

## **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report for the Meeting held on 24 April 2013**

### **Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy**

Following a review carried out by its Audit and Performance Management Committee the Fire Authority has adopted its 2013/14 Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.

### **Appointment of Independent Person**

The Fire Authority agreed that on 1 July 2013 Mr Christopher Humphries be appointed as the sole Independent Person for the Fire Authority (as set out in section 28 of the Localism Act) and that Mr Michael Tebbutt be removed from his Independent person responsibilities in accordance with statutory requirements.

### **Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality and Protocol on Member / Officer Relations**

Following a review by its Standards Committee, the Fire Authority has adopted amended versions of both its Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality and its Protocol on Member / Officer Relations.

### **Update from the Chair of the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group**

Following the February 2013 meeting of the Fire Authority it was clear that the Authority's budget would be in a £1.2 to £1.6 million annual deficit by 2019/20 and Members tasked officers to produce plans for dealing with this budget imbalance.

At its meeting in early April 2013, the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group received a list of options compiled by officers that, if implemented, could reduce annual running costs but which would also have a wide range of impacts on frontline service delivery and impacts on the governance of the Authority.

Officers are visiting all staff teams to carry out a detailed impact assessment of these options with the results of this exercise being reported in detail to the Fire Authority in September 2013.

It is anticipated that there will be some very difficult and challenging decisions to make and projects to deliver and the options include moving across the 'red lines' set for the Fire Authority's Public Value Plan. They may well involve decisions about station closures, fire engine removals, redundancies and possibly merger with other services, even though, in previous public consultations, Members and officers have stated that these were options that they did not wish to explore.

In this stage from April to September 2013, no decisions will be made. Members will decide, in September 2013, which options need to be further discussed with the communities affected. The results of these discussions will be reported to the Fire Authority in early 2014. Following their decision, consultation with staff and the public will begin, with any cuts being implemented later in 2014/15.

## **Coroner's Rule 43 Letter Shirley Towers, Hampshire**

Following an inquest into the tragic deaths of two firefighters on 6 April 2010, when fighting a fire in a high-rise block of flats in Southampton, the Coroner K St J Wiseman wrote a Rule 43 Letter to Sir Ken Knight, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers Unit, Department for Communities and Local Government.

Having obtained a copy of the Coroner's Rule 43 Letter, officers of this Service have examined existing procedures in the light of recommendations made in the letter and are taking steps, where necessary, to implement improvements.

## **Commercial Trading**

The Fire Authority has agreed to the establishment of a trading company. The primary objective of the company will be to provide services to other bodies on commercial terms to generate income for reinvestment in the core services of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority. The company will benefit the Fire Authority and, therefore, the area and residents of Shropshire.

The company will initially be set up as Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority (Trading) Ltd with various delivery arms being established over time. The first of these will be called Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services. The company will be 100% owned by the Authority and will be defined as a Local Authority Controlled Company. In agreeing to establish the company, the Fire Authority also agreed to provide a loan of £20,000, at commercial rates, to the new company to cover the initial trading period and start-up costs.

The Fire Authority agreed that 5 Authority members should be appointed to sit on the Board of Directors of the Company and appointed Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Mellings and Minnery from Shropshire Council and Councillor Kiernan from Telford & Wrekin Council. It also delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer, Monitoring Officer and Head of Finance to jointly agree, in consultation with the Board of Directors, the start-up date of the Company.

## Variation to the Capital Programme

The Fire Authority retrospectively approved a variation to its Capital Programme relating to the procurement of three new appliances. The appliance replacement scheme was due to be undertaken in 2014/15 at an estimated total cost of £660,000. New European emission regulations mean that the purchase price and running costs will increase for all new LGV vehicles brought after April 2014. It is estimated that each appliance would therefore cost an additional £10,000 and that running costs over the 15 year life would exceed an additional £10,000 per vehicle.

In order to mitigate these additional costs, orders for the new appliances had to be placed by 22 April 2013. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority approved the scheme being brought forward, in conjunction with the Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer to enable this to happen. No other changes are necessary to the 2013/14 programme as a result of this change, and there are no revenue consequences in 2013/14 as the scheme is to be funded from existing balances.

## Appointment of Chief Fire Officer

The Fire Authority ratified the appointment of the current Deputy Chief Fire Officer, John Redmond, to the post of Chief Fire Officer with effect from 9 July 2013.

The Chair of the Fire Authority thanked the current Chief Fire Officer Paul Raymond for his work and his commitment to both the Service and the Authority.



**Stuart West**  
**Chair**  
**Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority**  
**April 2013**

## **Background Papers**

Agenda and papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 24 April 2013

**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](http://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 24 April 2013 and the various reports and appendices will be listed.

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