

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Annual Meeting held on 20 June 2018

Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Fire Authority has elected Councillor Eric Carter as its Chair and appointed Councillor Keith Roberts as its Vice-Chair until June 2018.

Code of Corporate Governance 2017/18

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to the principles of effective corporate governance and has, therefore, adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is based on guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE).

The Fire Authority has conducted its annual review of the Code of Corporate Governance and agreed the recommendation of its Audit and Performance Management Committee that the Code be formally adopted.

Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

In April 2005, the Fire Authority adopted an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (since amended to include references to bribery), which is designed to:

- Encourage prevention;
- Promote detection; and
- Identify a clear pathway for investigation.

The Fire Authority has, on the recommendation of its Audit and Performance Management Committee, re-affirmed the Strategy without amendment.

The Strategy will be brought to the attention of all employees on the Service's weekly newsletter.

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

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

Committee Membership and Constitution

The Fire Authority has confirmed appointments to its committees and appointed its Chair, Councillor Eric Carter, to the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission. Councillor Kuldip Sahota has been appointed as both the Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Member Champion and its Risk Management and Audit Member Champion. The Fire Authority has also reviewed and agreed the constitution of its committees.

Review of Member Role Descriptions

The Fire Authority has reviewed and agreed the following Member Role Descriptions:

- Member
- Chair of the Authority
- Vice-Chair of the Authority
- Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups
- Equality and Diversity Champion
- Independent Person, including Skills and Competencies

Review of Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation to Officers

The Fire Authority has reviewed and agreed its Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business, Standing Orders relating to Contracts and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Review of Structure and Function of Fire and Rescue Authority and its Committees

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority has been in place since 1997 and during that time has provided capable and committed governance and strategic direction to the Service in meeting its aim of "Putting Shropshire's Safety First".

It is recommended that it would now be appropriate to undertake a full review of the form and function of the Authority, within the parameters of its Combination Scheme, to ensure it is performing its function in the best interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness as described by the National Audit Office. This recommendation is in line with previous discussion and commitments undertaken by the Authority and supports its ambitions to remain relevant and sustainable.

The Fire Authority has agreed that the Strategy and Planning Working Group be tasked to undertake a review of the structure and composition of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, with specific regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness and to report back to the Fire Authority with specific recommendations, in line with the governance year.

Statement of Accounts 2017/18

The Fire Authority has received a report, setting out the key revenue issues, which have arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2017/18.

The Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2018/19

The Fire Authority has agreed its Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2018/19.

This includes an increase in both the basic member allowance and special responsibility allowances of 4.04% over two years in line with their senior corporate responsibilities as identified within spinal column point 29 and over. There are no changes to travel allowances which are linked to the Government's approved mileage allowance payments.

The increase in allowances is based on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services agreed pay offer which was confirmed at the end of April 2018.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is a key element in the Fire Authority's strategy to meet its vision of "Putting Shropshire's Safety First". It is also a key theme of the Fire Service National Framework. The Fire Authority and the Service are actively involved in a number of partnerships, which are risk assessed for liability and reputation and scrutinised by the Service's Risk Management Group. This Group maintains a partnership register and monitors the outcome and productivity of each of the partnerships.

Over recent years the Service has developed many partnerships, which primarily support its prevention activities, in particular, providing a means to target some of the most vulnerable people in the community. All partnerships have been risk assessed and measurable objectives set.

The Fire Authority has received a report, giving details of the more significant partnerships, with which the Service is involved, in relation to its prevention and operational response activities and Equality and Diversity.

Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2017/18

The Fire Authority has received an annual report on corporate risk management work during the last 12 months.

Ongoing monitoring of the Service's corporate risk management work is a responsibility of the Service Management Team and the Risk Management Group (RMG) with the Audit and Performance Management Committee receiving regular corporate risk management reports.

The RMG's primary function is to ensure that the Authority has an effective and efficient risk management process in place. The Group does this through reviewing the Corporate Risk Register, Departmental Statements of Assurance, Departmental Risk Registers and Internal Audit findings, highlighting, where necessary, issues or areas of concern through to the Service Management Team and/or the appropriate committee.

There are currently twelve open risks on the Service's Corporate Risk Register, which includes four new risks and one re-opened risk that have been added during this reporting year.

Fire Alliance

At its meeting in March 2018, the Authority's Strategy and Resources Committee provided direction to the Service to work with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to develop a business case for an alliance between the two services. The purpose of the alliance would be to create greater capacity and resilience in a way that improved the sustainability of both organisations. The expectation at that time was that the business case would be available for consideration by both fire and rescue authorities in June 2018.

Significant work has been undertaken and the Services are agreed on a shared strategic purpose, ten guiding principles and five areas of development that fit well with both Services and offer opportunities for effective collaboration with other emergency services.

The Fire Authority agreed to the Service's request for additional time to be given to ensure that the Plan is fully considered and well socialised with stakeholders, including the Strategy and Planning Working Group, prior to it being presented to the Fire Authority.



Eric Carter
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
July 2018

Background Papers

Agenda and Papers for the Annual Meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 20 June 2018

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:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk>

To access reports go to the Fire Service's website and follow the steps below.

- Click on 'About Us' in the red bar at the top of the page
- Click on 'Fire and Rescue Authority'
- Click on 'Meetings' in the list on the right hand side of the screen
- Click on '20 June 2018' 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.