safer' as well as underpinning its approach to IRMP. It centres on a number of pillars:

- **Optimal resource allocation and deployment** - Ensuring resources are in the locations that will have the greatest impact.
- **Changing the way that we deliver the Service** - The implementation of innovative duty systems, the introduction of new equipment and vehicles and the changing of working practices to meet ever changing risk and demand.
- **Value for money** – Deliver the highest quality service with the resources available.
- **Public and Firefighter safety** – Continuing to deliver fire prevention and other community safety initiatives and ensuring firefighters have the best equipment and training to do their job.
- **Leadership** – strong and effective leadership throughout the organisation to deliver an effective and efficient service.
- **Governance** – ensuring integrity, transparency, effectiveness and inclusivity, managing and mitigating risks to the organisation and complying with the Code of Corporate Governance.

## **Working in partnership**

The Authority recognises that the causes of fires and other emergencies and the consequences of such, cannot be addressed by the fire and rescue service in isolation. Working in partnership with other agencies is therefore a fundamental part of the way services are delivered at all levels and in all areas; partnership working is therefore regarded as being part of core business.

## **Planning for major emergencies**

The majority of emergencies the fire and rescue service responds to are relatively small in nature and are dealt with using local resources based at fire stations strategically located across West Yorkshire. However, very occasionally, major events occur which require not only the bringing together of fire and rescue service resources but also a multi-agency emergency response. The Civil Contingencies Act and supporting regulations and statutory guidance establish a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level.

By working with partners in West Yorkshire and elsewhere, the Authority will ensure that, within its statutory responsibilities, the necessary capability and capacity is in place to respond to foreseeable risks and contribute appropriately to collective arrangements for national resilience, using the Community Risk Register and National Risk Assessment as the basis. The Authority will also ensure it has robust business continuity arrangements in place to ensure it can continue to deliver its critical services at times of crisis.

## **Delivering humanitarian and other services**

Although the provision of an emergency response capability to respond to fires and road traffic collisions is the primary focus, the Authority also chooses to provide a number of other specialised services where the public can expect a prompt and effective response, for example, water rescue, animal rescue and lift release. In certain cases a charge is levied for these services.

## **Provision and support of a professional efficient, effective and safe workforce**

The Authority will ensure that it recruits, trains, develops and retains a workforce to undertake the variety of roles within the fire and rescue service. It will utilise appropriate terms and conditions, including duty systems, to deliver effective and efficient services in an economic way. The Authority is committed to maintaining good employee relations and to this end will engage positively with recognised trade unions to consult and negotiate in good faith on all matters associated with conditions of service.

The Authority is also committed to the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and will support the provision of safety equipment, training and occupational health in the workplace.

## **Management and maintenance of our infrastructure**

The fire and rescue service, by its very nature, is delivered in a distributed way across West Yorkshire. This requires significant investment in premises, vehicles, information technology and other infrastructure. The Authority will maintain an affordable capital investment plan to support a long term sustainable asset strategy directly aligned to its service delivery objectives. The Authority will not hold surplus assets where these represent an economic burden or where sale/disposal of such can support service delivery objectives.

## **Equality and diversity**

The Authority is committed to meeting, and where possible, exceeding the requirements of equality legislation and public sector equality duties. Achievement of the Excellent Level of the Equality Framework in 2010 remains the benchmark for future performance, ensuring equality is embedded in service delivery. The general and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 require publication of equality objectives annually and these will be an integral part of the Service Plan and annual Action Plans. The importance of an adequate evidence base for any decisions is acknowledged and engagement with the community and employees is a continuous process to tailor the services provided and employment practices introduced. Service delivery priorities are directed towards the most vulnerable communities who are at risk from fire, fire related injuries and road traffic incidents.

## **The environment**

The Authority is committed to safeguarding the environment and recognises the need for effective management action to reduce its environmental impact and to manage environmental risks. Environmental risks have been identified as part of the Authority's strategic risk management arrangements, and it is through this process that associated management action is monitored.

The importance of the physical environment of West Yorkshire, including its heritage, land and waterways is acknowledged and the Authority will ensure plans are in place to respond to and mitigate the effects of fires and other emergencies affecting these important assets.