



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Service Improvement

Corporate Governance, Risk and Improvement Framework Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The framework brings together a unified approach to risk management and service improvement, using a structured Three Lines model aligned with the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. This ensures that risks and improvement priorities are identified and managed at the first line, progressed through the second line, and independently assured within the third line.

Core Code of Ethics

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

National Guidance

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

2. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services or in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Policy is to establish and embed a Corporate Governance, Risk and Improvement Framework that ensures effective oversight, delivery of priorities, informed decision-making, independent assurance, and continuous improvement to enhance performance and outcomes.

Objectives:

- To maintain a robust governance, risk and improvement framework with clear accountability, effective controls, and compliance with statutory and strategic requirements.
- To deliver strategic priorities and improvement activity through clear plans, defined ownership, and effective performance monitoring.
- To support risk-informed decision-making and demonstrate improved performance and community outcomes through the effective use of data, intelligence, and feedback.
- To deliver independent assurance over governance, risk management, and internal control arrangements.
- To embed learning, insight, and adaptation to strengthen organisational performance and resilience.

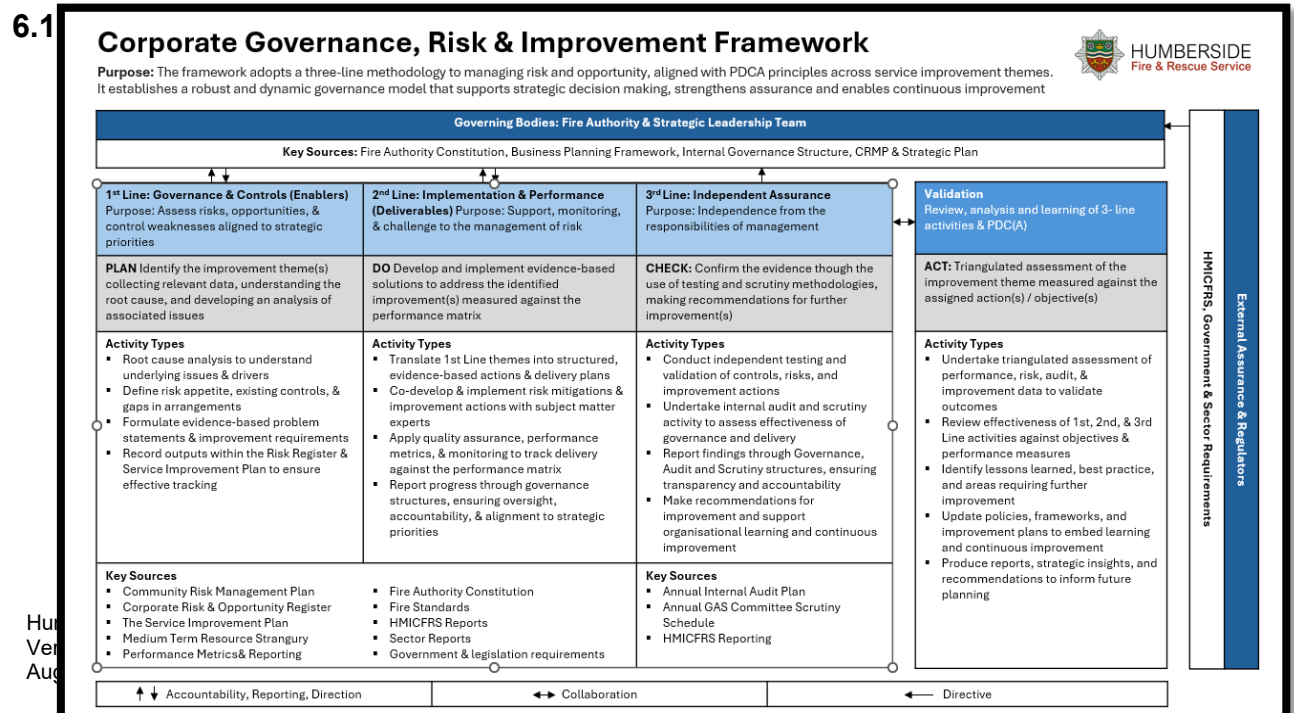
4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Equality Impact Assessment
- Community Risk Management Plan
- Legal References:
Fire Services Act 2004
- National Guidance Reference:
National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services
- Fire Standards:
Leading the Service and Internal Governance and Assurance
- Policy Delivery Guidance (PDG):
 - Corporate Risk and Opportunity Management PDG,
 - Internal Audit PDG,
 - Fire Standards PDG,
 - The Service Improvement Management PDG

5. DEFINITIONS

- Corporate - Provides the structure and assurance that the Service is operating as a cohesive, well-governed organisation responsive to risk, aligned to strategic priorities, Community Risk Management Plan, National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services and the Fire Services Act 2004.
- Governance - Processes, and oversight arrangements that ensure the Service operates lawfully, ethically, and effectively, with clear accountability and decision-making.
- Risk - The identification, assessment, and management of potential threats or opportunities that could impact the Service's ability to achieve its objectives.
- Improvement - The continuous process of learning, adapting, and enhancing performance, services, and outcomes.

6. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK



6.2 Content and Context

1st Line Governance & Controls (Enablers)

The Service identifies and analyses corporate risks, opportunities, and improvement themes using data and risk assessment tools, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities and formal recording within governance frameworks such as the Risk Register and Service Improvement Plan.

2nd Line Implementation & Performance (Deliverables)

The Service translates identified 1st Line themes into structured, evidence-based actions, providing oversight, support, and constructive challenges through governance arrangements, quality assurance, and integration within directorate, tactical and delivery plans.

3rd Line Independent Assurance

Independent assurance is provided through robust scrutiny and evidence testing, including internal audit activity, to validate the effectiveness of 1st and 2nd line activity, while offering recommendations to strengthen governance, controls, and overall service delivery.

Validation and Learning

Undertake a triangulated assessment of improvement themes by reviewing outputs, outcomes, and effectiveness, utilising the Fire Standards, Service Improvement Plan and Risk and Opportunity Register (as applicable) across all three lines to confirm performance, impact, and alignment with strategic objectives, while driving learning and informing future improvement planning.

Improvement Themes (PDCA Cycle): Improvement themes progress through a structured lifecycle from identification (PLAN), delivery (DO) and independent validation (CHECK) to final evaluation and performance confirmation (ACT), ensuring continuous improvement and risk reduction.

Activity Types: Activity types set out the actions (not exhaustive) each line undertakes to plan, deliver, check and validate improvement and risk management. They translate the framework from high-level intent into structured, evidence-based activity.

Key Sources: Aligned information sources across all lines, strategic plans, risk registers, improvement plans, audit outputs, and performance reporting, to ensure consistency of evidence, effective triangulation, and a single version of the truth.

6.3 Governing Bodies (Roles, Responsibilities and Enablers)

Provide strategic direction, oversight, and accountability, ensuring that risk, performance, and improvement activities are aligned to the Business Planning Framework and organisational priorities, through two key stakeholder groups which are:

- **Humberside Fire Authority (HFA)**

Corporate Governance, Risk and Improvement Framework

Statutory governing body responsible for overseeing Humberside Fire and Rescue Service. Core roles and responsibilities of the HFA include; approval of strategic plans, holding the Service to account, providing democratic accountability and delegation of Service delivery to the Chief Fire Officer.

- **Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)**

Senior officer leadership group led by the Chief Fire Officer, with core responsibilities including; operational delivery and implementation of the HFA strategy, managing service performance, resources and risk, translating strategic intent into operational plans.

6.4 Independent Assurance

Objective, third-line activity that tests and evaluates whether governance, risk management and improvement actions are effective, providing impartial confidence and identifying areas for further improvement.

Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee (GAS)

A formal committee established under the Authority's Constitution

Purpose: The GAS Committee exists to provide independent assurance to the HFA on the adequacy, effectiveness, and integrity of the Service. It operates as:

- A scrutiny body, reviewing performance, policy, and key organisational issues
- An audit committee, overseeing internal and external audit and financial assurance
- A governance body, monitoring adherence to governance standards, ethics, and constitutional arrangements

The Committee aligns directly with the HFA's broader statutory responsibility to ensure proper governance, risk management, and efficient use of public resources.

How it enables the framework: In practical terms, GAS acts as a key line of defence within the governance model, ensuring:

- Public accountability is maintained
- Decisions are made transparently and in line with legislation and policy
- Continuous improvement is evidenced and challenged

Internal Audit

Independent assurance that evaluates governance, risk management, and internal control effectiveness.

Purpose: To provide objective insight and assurance to strategic and corporate leaders and the Fire Authority on the effectiveness of controls, compliance, and performance.

How it enables the framework: It delivers third-line assurance by testing controls, validating evidence, and providing recommendations that strengthen governance, risk management, and continuous improvement.

6.5 External Assurance and Regulators

Purpose: External assurance and regulation, including HMICFRS inspection and external audit provide independent, objective validation of the Service's governance, performance, and financial management. Inspection activity assesses effectiveness, leadership, and the impact of scrutiny, identifying Areas for Improvement and driving service improvement planning, while external audit provides assurance on financial control, compliance, and value for money, highlighting risks and informing the Annual Governance Statement.

The Fire Services Act, National frameworks, standards, and sector bodies, such as Fire Standards, National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association, and National Operational Guidance define expected levels of performance, best practice, and sector benchmarks, promoting consistency and continuous improvement across services.

How it enables the framework: Provides clear benchmarks for self-assessment and external validation, ensuring alignment with national expectations and professional standards, and underpinning evidence used for inspection and assurance reporting.

6.6 Key Source Information

Fire Authority Constitution

The formal governance document that sets out the roles, responsibilities, powers, and decision-making arrangements of the Fire Authority.

Purpose: To ensure the Authority operates lawfully, transparently, and with clear accountability in delivering its statutory functions and governance responsibilities.

How it enables the framework: It provides the overarching governance foundation, defining authority, accountability, and scrutiny arrangements that underpin effective risk management, assurance, and service improvement.

Business Planning Framework

A structured annual planning cycle that aligns strategic priorities, plans, and performance reporting across the Service.

Purpose: To translate strategic objectives (e.g. CRMP and Strategic Plan) into deliverable actions, ensuring coordinated planning, monitoring, and reporting.

How it enables the framework: It ensures alignment between governance, risk, and improvement activities by providing a clear mechanism for planning, tracking, and reporting progress against priorities.

Internal Governance Structure

The system of boards, committees, and meetings (e.g. SLT, Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee) that oversee decision-making, performance, and risk.

Corporate Governance, Risk and Improvement Framework

Purpose: To provide structured oversight, accountability, and escalation routes for governance, risk, and performance activities across the Service.

How it enables the framework: It acts as the central coordination mechanism for monitoring risk, tracking improvement, and providing assurance through defined reporting and escalation routes.

Community Risk Management Plan

The Service's statutory strategic document that sets out how risks to the community are identified, assessed, and mitigated through service delivery priorities.

Purpose: To define the Service's long-term risk profile and establish strategic priorities for prevention, protection, and response activities.

How it enables the framework: It provides the strategic foundation for corporate risk identification and prioritisation, ensuring that governance, assurance, and improvement activity are aligned to community risk and statutory requirements.

Strategic Plan

A high-level Service plan that sets the Service's vision, strategic objectives, and long-term outcomes, in delivery of the CRMP.

Purpose: To provide clear direction and priorities for the organisation, ensuring alignment with national frameworks, governance expectations, and performance ambitions.

How it enables the framework: It establishes the overarching direction for governance, risk management, and improvement, ensuring all activity is aligned to clearly defined Service objectives.

Tactical Plan

Directorate team level plans that translate strategic objectives into specific actions, deliverables, and performance measures.

Purpose: To operationalise the Strategic Plan by defining clear actions, ownership, and timelines for delivery across the Service.

How it enables the framework: Provides the practical mechanism for delivering improvement and managing risk within the Plan–Do–Check–Act cycle, ensuring that strategic priorities are implemented, monitored, and assured through governance structures and directorate team workstreams

Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register

A central repository for identifying, assessing, and managing strategic and directorate risks and opportunities.

Purpose: To ensure risks are owned, assigned the most effective appetite statement, evaluated, mitigated, and monitored, with clear visibility at Strategic leadership and Fire Authority level.

Corporate Governance, Risk and Improvement Framework

How it enables the framework: It provides the core mechanism linking risk management to service improvement, ensuring that identified risks drive prioritised improvement actions and assurance activity.

Service Improvement Plan

A structured plan that captures and tracks improvement themes, actions, and outcomes across the Service

Purpose: To coordinate the development, delivery, and monitoring of improvement activity aligned to Service priorities and identified risks.

How it enables the framework: It operationalises improvement activity within the PDCA cycle, ensuring that learning from risk, audit, and performance drives continuous improvement.

Fire Standards

Nationally agreed professional standards for sector specific activities that define expected levels of performance, governance, and service delivery.

Purpose: To provide benchmarks, guidance, and assurance criteria to support consistent and effective service delivery.

How it enables the framework: They establish clear performance expectations and assurance benchmarks, informing governance, improvement planning, and gap analysis across the Service.

6.7 Integrated Processes

Performance Reporting

Purpose: To provide transparent assurance on Service performance against the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Ensure accountability, governance, and continuous improvement across service delivery.

How it enables the framework: Provides a comprehensive annual view of performance, supported by corporate (bi-annual) reporting, conducting trend analysis and year-on-year comparisons. Review and refinement performance measures, metrics, and reporting themes.

Performance Monitoring Processes and Meetings

Purpose: Provide a structured, evidence-based approach to ensure the Service is delivering against strategic objectives and CRMP priorities. To ensure we operate effectively and efficiently across all service areas, comply with statutory requirements and internal policies, identify risks, gaps, and emerging issues early and provide assurance to Strategic leaders, Elected Members, and external bodies (e.g. HMICFRS)

Corporate Governance, Risk and Improvement Framework

How it enables the framework: Monthly SLT, CLT, and TLG performance meetings are a key governance mechanism, bringing together performance data, scrutiny, and leadership oversight to:

- Review and challenge performance
- Make informed decisions
- Track delivery and accountability
- Drive continuous improvement

Positive Practice

A national repository managed through the NFCC that enables fire and rescue services to submit and share interventions and approaches identified as innovative or positive practice.

Purpose: To facilitate sector-wide learning by capturing, benchmarking, and disseminating effective and innovative practices that address operational, organisational, or community risks. Internally, to systematically capture learning, highlight effective approaches, and promote a culture of continuous improvement by recognising and evaluating practices across the Service.

How it enables the framework: It strengthens the framework by providing external validation and benchmarking, enabling the Service to compare its approaches, adopt best practice, and demonstrate evidence of learning and improvement to HMICFRS and wider stakeholders. Internally, it is established to manage the process for identifying, recording, and categorising practices as innovative, promising, or positive through structured submission mechanisms.

If anyone requires any further guidance / information regarding this document, please contact Corporate Assurance