

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Annual Meeting held on 20 July 2011

Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Stuart West has been elected Chair of the Fire Authority and Councillor David Minnery has been appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority. Both will hold office until the Annual Meeting in July 2012.

Retirement of the Treasurer

Mr Keith Dixon will retire from his post of Treasurer of the Fire Authority on 5 August 2011. The Chair of the Authority together with representatives of the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups thanked Mr Dixon for his hard work and dedication to the Authority over the last 14 years. The Chair then presented Mr Dixon with a certificate of service and a Fire Authority plaque.

Committee Membership and Constitution

The Fire Authority has agreed the appointment of Members to serve on its committees. The constitution of all the Fire Authority's Committees and Working Groups has been reviewed and agreed. In addition, the Fire Authority has appointed Councillor Stuart West as its representative on the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Assembly and Fire Service Forum.

Review of Scheme of Delegation to Officers and of Standing Orders

The Fire Authority has undertaken its annual review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and of its Standing Orders. Minor amendments have been made to these documents to reflect changes in legislation and / or for the purposes of clarity.

In accordance with the Fire Authority's Standing Orders, the amendments agreed will stand adjourned until the next meeting of the Fire Authority in October 2010.

Budget and Financial Monitoring

The Fire Authority has approved virements to its budget totalling £285,000. This will be used to fund expenditure on the St Michael's Street Scheme in 2011/12, thereby reducing debt charges by £6,000 in 2011/12 and £24,000 in future years.

As a consequence of concerns about the stability of financial markets in the wake of Greek sovereign debt crisis, the Fire Authority has restricted its lending for the time being to the Debt Management Office and local authorities.

Partnership Working and the Outcomes

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, in conjunction with other organisations, continues in its aim to create a 'Safer and Stronger Shropshire'. The Service is developing strong and consistent links with the Local Strategic Partnerships in both the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin areas. Partnerships include work with the elderly through the Red Cross and a pilot scheme in Ludlow, which aims to target fire safety and signposting activities for elderly and vulnerable people through local general practitioners. Youth partnership work continues in conjunction with the Youth Offending Service and the Institute of Advanced Motorists amongst others.

FiReControl Project – National Audit Office Review

The Authority received an executive summary of the National Audit Office's recently published findings into the failure of the FiReControl project. The summary sets out the key findings of the National Audit Office's investigation and their recommendations for future projects.

In addition to those areas outlined in the report, Members' attention was drawn to the following areas, which the report did not cover:

- 1) The cost to fire authorities, which is estimated to run into millions of pounds;
- 2) The FireLink project, which was an integral part of the FiReControl project and which is still costing money; and
- 3) The impact on staff, including Fire Control Operators, whose careers have effectively been put on hold for several years with the risk of redundancy and temporary staff whose contracts were terminated at short notice.

The Fire Authority agreed that representations regarding these issues and, in particular, those regarding the costs of the failed FiReControl and of FireLink should be made to Communities and Local Government by senior officers of the Service.

Corporate Risk Management Summary

The Fire Authority has received its fifth Annual Corporate Risk Management Summary Report, which informs Members about the corporate risk management work undertaken during the previous twelve months, as well as summarising the risk environment, in which the Fire Service currently operates.



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

Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 20 July 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 Service'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 Committee Meetings, then Fire and Rescue Authority, then 20 July 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.