

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Meeting held on 26 September 2011

Statement of Accounts 2010/11

The Fire Authority is required to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2010/11 by 30 September 2011, following sign-off by the Authority's responsible finance officer by 30 June 2011 and full review by external auditors, i.e. the Annual Governance Report of the Audit Commission. The Fire Authority has delegated responsibility for receiving the Annual Governance Report and the opinion of the Auditor and for signing the Letter of Representation to the Audit and Performance Management Committee and this was completed by that Committee at its meeting on 8 September 2011.

The Fire Authority has therefore received and approved the Statement of Accounts for 2010/11, subject to the incorporation of the Annual Governance Statement 2010/11 as detailed below.

Annual Governance Statement 2010/11

Corporate Governance and Accounting Regulations require the Fire Authority to publish, on a timely basis, within its annual report, an objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the Fire Authority's governance arrangements, including its risk management and internal control mechanisms, and their effectiveness in practice. This is known as the Annual Governance Statement.

The Fire Authority has formally received and approved the Annual Governance Statement 2010/11, which must be included as part of the Statement of Accounts 2010/11.

Code of Corporate Governance 2011/12

The Fire Authority has approved and formally adopted its Code of Corporate Governance for 2011/12.

Financial Performance to August 2011 including the Annual Treasury Report 2010/11

The Fire Authority received a report on financial performance to August 2011, which set out the current position with regard to the Authority's revenue budget and capital programme.

The report also set out the Fire Authority's performance against its prudential indicators. For 2010/11 and the current financial year, the Fire Authority is operating

within its prudential indicators and has undertaken no further borrowing to date in this financial year. With regard to Treasury Management the Fire Authority is operating within the limits of its Treasury Policy Statement for both 2010/11 and the current financial year. The Fire Authority has continued its policy of only lending to the Debt Management Office and to other local authorities.

Open Public Services White Paper

The White Paper on Open Public Services, which was published in July 2011, set out the Coalition Government's view on how it wishes to change public services for the better. The Fire Authority has discussed the implications of the proposals set out in the White Paper and has tasked its officers to respond accordingly to the Paper. The Fire Authority has also tasked officers to progress any immediate actions that need to be undertaken in advance of April 2012, when it is anticipated that the White Paper's recommendations will begin to be implemented nationally.

Response to Consultation on Proposed Changes to Firefighters' Pension Schemes

The Fire Authority has considered and agreed its response to the consultation exercise on the proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (1992) and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2006). This consultation arises from the Hutton Report, published in March 2011, which recommended wide-ranging changes to local government pension provisions to make them more affordable and fairer to middle and lower income employees. It is a separate consultation to the changes that the Government is proposing to pension contribution rates.

Accommodation Update

The main Headquarters building is almost complete and has been occupied by Headquarters staff since 29 August, Station personnel since 5 September and Control staff since 12 September. Snagging and minor works are ongoing.

Demolition of the old Headquarters building is now taking place. Mechanical demolition and removal from site will begin on 3 October 2011 and it is anticipated that this will take two weeks and involve up to 200 vehicle movements. After demolition is completed, alterations will be made to the temporary fire station building to enable the return of Workshops and Technical Services from Sundorne. The land that was occupied by the old Headquarters building will be divided up for various uses including carparking, training and workshops.

Information and Communications Technology Strategy – Update

The previous 12-month period has presented unprecedented Information and Communications Technology (ICT) challenges to the Service, including the consequences of the collapse of the national FiReControl Project, ICT hardware failures and the demands of relocating services to the newly refurbished Headquarters building.

In addressing these and additional demands, the Service, with the support of the Fire Authority, has been able to enter into a shared service agreement with Shropshire Council to secure access to the Public Services Network; to procure a cost-effective resilient local area network solution; to complete transference of communication and data services from the old to the new Headquarters building; and to complete migration, implementation and go-live of the new command and control system.



Stuart West
Chair

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
October 2011

Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 26 September 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 Meetings, then Fire and Rescue Authority, then 26 September 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.