

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report for Meeting held on 27 April 2011

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

Following a review carried out by its Audit and Performance Management Committee the Fire Authority has adopted its 2011 / 12 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

Service Plan and Public Value Performance Measures

Following recommendations from its Strategy and Resources Committee the Fire Authority has agreed its Service Plan 2011 / 12, which sets out the Fire and Rescue Service's vision, aims and the public value measures, which it will use to monitor those aims.

Information and Communications Technology

Service Officers have, over the last year, analysed its network and other risk critical systems and have identified that the whole network requires rebuilding. This will provide opportunities to link with partners' networks (such as Shropshire Council) to save money on the long-term, increased resilience of the network and bring the network up to international standards. The move to the new Headquarters and the need to make long-term fire control provision presents the opportunity to carry out much of this improvement work in a safe way with limited service interruption. To enable this work to go ahead the Fire Authority has approved the creation of an Information and Communications Technology Improvements reserve.

Streamlining of Fire Authority Committees

The Fire Authority has agreed various changes to its committee structure in order to make it more efficient. These include:

- Merging its Appeals Committee with the Human Resources Committee;
- Dissolving the Urgency Committee; and
- Dissolving the Budget Working Group.

Approval of the Statement of Accounts 2010/11

Recent changes in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 affect the timing of the approval of the Statement of Accounts for the last financial year. Having agreed to retain approval of the Statement of Accounts, the Fire Authority has asked that its October meeting be brought forward to September to accommodate such approval by the statutory deadline. This will also enable its Audit and Performance Management Committee to review and comment upon the Statement of Accounts prior to its submission to the Authority for approval.

Fire Control

In December 2010 the Coalition Government announced its intention to cancel the national FiReControl project with immediate effect on the grounds that the appointed contractor was unable to deliver on time, to cost and quality. Recognising that Fire and Rescue Authorities have a statutory function to deal with calls for assistance, the Government published (in January 2011) a consultation document on the future of Fire and Rescue Control Services in England. The Government believes that the fire and rescue community is best placed to decide on the future of its control services, and it will not, therefore, impose any solution.

The Fire Authority considered the available options and formally responded to Government (concerning the consultation exercise) with the view that the most prudent route forward would be through a partnership approach with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to secure the formation of a shared resilient control room infrastructure with common operating, technological and procedural standards / practices operated from two remote locations.

The two organisations have now prepared an Outline Business Case in respect of a joint application for central government funding to support the implementation of the proposed 'shared' control room infrastructure. The OBC will be supplemented by a formal overarching Memorandum of Understanding, setting out the full scope and expected outcomes of the collaboration.

Information and Communications Technology Strategy

The Fire Authority has agreed to enter into negotiations with Shropshire Council to review options for a shared services arrangement to secure improvements to the Service's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure. Such a shared services arrangement would make effective use of the proposed ICT reserve to support migration to the Council's new Wide Area Network, which will underpin the Service's ICT Strategy for the next three to five-year period.

Officers will now commence formal discussions with Shropshire Council to develop a detailed business case, setting out the benefits, full costs and budget implications of migrating to the Council's ICT network.



Stuart West
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
April 2011

Appendix

National / Local Indicators for 2010/11

Background Papers

Agenda and papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 27 April 2011

The agendas and reports (with the exception of exempt or confidential items) for all Fire Authority meetings and those of its Committees appear on the Brigade's website:

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk

To access reports go to the Authority's website. Click on Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority on the right hand side of the screen, then Fire and Rescue Authority, then 27 April 2011 and the various reports and appendices will be listed.

If you have any difficulty with the website, please contact Lynn Ince, Management Support Officer on 01743 260225.