

SHROPSHIRE AND WREKIN FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY CHAIR'S REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2012

Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Stuart West has been re-elected Chair of the Fire Authority and Councillor David Minnery has been re-appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority. Both will hold office until the Annual Meeting in July 2013.

Confirmation of Code of Conduct and Standards Issues

Following the publication of the Localism Act 2011 Regulations on 8 June 2012, the Fire Authority has approved its Code of Conduct to come into immediate effect and confirmed its arrangements for dealing with complaints made against Members. In addition, the Fire Authority has agreed that a politically balanced Standards Committee be established with a membership of 5.

The Fire Authority will share an Independent Person with Telford & Wrekin Council and the recruitment process for this position is currently underway. A recommendation regarding the appointment of the Independent Person will be brought to the September 2012 meeting of the Fire Authority.

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

The Fire Authority has agreed both the composition of its Committees and the allocation of seats on its committees to political groups.

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 its Chair, Councillor Stuart West as its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission.

Member Champions

Following a review of their effectiveness, the Fire Authority has abolished its standing Member Champion roles with the exception of those for Equality and Diversity and Risk Management and Audit. In addition to this, the Fire Authority has agreed to appoint appropriate Member Champions on a task and finish basis, as and when required, to promote, encourage, challenge and drive improvement in specific areas as determined by the Fire Authority.

To facilitate this process, all Fire Authority members will be asked to undertake a Skills Audit which will seek to identify any specialist skills and experience which

members may have gained from their Fire Authority and Council positions or from their day-to-day occupations. This will ensure that the Member(s) with the most appropriate expertise is/are appointed to champion a particular project.

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 2012.

Statement of Accounts 2011/12

Closedown of the financial year 2011/12 is now complete, and the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts has been audited by the Audit Commission and signed by the Treasurer as a true and fair view of the Fire Authority's financial position.

The out turn of the Revenue Budget for 2011/12 is £1,411,000. These opportunity savings will be held in the General Fund. The Fire Authority has approved the transfer of £148,000 from the General Fund to its revenue budget to cover expenditure for 2011/12 projects that have slipped into 2012/13. A further £300,000 will be used to create a Service Transformation Programme Staff Reserve for the secondment and backfilling of staff to enable the delivery of the Service Transformation Programme. The remaining balance of £963,000 will be used to establish an Income Volatility Reserve to protect the Fire Authority against detrimental transitional changes in grant, council tax and business rates.

The Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement will be formally approved by the Audit and Performance Management Committee at its meeting in September 2012.

Public Value Review Update

The Fire Authority received a review of the implementation of the first year of its Public Value initiatives. A total saving of £1.115 million has been realised compared to the £1.148 million that was predicted. The planned reductions to Support and Operational Staff posts have been implemented with minimal impact on the Service. There has, however been a noticeable impact on the Service's operational officers which is a cause for concern. The Fire Authority has agreed that a task and finish project be established to look at Officer resilience and have appointed Councillor Price as the Member Champion for this issue.

The planned Public Value initiatives for years 2, 3 and 4 will continue as planned, with no known reason at this stage for any changes, to deliver the necessary budget reductions.

2020 Strategic Planning Process: Summary Programme Plan

The Fire Authority has agreed the Summary Programme Plan for phase one of the Member-led, consolidated 2020 strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process, which spans an 18 to 24 month period, aims to align a number of past planning processes and adds scenario-based planning to create the Fire Authority's 2020 Strategy. The approach, in summary, provides a means by which the Fire Authority, through structured two-way consultation with staff and the community, can create a range of potential scenarios, to which the Service might be exposed in future years.

The first phase of the planning process is to develop a range of potential scenarios with members of the Authority's Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group and stakeholder groups and then to consult with all staff regarding the most likely impact of these scenarios upon the Service in future years. Staff consultation during phase one will involve 45 Member-led sessions during which staff will debate and agree the level of likelihood and impact of the scenarios developed by the stakeholder groups. The results of this consultation will be presented to the Fire Authority at its December 2012 meeting.

The second phase of the programme, which commences in January 2013, will work with staff and the public towards the outcome of the programme which is a costed, long-term strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Fire and Rescue National Framework 2012

The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2012 was published on 11 July 2012. The National Framework sets out the Government's expectations and requirements for fire and rescue authorities. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their duties.

Officers are currently assessing the Framework and its implications for the Fire Authority. A report on this issue will be brought before the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2012.

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.

New partnerships established in 2011/12 include Shropshire Council Landlord Services, the Harlescott Place Based Intervention Group and Telford and Wrekin Primary Care Trust. The Service is also developing a number of partnerships such as a data sharing partnership with Shropshire Primary Care Trust.

The Service has also, at the invitation of Shropshire Council, entered into a 'task and finish' fixed-term partnership with the Mihai Eminescu Trust, in the Transylvania region of Romania. The aim of the partnership, which will conclude in December 2012, is to provide end-of-life fire appliances, equipment and uniform, and training to firefighters based in the Mures County of Romania.

Fire Control Project

Following the announcement of the allocation of Government funding to support the upgrade of fire control room arrangements, a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been entered into with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority. The MoU signifies the ratification by both Fire Authorities to work towards the creation of a single resilient command and control function operated from two remote locations (Shrewsbury and Worcester).

Corporate Risk Management Summary

The Fire Authority has received its sixth 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
July 2012

Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 18 July 2012

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 18 July 2012 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.