Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service

Corporate Governance Framework
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1. Introduction

Good corporate governance is fundamental to any effective organisation and is the hallmark of any well managed corporate entity. Correctly applied good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and ultimately, good outcomes for all concerned.

A governance framework comprises of the systems, processes, culture and values by which an organisation is directed and controlled, and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the communities it is responsible for. It enables an organisation to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have ultimately led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The purpose of this framework is to articulate Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service’s vision, strategic regulatory compliance, accountability and decision making processes. The object of the framework is to help provide transparency, clarity of purpose and encourage ownership amongst our staff, stakeholders and partners.

The framework is designed to contribute towards a better common understanding of corporate governance within the Service and is aligned to the six core principles set out in guidance[^1] issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) namely:

1. Focusing on the organisation’s purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users
2. Performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles
3. Promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour
4. Taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk
5. Developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective
6. Engaging stakeholders and making accountability real

GFRS will ensure that all areas of activity within each of the six core principles are assessed on an annual basis with gaps being addressed (Annual Governance Analysis and Action Plan) and identified risks where appropriate, reflected in the Corporate Risk Register.

The framework is interdependent on, and designed to underpin and interface with Gloucestershire County Council’s approach to Corporate Governance as a whole. In order to provide a comprehensive approach to corporate governance the following additional information is produced to underpin this framework:

- An Annual Governance Analysis and Action Plan

The Annual Governance Analysis and Action Plan is cross mapped to the six core principles of governance and is designed to show how the Service meets these principles.

2. About the Service

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is an integral element of the County Council and is responsible for delivering fire and rescue services to all of the communities throughout the county of Gloucestershire.

The Service’s headquarters are based within the county’s Tri-Service Centre at Quedgeley, Gloucester (alongside the Police and Ambulance Services), and emergency response is delivered by fire appliances and fire-fighters from a network of 21 fire stations located strategically across the county.

The Service is broken down into a number of functional areas:

- Community Safety (Prevention, Protection, Response and Resilience)
- Training, Operational Assurance, Safety and GCC Centralised functions including: financial management and human resource
- Business Planning, Strategy, Risk Management and Performance
- Technical and Logistical support
- Civil Protection and Regulatory Services

2.1 Statutory Duties and Responsibilities

The legislation governing the Fire and Rescue Service is covered by the following:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Service (Emergencies)(England) Order 2007

The primary legislative provisions which determine the functions of the Service include:

- Promoting fire safety
- Extinguishing fires and protecting life and property
- Rescuing people from road traffic accidents (and a large range of other risks determined through the Emergencies Order)
- Responding to other types of emergencies
- Entering into reinforcement schemes with other fire authorities for mutual assistance
- Assessing the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning; and in this regard to:
  - Put in place emergency plans
  - Put in place business continuity management arrangements
  - Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
o Share information with other local responders to enhance coordination; and,
o Cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency.


The Government outlines expectations of English Fire & Rescue Services through the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. One of the Governments expectations is the assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect communities, including those of a cross border, multi-authority and/or national nature.

Key priorities set out in the Framework include:

- Identifying and assessing the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that Gloucestershire faces
- Making provision for prevention and protection activities and responding to incidents within Gloucestershire appropriately
- Working in partnership with the communities of Gloucestershire and a wide range of partners both locally and nationally to deliver a fire and rescue service; and
- Being accountable to the communities of Gloucestershire for the service we provide through an annual ‘Statement of Assurance’.

Under the framework all Fire & Rescue Services must produce a local Integrated Risk Management Plan that gives due regard to Community Risk Registers and any other local risk analyses as appropriate.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service’s Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2015–18 is the Service’s analysis of the county’s community risk profile, together with our strategic approach for effectively managing that risk over the identified period.

Our current IRMP (2015 – 2018) can be viewed by clicking on this link:

2.2 Service Drivers

To meet expectations laid down in statute the Service has developed and implemented the following vision:

Our Mission:
Working Together for a Safer Gloucestershire.

Mission Statement:

“Working in partnership we will provide the highest standard of community safety and emergency response services to the communities of Gloucestershire”.

Strategic Aims:

- Prevention and Protection: Work with our local communities to reduce risks to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies
- **Response and Resilience**: Respond promptly and effectively to deal with fires and other emergencies when they occur

- **People**: Ensure our services are delivered by well equipped, highly skilled, motivated and well developed workforce which is able to work safely and whose composition reflects the diverse community

- **Performance**: Monitor our performance to ensure we continually improve and deliver value for money

**Our key focus:**

- Reducing the number and severity of fires, road traffic collisions and other emergency incidents occurring in Gloucestershire

- Reducing the severity of injuries due to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergency incidents

- Reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents

- Safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural)

- Providing value for money.

**Our core values:**

We fully support and adhere to the national fire and rescue service core values set out below:

- **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
  - Recognising good work
  - Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
  - Personal development
  - Co-operative and inclusive working

- **Diversity** – we value diversity in the Service and Community by:
  - Treating everyone fairly and with respect
  - Providing solutions for different needs and expectations
  - Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression
  - Challenging prejudice and discrimination

- **Improvement** – we value improvement at all levels of the Service by:
  - Accepting responsibility for our performance
  - Being open minded
3. The Governance Framework

3.1 The Framework

The governance framework enables Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to monitor the achievement of strategic objectives, and to consider whether objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money. The systems associated with internal control are integral to the framework (i.e. policies, processes, tasks, behaviours, performance and other aspects of the organisation) and ensure that:

- Activities are conducted in accordance with the laws, regulations, internal policies and proper standards
- Significant risks are recognised, appropriately managed and recorded
- Assets are safeguarded from inappropriate use, or from loss and fraud
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively
- Human, financial, environmental and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively
- Records and information are properly maintained
- Effective arrangements are in place for timely, relevant and reliable internal and external reporting
- The organisation’s values and ethical standards are met.

The framework below (Figure 1) outlines the overarching governance arrangements and the interdependencies between the functional aspects namely planning, assurance, monitoring and reporting.
Statutory / Corporate Requirements

Corporate Risk Register

Corporate Strategy

IRMP

GFRS SLT

GFRS Statement of Assurance

Annual Business Plan

Service Delivery

Team Plans

Legislative / Public Accountability

Gloucestershire County Council

Annual Governance Statement

External Assurance
GCC Internal Audit
Peer Review
Benchmarking
Customer Satisfaction Survey (ORS)
Post Incident Feedback Complaints

Internal Assurance
Budgetary Controls
Commercial Assurance
Project Management
Risk Management
Partnership Agreements
Business Continuity
Operational Assurance

Fig 1
3.2 The Governance Structure

In order to ensure that the governance arrangements outlined in Fig 1 are appropriately managed requires a formal governance structure to be in place. The structure that applies to Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service is shown in Fig 2 below:

![Governance Structure Diagram]

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.3.1 Gloucestershire County Council is responsible for:

- Undertaking the role of the Fire Authority as prescribed under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Setting the overarching Corporate Strategy
- Making key decisions where:
  - Significant change or impact will affect two or more communities or wards
  - Expenditure or savings exceeding £500,000 are concerned
- Oversight, challenge, evaluation and reporting in respect of GFRS business decisions and activities
- Internal audit of GFRS activities to ensure, among other things, the correctness of all income and expenditure and;
- Provision of an Annual Governance Statement as set out in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015
3.3.2 The Chief Fire Officer is appointed by the Fire Authority and forms an integral part of the Chief Officers Management Team within GCC thereby providing a direct link between GFRS and GCC.

Under the ‘Scheme of Delegations’ (contained within GCC Constitution), the Chief Fire Officer is responsible for and can make ‘executive’ decisions concerning:

- The management of operations of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Note: Any decision regarding expenditure of more than £250,000 must be formally recorded via GCC.

The Chief Fire Officer is also responsible for:

- Overall planning and management of the budget for GFRS
- Reporting to the Cabinet and Fire Authority and recommending for their consideration matters affecting finance and Service policy.

The Chief Fire Officer also undertakes the following in relation to regulatory services:

- Sign warrants and authorise Officers to enforce the legislation referred to in the Trading Standards Legislation Master Lists A to D held by the Head of Legal Services and issue statutory notices in relation to that legislation.

The Chief Fire Officer is required to assist in the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement for the Council by providing a Members/Directors/Service Assurance Statement covering the internal control framework operating within GFRS.

The Chief Fire Officer must also ensure a Statement of Assurance (incorporating a Statement of Accounts) is produced for GFRS which demonstrates that the service has fulfilled its obligations under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012).

3.3.3 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer will assume command of the Service in the absence of the Chief Fire Officer and will ensure that all responsibilities and duties delegated are carried out in accordance with the appropriate Acts and Regulations.

3.3.4 GFRS Strategic Leadership Team is collectively responsible for:

- Setting the overall strategy for the organization (in line with GCC’s Corporate Strategy); which is encompassed in GFRS Mission Statement:

  ‘Working together we will provide the highest standard of community safety and emergency response services to the communities of Gloucestershire’

- Providing leadership - primary focus is a collective strategic leadership but this will require the support of individual, team and operational leadership.
• Governance – ensuring a framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community by taking decisions to achieve our objectives
• Delivering Improvement – providing clear communication of direction with specific and measurable performance expectations
• Making service level decisions that affect the whole organization
• Identifying, recording and appropriately managing corporate risks
• Ensuring delivery of effective and efficient services
• A collaborative approach to making efficiency savings

**Note:** Although SLT can endorse a direction of travel, they cannot make a collective decision - all decisions require individual ascent.

### 3.3.5 Steering/Management Groups

Steering/Management Groups have senior managers nominated as lead officers for specific areas of service delivery. The nominated officers are responsible for ensuring activities are carried out in line with and directly contribute towards delivery of:

- GFRS ‘Mission’ Statement and core aims
- Identified objectives set out in the IRMP
- Outcomes laid down within the Annual Business Plan

In order to meet these objectives, the nominated lead officers are also responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining service policy and procedures
- Developing individual team plans
- Managing delivery of effective and efficient services
- Reporting progress against plans
- Provision of measurable data to SLT cross mapped to identified targets and indicators in the Annual Business Plan.

### 3.3.6 Functional Teams (Delivery, Support and Civil Protection)

Functional Teams (Delivery, Support and Civil Protection) utilising a variety of methods are responsible for delivery of GFRS’s stated aims, namely:

- **Aim 1** - Working with our local communities to reduce risks to life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies
- **Aim 2** - Responding promptly and effectively to deal with fire and other emergencies when they occur
- **Aim 3** - Ensure our services are delivered by a professional, well equipped, highly skilled, motivated and well developed workforce which is able to work safely and whose composition reflects our diverse community
- **Aim 4** - Monitor performance to ensure we continually improvement and deliver value for money
3.3.7 Individual Employees

All staff irrespective of their role or position within GFRS are required to comply with their individual contractual terms, scheme of conditions of service and GCC’s Employee Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct encompasses the following elements:

- Standards
- Personal Appearance
- Use of the Council's Facilities and Equipment
- Fraud and Corruption
- Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship
- Register of Gifts and Hospitality
- Disclosure and Use of Information
- Political Neutrality
- Relationships
- Appointments and Other Employment Matters
- Undertaking Additional Outside Work
- Arrest or conviction on civil or criminal charges
- Membership of clubs, societies and other organisations
- Equality Issues
- Health and Safety Issues
- Confidential Reporting Procedure (whistleblowing)
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Note: A full copy of the Employee Code of Conduct can be found on Staffnet using the link above.
4. Governance Mechanisms

4.1 Overview

Internal control systems are a significant part of the governance framework and are designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. They cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

Internal control systems are designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

4.2 Key Corporate Governance Strategies/Systems and Processes

4.2.1 GCC Arrangements

As an integral element of GCC, GFRS must adhere to internal control strategies, systems and processes put in place by GCC that contribute to effective governance arrangements and underpin the council's core principles. These are listed below:

- **The Council’s Constitution**: describes the individuals and groups that make up the County Council (that is, its “composition”) and the principal rules and procedures that govern the way it operates, including clearly defined decision making processes.

- **The Council Strategy**: defines the Council’s key priorities and plans, following full consultation with the communities of Gloucestershire.

- **Medium Term Financial Strategy**: describes the Council’s financial strategy and detailed budget to meet the priorities of the Council’s Strategy.

- **Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement and Strategy**: defines the Council’s response to fraud and irregularity.

- **Performance and Spending Framework**: defines the Council’s corporate performance management arrangements, including audits, inspections and assessments.

- **Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy**: defines how risk is managed within the Council and our partners.

- **Information Management and Security Policies**: defines how the Council’s information is managed and secured.

- **Members training programmes and briefings**: to support continued Member development.
• **Employee Code of Conduct:** (see 3.3.7 above)

• **Officers’ development programmes:** (to support continued officer development)

• **Customer Complaints Policy 2013 and Customer Care Standards:** enables the Council to act quickly and efficiently to put things right if something goes wrong; and to learn from customer complaints in order to improve our services and focus on the needs of our customers.

• **External Audit arrangements:** The District Audit Service (external audit) provide (a) an independent opinion on the financial statements and (b) a value for money conclusion focusing on financial resilience and the three ‘E’s i.e. Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness.

• **Internal Audit arrangements:** Internal Audit provide independent, objective assurance that the key risks to the achievement of objectives/priorities are adequately managed and that Anti-Fraud and Corruption arrangements are in place to ensure financial probity.

4.2.2 GFRS Arrangements

• **Integrated Risk Management Plan:** defines GFRS’s key priorities and plans over a specified period (normally 3 years), following full consultation with the communities of Gloucestershire.

• **Annual Business Plan:** produced by GFRS and linked to both Outcome Agreements in GCC’s Corporate Strategy and the IRMP. The plan sets out key elements of core business and includes the 'Balanced Scorecard' which outlines targets / indicators for the Service to deliver against; progress / performance in relation to these targets is scrutinised by SLT and reported upon to GCC.

• **Team Plans:** produced by functional teams and linked directly to the IRMP and Annual Business Plan. These plans set out key elements of "the day job" that teams work to and give the context for individual appraisals (Performance Development Review or PDR).

Team plans are underpinned by the Local Risk Management Plan which outlines how GFRS and identified partners will work together to promote safety in the communities across Gloucestershire and, further still by individual station plans that outline delivery of risk intervention measures at a ‘grass roots’ level.

Timescales for development of these plans and identified reporting periods are captured in the **Annual Planning and Performance Management Cycle;** see figure 3 on the following page.
• **Service Policies**: put into context the organisation’s strategy giving direction regarding a course or principle of action to be adopted by all Service personnel; in general terms these cover ‘day to day’ or core business activities.

Where there is a direct correlation to policies and operating principles between GCC and the Service, for example Equalities, Finance, Procurement etc, GFRS naturally defaults to, and follows GCC’s (as our ‘parent’ organisation) policy.

**All Service Policies can be found on ‘GFRSnet’ under the tab labelled ‘Policies and Procedures’**.

**All GCC policies can found on the GCC ‘staffnet’ system under the tab labelled ‘Policies, procedures and forms’**.
Note: Corporate and organisational policy is subject to periodic review and update; therefore it is best practice to refer to the electronic copy held on the respective system to ensure compliance with current practice/requirements.

- **Operational Procedures (BIS/SOP’s):** are based on generic risk assessments for specific incidents or types of hazard and encompass safe systems of work in order to protect and where possible, enhance fire-fighter safety arrangements within the operational environment.

  Standard Operating Procedures can be found on ‘GFRSnet’ under the tab labelled ‘Policies and Procedures’ in either the ‘Brigade Information System (BIS) or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP’s) folder.

- **Principles of Decision Making** (linked to the planning cycle)

  Responsibilities, authority and limitations in relation to decision making regarding GFRS activities are clearly outlined under section 3.3 Roles and Responsibilities. The overall process is outlined in figure 4 on the following page:

  Irrespective of the level at which a decision is being made or who holds / takes responsibility for making the decision, the principles of decision making (GCC Constitution) should be adhered to. These are:

  - They must be lawful
  - They must involve a proportionate exercise of power relative to the desired outcome
  - They should take proper account of consultation with others
  - They should have proper regard to officer’s advice
  - They should respect human rights
  - They should be made in public wherever this is appropriate and practicable
  - Their aims and outcomes should be clear
  - They should be properly reasoned and alternatives that are discounted should be identified and the reasons for rejection explained adequately
  - In addition, Cabinet, when taking decisions, must do so in accordance with council policy, the Cabinet Procedure and rules on Access to Information in Part 4 of the Constitution.

  The starting point to enable strategic decisions to be made in relation to GFRS activities must be an information paper set out on the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) Business Template. The template is designed to ensure that those putting information forward for due consideration have encompassed and undertaken actions required in relation to many of the decision making principles e.g. rationale and options, financial considerations, equalities impacts, requirements for consultation, etc.
Fig 4

- **Information paper / business case prepared by teams for consideration**

- **Chief Fire Officer (Chairperson)**
- **Strategic Leadership Team - decision making for GFRS**

- **Commissioning Board: 7 + 1**
- **Discuss issues and look at any impact across teams**

- **Lead Cabinet Members**

- **Chief Officer Management Team: GCC Director level.**
- **Formal meeting, strategic impacts, discuss issues, budgets**

- **Statutory Officers: Draft cabinet report and due regard**
- **Feedback to originator**

- **GCC managed process from this point**

- **COMT plus Cabinet of 8**
- **Informal run through of issues**

- **Cabinet of 8**
- **Formal sign off of key decisions**

- **Scrutiny for GFRS is the Environment and Communities group**
- **Mixed group of shadow members - can challenge process**

- **Call in period to challenge decision**
- **One week duration**

- **Decision made**
- **Formal**
If procedures dictate that information is required to be submitted beyond the remit of the Service for a formal decision to be made i.e. to individuals, boards, committees or Cabinet, the original author will need to contact GCC Democratic Services to ensure that:

- The appropriate corporate template has been completed and;
- That any briefing note or report is submitted within the appropriate timescale to allow for oversight to be applied before subsequent discussion / decision making takes place.

**Information Management and Security (Access to information)**

Information security means safeguarding information from unauthorised access or modification to ensure its:

- Confidentiality – ensuring that the information is accessible only to those authorised to have access;
- Integrity – safeguarding the accuracy and completeness of information by protecting against unauthorised modification;
- Availability – ensuring that authorised users have access to information and associated assets when required.

There are three primary pieces of legislation that cover information management and security:

- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000) and;
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998)

The [Data Protection Act](#) controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government.

Everyone responsible for using data has to follow strict rules called ‘data protection principles’. They must make sure the information is:

- used fairly and lawfully
- used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary
- handled according to people’s data protection rights
- kept safe and secure
- not transferred outside the European Economic Area without adequate protection
There is stronger legal protection for more sensitive information, such as:

- ethnic background
- political opinions
- religious beliefs
- health
- sexual health
- criminal records

Internal arrangements covering data protection / disclosure of information include:

- Service policy - Information Security Policy
- GCC Employee Code of Conduct covers disclosure and use of information
- All GFRS staff have been provided with guidance regarding their responsibilities in relation to data protection
- A nominated Senior Information Risk Owner is in place for GFRS
- Information Asset Owners are identified for all information types held by the Service
- Government Protective Marking Scheme for clarification and control of information is applied
- Information Asset Risk Assessments have been completed for all information types
- An information asset register with nominated responsible persons is in place
- ITTR systems are:
  - Secured from unauthorised external access
  - Have internal access controls (permissions based)
  - Are periodically tested for security (penetration testing).

The Freedom of Information Act provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways:

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

Arrangements for accepting, recording and responding to FOI requests are all centrally managed by GCC via the Information Management Service and Archives.
Internally, FOI requests are received and coordinated by the Strategic Support Officer or in their absence the Principle Officer's Support Team. The coordination role ensures that FOI requests submitted are valid and that GFRS provides accurate information in a timely manner without transgressing data protection legislation.

The **Public Interest Disclosure Act** was created by parliament to protect whistleblowers from detrimental treatment or victimisation from their employers after they have made a qualifying disclosure.

Qualifying disclosures are termed as any disclosure of information which, in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure, tends to show one or more of the following:

- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed,
- A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he is subject,
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur,
- The health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered,
- The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged, or
- Information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Note: GFRS personnel are covered by GCC’s procedures: Reporting Procedure For Employees (Whistle-Blowing) which can be found in Appendix 1 of the **Employee Code of Conduct**.

**Responsibilities:**

Information security is everyone’s responsibility and all employees, third parties and partners who have access to the Service’s information are required to comply with legislative requirements, specific corporate and service policy and supporting policies, standards, and procedures.

- **Financial management**
  
  GFRS do not have a bespoke service policy that governs financial management; specific financial guidance, accounting instructions and monitoring arrangements are all driven centrally by GCC.

  Detailed policy and procedural information regarding all aspects of financial management ('Revenue Budget Roles Statement', Accounting Instructions and
Financial Regulations) can be found on ‘staffnet’ under ‘Financial Guides and Manuals’.

As a Service, GFRS forecasts the overall budget on an annual basis. The forecast budget is then submitted to GCC for due consideration and approval by Cabinet in February. The diagram in figure 5 outlines the budget cycle.

**Budget and Strategy Cycle**

Internally, GFRS service areas (functions) are allocated their own budget. Each service area will have:

- An identified **Budget Manager** who has overall responsibility for the management of both the budgets and the budget holders within the services area(s) under their control
- A nominated **Budget Holder** who is responsible for the management of the cost centre(s) under their control.

The primary ‘tool’ used across GCC as a whole for financial management and reporting is the ‘SAP’ system. Those with financial responsibilities assigned to their role will need to be fully conversant with the system and the various financial management modules and processes.
Note: In all cases, it is imperative that those with responsibility for financial management irrespective of role are in receipt of specific training to undertake the function.

GFGR ensure oversight, financial prudence and due diligence are applied internally through the monthly Expenditure Management Group (EMG) meetings.

- Procurement arrangements

All GFGR employees must follow GCC Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, the Council’s Purchasing Guide, Contract Guidance Manual (when appropriate) and Accounting Instructions whenever any goods or services are purchased.

Employees may not order, in the name of GFGR or the Council, equipment or goods, whether with a discount or not, from official suppliers for their own personal use even if the cost is reimbursed in full to the Council.

In general terms the information in figure 6 below must be followed when considering procurement options.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type</strong> A (EU) B (£75k-D EU) C (£5k-£75k) D (£5k-£10k)</td>
<td>Single written quote</td>
<td>Three written quotes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>CLOSED event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> £3,000 to £5,000</td>
<td>Quick quote sent to selected suppliers</td>
<td>Three written quotes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Quick Quote on PreContract</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, Obligatory over £5k</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> £5,000 to £25,000</td>
<td>Quick quote sent to selected suppliers</td>
<td>Three written quotes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Quick Quote on PreContract</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, Obligatory over £5k</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Quick quote sent to selected suppliers</td>
<td>Three written quotes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Quick Quote on PreContract</td>
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<td>Obligatory over £5k</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong> £75,000 to £50,000 (EU threshold (£105,000))</td>
<td>Tender required</td>
<td>£25k- £41,000 tender required</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>You can advertise an opportunity on Contract Finder from within ProContract – event and form to complete. Based on the total (estimated) value of your contract – this includes extensions and any ongoing support costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> Above EU threshold</td>
<td>Tender process</td>
<td>Type A procurement</td>
<td>Above £4,104 tender required</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>You can advertise an opportunity on TED (OJEU) and Contract Finder from within ProContract – event and form to complete. Based on the total (estimated) value of your contract – this includes extensions and any ongoing support costs.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Further advice, information and assistance in relation to procurement can be sought from The Commercial Service and where appropriate, copies of the Procurement Guidance should be issued to those staff that are or become involved in purchasing supplies and services.

- **Performance management**

  By observing and reviewing performance across all areas of service delivery, GFRS can maintain and improve its ability to manage risks across the organisation. Learning from experience through the use of audits, monitoring and performance reviews supports the ethos of a learning organisation focused on continuous improvement and ensures delivery of an efficient and effective service which is ‘value for money’ in real terms.

  Monitoring of the organisation’s performance is carried out by the Strategic Leadership Team. In addition, quarterly reports of a core data set are monitored by Gloucestershire County Council’s Chief Officer Management Team, Cabinet and the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee. A mix of nationally accepted fire and rescue service performance indicators with local targets is used to track progress and monitor trends.

  Senior managers from across the Service will provide the primary source of internal assurance; it is also expected that assurances will be available from a wide range of external sources, including corporate assessments (GCC Internal Audit), inspections (Peer Review) and external audit (through the annual audit of GCC accounts (Grant Thornton) and value for money opinion).

  In addition we also aim to draw upon audits carried out by other agencies and the application of specific diagnostic tools.

  Reporting is through the governance structure (in line with the Annual Planning and Performance Management Cycle - sect 4.2.2), which ultimately delivers the transparency aspect of corporate governance.

### 4.2.3 Assurance

- **External Assurance Mechanisms**

  The following table outlines external assurance mechanisms that are designed to aid performance management and provide accountability for the organisation:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gloucestershire County Council</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Cabinet’s role is principally to formulate detailed policies and proposals for delivery of services within the policy and budgetary framework that is set by the full Council.</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversight and Scrutiny Management Committee</td>
<td>Direct, carry out and monitor the overview and scrutiny functions of the County Council.</td>
<td>Ad-hoc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Environmental and Communities Scrutiny | Carry out the overview and scrutiny functions of the County Council delivering the roles set out in Article 8 of the Constitution in the context of matters relating to portfolio specific services:  
  - The fire and rescue service, emergency management, trading standards, registration service and coroners  
    (Note: not an exhaustive list)                                                                 | Bi-monthly |
| Lead Cabinet Members                | Portfolio specific services – briefing, decision making and approval                      | Monthly                                                                                                                                  |
| Cabinet Officers Management Team    | Portfolio specific services – briefing, decision making and approval                      | Monthly                                                                                                                                  |
| Commercial Assurance Board          | The main aims of the Commercial Assurance Board are:-  
  - To provide a governance overview of the adequacy and effectiveness of commissioning, procurement and contract management arrangements.  
  - To ensure that prior to any decision to make a financial commitment to a third party a clear business rationale exists, that options including de-commissioning and collaboration have been assessed, and, where an external procurement is proposed, a procurement strategy is in place.  
  - To ensure that the Council as a whole is positioned to secure optimum value for money, manages its external supply risk and achieves its desired service outcomes; and  
  - To provide Council/COMT with an overview of the performance of all commercial activity to support achievement of corporate objectives. | Monthly   |

Commercial Assurance Board is not a decision-making body but rather one that provides specialist advice and assurance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commissioning Board</td>
<td>The key decision-making body for commercial and other commissioning projects, and will (as currently) review projects at key stages of their life-cycle</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Board</td>
<td>Provides independent challenge on significant issues, directing its attention mainly at a pre-project stage</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Audit</td>
<td>Routine audits - a series of regular reviews of the various financial systems. These are a mixture of establishment audits (schools, social care day centres, highways divisions etc.) and central system reviews (e.g. looking at the corporate creditor payments system). Ad hoc reviews of specific systems - where the approach is not just to ensure compliance with financial regulations but to comment on the overall efficiency of the system and to suggest improvements. Irregularity investigations - to investigate any suspicions or allegations of misuse of Council monies. Auditors will establish the facts of the case which may be used to institute disciplinary proceedings. Details of the investigation may also be passed to the police if fraud has been identified.</td>
<td>Ad-hoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Audit</td>
<td>The independent examination of the activities and accounts of local authorities.</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A local authority external auditor not only comments on the accuracy of accounts but also has a role in encouraging efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources through value for money studies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Association</td>
<td>Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge: Operational Assessment provides an opportunity for Fire and Rescue Authorities to assess themselves across a number of key aspects of service provision. Fire Peer Challenge allows FRAs to access independent input to support improvement, focusing on areas the FRA has identified as particularly seeking the input of peers.</td>
<td>Every 3 – 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFRS</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Research Services Ltd</td>
<td>Customer Satisfaction Survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent annual survey undertaken at the request of GFRS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public | Post Incident Feedback | Returns made via ‘After the Fire’ questionnaire. | Ad- hoc

Public | Complaints | Independent submissions from the public to the Service. | Ad- hoc

- **Internal Assurance Mechanisms**

  The following table outlines internal assurance mechanisms that are designed to aid performance management and provide accountability for the organisation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership Team</td>
<td>Governance, strategy and decision making</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expenditure Monitoring Group</td>
<td>Financial oversight and scrutiny</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rep Bodies Level 2 (Strategic)</td>
<td>Oversight and scrutiny for Level 1 decisions where formal agreement cannot be reached. Governance and appeals</td>
<td>Ad- hoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership Meetings</td>
<td>Initial agreement (MOU) and governance arrangements</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contract Management</td>
<td>Management meeting – Performance management</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Liaison meeting – Contract governance and oversight</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information Exchange</td>
<td>Horizon scanning / situational awareness / ground truth</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Continuity Management Plans</td>
<td>Plans to continue operations if the organisation is affected by different levels of disaster which can be localized short term events, to days long organisation wide problems, to a permanent loss of a facility/function. Provision of these plans addresses a requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004).</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Tactical | Partnership Meetings                          | Operational management and performance monitoring                                                                                              | Various   |
|          | Senior Managers Forum                         | Situational awareness / workforce governance                                                                                                    | Monthly   |
|          | Rep Bodies Level 1 (Tactical)                 | Discussion consultation, negotiation, agreement. Day to day interface between organisation and rep bodies to consider issues affecting terms and conditions of the workforce. | Monthly   |
|          | Managers Technical Mornings                   | Knowledge and information exchange; dissemination of operational learning                                                                   | Monthly   |
| Operational Performance Improvement Group | Ensure the safety of all operational personnel in an incident and training context. To promote and maintain a high level of operational assurance. | Bi-monthly |
| Health & Safety Working Group | Instigating, developing and carrying out measures to secure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees | Bi-monthly |

| Team Meetings | Ensure day to day delivery of objectives and projects to meet organisational strategy | Weekly / Monthly |
| Watch Managers Forum | Situational awareness, knowledge and information exchange; dissemination of operational learning | Quarterly |
| Employee Network Group | Development and sharing of organisation culture and values | Quarterly |
| Hazmat Officers Group | | |
| Fire Investigation Officers Group | Horizon scanning, monitoring and review of SOP’s and sharing / dissemination of good practice | 6 monthly |
| Water Incident Managers | | Ad-hoc |
| N-ILO Officers Group | | Ad-hoc |

| Operational Assurance | Operational Assurance is a safety management system, underpinned by the key “Safe Person Principles” which aims to support the delivery of a safe, effective and efficient operational response using planned and systematic processes to minimise organisational risk. It assures the effectiveness of GFRS arrangements in the implementation of policy, process and procedure measured against recognised fire and rescue service standards. The four key elements of Operational Assurance are: Station Self Audit | Continuous |
| | Targeted & Key Skill Audits | |
| | Operational Performance Audits (OPA’s) | |
| | Post Incident Operational Debriefs. | |

4.2.4 Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

- **GCC Annual Governance Statement**
  GFRS provides a [Members/Directors/Service Assurance Statement](#) covering the internal control framework operating within GFRS.

- **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012)**
  GFRS provides a [Statement of Assurance](#) (incorporating a Statement of Accounts) demonstrating that the service has fulfilled its obligations under the framework.
The communications / feedback loop (governance and assurance) is outlined below in figure 7.

- **Annual Business Plan**
  Data and statistics aligned to identified targets within the Annual Business Plan are collected and collated by GFRS and reported to GCC via the ‘**In-phase**’ system and to SLT on a quarterly basis.
Financial Reporting
The primary ‘tool’ used across GCC as a whole for financial management and reporting is the ‘SAP’ system. (See financial management under Sect 4.2.2).

Project Management
Information and data regarding major projects are recorded, up-dated and monitored via GCC’s ‘Verto’ system; reporting is to the Commercial Assurance Board and the respective Service Head / Director of Service.

Business/Team Plans
Nominated Lead Officers periodically report progress against identified work-streams to SLT for oversight / monitoring against the Annual Business Plan.

PDR’s
PDRs are designed to be a continuous process enabling managers and staff to discuss and review openly their role and performance in helping the Service and Council to achieve priorities outlined in respective business plans.

Appraisals are conducted on an annual basis with an interim review undertaken at 6 months.

Training and Development
The PDR-pro system is utilised by individuals, line managers and the Training Team to capture information regarding individual training and development.

Human Resource Management
Human resource management and monitoring is undertaken via the Resilience and Day Staff Rota’s alongside Gartan; issue reporting is via SAP and Gartan (Payroll / absence management) by line managers and RIVO (Near Miss / Accidents) by line managers and investigating officers.

Incident Information
Incident data and statistics are collected and reported via:

- The ‘IRS’ system (national tool)
- The ‘Datahub’ (local tool)
- Fortek BOSS (incident log and communications)

With the exception of IRS which is completed between Fire Control and the Incident Commander of an incident, all other information and statistical data regarding incidents is captured by Fire Control.