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 requests for information from the Brunel assurance team.

6.   Brunel has now reviewed three HMICFRS reports on SFRS and has observed the progression of the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP) since January 2020 and its initial implementation in April 2020. For this assurance statement, we have as a baseline SFRS operations as reviewed in the 2018-19 HMICFRS report. Judging "direction of travel" throughout is made problematic by the concurrent COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted both SFRS and the community they serve. Despite this disruption, it remains possible to assess the progress of the MSSP against both the Inspectorate reports as well as SFRS' own criteria.

Discussion of Assurance Points

PART 1: SFRS Data Collection & Measures.

7.   SFRS have provided an extensive list of service evaluation indicators designated as either "quantitative evaluation indicators", "proxy measures", or "qualitative evaluation indicators". They have additionally provided the data currently available for the former two categories.

8.   The "quantitative evaluation indicators" consist of two parts. The largest group are measures that can be observed in the data provided to the Brunel team. The smaller group are measures which currently are not collected or which may not be quantitative evaluation indicators. These are in the chart below. (NB: Response statistics dealt with separately.

Service Measurements Reviewed 1

Service	Indicator	Issue
Domestic SAWV	·Reduction in fires comparing: ·Alarms installed vs no alarm ·Vulnerable vs non-vulnerable ·Person-centred approach risk rating reduction in level ·Measure risk to firefighter (compare SAWV data with MDIA etc) ·Fires reported vs insurance claims (ABI) ·Vulnerability indicators- number visited	These are either output measures of analysis (e.g. fire reduction, risk to firefighter, fire reported), not quantitative in their current description (person centered) or unclear how they can be derived or defined (vulnerability indicators).
Business SAWV	·Comparing type (against Experian headers) ·Outcome ·Referrals to Protection team ·Other agency referrals e.g. trading standards ·Themed Audits completed e.g. Christmas visits	These are either output measures (comparisons and referrals) or are currently not implemented (themed visits)

Service	Indicator	Issue
Firewise	·Is there a link to decrease in local area fires	This is an output measure.
Fire Investigation	·Number of sanctuary Incidents ·Number of safeguarding Incidents.	These are currently not being measured.
Risk Information Gathering	·Count of MDIA produced by station/team ·Count of MDIA requiring review by station/team ·Count of TCR by station: total number, new premises, reviewed premises, past review date, premises records requiring amendment following QA. ·Count of premises by type and risk grading	These are output measures.
Primary Authority Scheme	·PAS partners ·Staff employed ·Income generation	NB: New operating model in place March 2022 which will impact the measurement.
Water Safety	·Events/roadshows delivered ·Education training delivered (Year 8)	This information has not yet been provided to Brunel.
Wildfire Prevention	·Events/roadshows delivered ·Education training delivered (Year 8)	This information has not yet been provided to Brunel.

9.   The comments we provide in the 3rd column above, on measures and proxy measures used for downstream evaluation of effect, can broadly be separated in two categories: output

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 sight of a plan for how these surveys are constructed, e.g. is there a national template? If not, is there capacity in-house at SFRS in questionnaire development and data analysis? Will the surveys be focused on qualitative feedback or quantitative feedback or both? It is certainly true that public feedback through surveys can be very useful, although this depends first and foremost on the surveys being correctly designed and tested so that they measure what they are supposed to measure. Second, that the information is analysed systematically. If *qualitative* feedback is sought through surveys it would require a thematic analysis. If *quantitative* feedback is provided, then this should be analysed. It is equally important that a plan is created for when the surveys are run, so that the data is comparable period to period.

12.   SFRS should consider whether it is possible and sustainable to perform this kind of data collection in-house. Another option would be to not invest in building and maintaining such capacity in-house and instead purchase the data externally. Several national survey agencies run panel surveys for which SFRS would be able to purchase questions to be asked only of those living within the service coverage area. This would alleviate concerns about questionnaire design, sampling, and initial analysis and allow the data officers of SFRS to focus on examining the impacts on the responses instead of focusing on the pre-survey work.

13.   **Feedback**. The smaller group of indicators relate to feedback, although some of these might also be survey focused. However, a very important indicator is fire response crew feedback. For Brunel, this seems like a key information source for risk information gathering and

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

14.   Another qualitative indicator relates to social media. This is certainly a burgeoning field, but also one for which the risk of doing this in-house is incomplete coverage. We understand that social media sentiment data is being collected, however we have not yet seen this.

15.   **Response Data**. SFRS has provided response modeling data which shows peak times during the day where there are incidents[1]. The data provided by SFRS for response time is very detailed. The data suggests that over the past two years the response time of the first appliance to critical incidents is just over 7 minutes and the periods 20/21 and 21/22 are the lowest of the six years provided. The response for the second appliance is just over 12 minutes and is the median of the six years covered. Also the response time for other emergencies have seen the shortest response time, just under eight minutes, in 20/21 and 21/22. The average turnout time for both day and night and on-call average turnout time is expected to be the lowest yet in 21/22. The only statistic where SFRS is at the lowest in 21/22 is on-call pump availability. What is important to note for all the statistics for 20/21 and 21/22 is the potential impact of the pandemic. This makes the low turnout and response time noteworthy as SFRS, like other public safety organisations, would have been under tremendous pressure throughout the pandemic on staffing levels.

16.   **Measuring the Impact of Interventions.** If SFRS wish to know whether the interventions (SAWV and other interventions) have a measurable impact, we recommend that a plan is designed and presented to SLT that allows for the direct causality to be established. This will require measuring pre-intervention, the intervention itself, and post-intervention. It will further be beneficial if a control group be created either through using existing splits in the population or through collaboration with a neighbouring Service. Typically, a 24-month experimental research design for this question ("what is the impact of SAWV?"), begun once SFRS have declared that they are at Full Operating Model, will provide sufficient data. Design would therefore be:

       a. Pre-intervention: number of fires/incidents amongst this cohort in Surrey absent intervention;

       b. Intervention: what is achieved in the SAWV;

       c. Post-intervention: number of fires/incidents amongst this cohort after intervention;

       d. Control Group: number of fires/incidents absent SAWV in a similar population outside Surrey.

17.   These measures would need to be effectively concurrent. Existing (historic) data on populations who have received SAWV, and any incidents *subsequent* to those visits, will help

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[1] 20200724_ResponseModellingDataPresentation_CI_V1

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

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* (the resources dedicated to the strategy). Across the documents we have
been provided, there is a clear description which presents all three of these components, with
further areas for development covered below.

19.   Having reviewed the documents provided, we are satisfied that SFRS appear to have
the characteristics of an organisation that learns on an ongoing basis. Considering the plans
prepared during the first two assurance reviews, and the adjustments made to meeting the
priorities outlined in the most recent 2021-22 HMICFRS Report, SFRS have shown that they are
capable of flexing the ends, ways and means to meet ongoing and future requirements. We
have not had sight of a list of documented "lessons learned" from the SLT, and we are basing
our views on the content of the documents presented to us. We recommend that a formal set of
Lessons Learned should be produced with input from SFRS colleagues across the Service.

20.   Overall, we are satisfied that the "Requires Improvement" points from the 2021-22
HMICFRS report are addressed in the post-inspection action plan (which we identify as
document 003a), and the most recent update provided (document 003b). There has been
improvement across many of the categories on which SFRS are inspected by HMICFRS, and
some categories that have remained stable. All subheadings under the "People" category have
improved or remained stable, as have all subheadings under "Efficiency", with the latter
category improving overall. However, there are a small number which have slipped from the last
report. These are, from the "Effectiveness" category, the subheadings of "Understanding fires
and other risks" and "Responding to major and multi-agency incidents".

21.   Improvement to "Responding to major and multi-agency incidents" is in the plan and
noted as having components both complete and underway. The newly created Exercise Group
(document 003b, page 8) should monitor the activities to ensure that this area of improvement
moves in a positive direction. Periodic major incident exercises should be evaluated against
known HMICFRS criteria to check progress. Exercises with neighbouring Services will also help
strengthen external relationships and solidify ways of working. After Action Reports (AARs) from
any exercises will serve as data towards evidencing improvement for future inspections.

22.   "Understanding fires and other risks" remains the point which likely requires the most
effort to satisfy. There is both a "sensing" and "communicating" function inherent in this point.
Logically, any service must first identify and understand risks, then find ways to rapidly
communicate these to its staff. As the HMICFRS report notes positively, the service "has a plan
in place to improve the use and communication of risk information, and has increased resources
to the team." (P.8). Identifying which risks to communicate is therefore the crux of the required
improvement. We have addressed aspects of this in Part 1 of this report.

23.   **Culture & Diversity**. We note that SFRS have taken the positive step of commissioning
a detailed review of Culture and Inclusion (document 007) by an outside organisation. This is

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 workforce means attracting more applicants from under-represented segments of the population. This will involve a significant change in outreach (noted generally in the People Strategy) and active attraction and recruitment efforts which can be detailed in a future iteration of 005d to bring the document to life.

25.   We would like to reiterate the importance of file management for SFRS documents. We dealt with a small selection only and even then it is not always clear when documents are dated and what their unique title is. There has been some use of file naming conventions, and we encourage this to become the norm.

Presentation

26.   This paper has been written as a public document. Its contents are free to use by SFRS.

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Assurance Report

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

SFRS Documents Reviewed 1

File Name	Coding - Description
SRF - 2021 Self-Assessment	**001**. HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) Inspection 2021/22 self-assessment against HMICFRS Criteria
HMICFRS 2021/2 Fire and Rescue Service Report 2021-22. An Inspection of Surrey Fire and Rescue	**002a**. "Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22 Effectiveness, efficiency and people An inspection of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service"
HMICFRS 2021/2 State of Fire and Rescue Services in England	**002b**. General report covering all English FRS.
High-level HMICFRS 21.22 IIP	**003a**. SRFS Action Plan
2022_04_08_HMICFRS 21.22 IIP v1.0	**003b**. Inspection Improvement Plan December 2021 (reviewed 08 April 2022)
30112020_IIPUpdate_LL	**003c**. Inspection Improvement Plan Deliverable and Quality 2020
IIP Update 29 July2019v5	**003d** Inspection Improvement Plan from 2018-2019
Surrey FRS - VFM Position & Improvement Opportunities	**004a** SRFS VFM Position and Improvement Opportunities. External report on SFRS efficiency in service delivery
Assets Strategy Final v2	**004b** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Assets Strategy 2021-2024. Strategy on digital delivery and asset improvement for SFRS

File Name	Coding - Description
SFRS Medium Term Financial Strategy Final v2	**004c** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2024. "Form the Service's Economic Improvement and Sustainability Plan, underpinning the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), known as our Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP)"
Delivery of Services Strategy Final v3	**005a** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Delivery of Services Strategy 2021-2024 "Leaving no-one behind!"
People Strategy 2021-2024 on a page	**005b** a single page document which outlines a summary of SFRS people strategy
People Strategy Final v2	**005c** The full document of the People Strategy 2021-24
210222 SFRS Recruitment Strategy	**005d** An 8-slide PowerPoint presentation with the recruitment strategy