



Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report for the Meeting held on 14 October 2009

Service and Financial Planning

As part of its work programme for service and financial planning, leading to budget proposals in December, the Fire Authority has tasked its Strategy and Resources Committee with:

- Examining how short-term expenditure reductions might be made in 2010/11, with least impact on service delivery; and
- Building up service delivery from a zero base and producing a set of what-if service reductions, which will protect core service delivery.

The Fire Authority has also requested its officers to seek to fund any minor new developments from existing budgets and to explore ways of lobbying to improve the current grant distribution to the Authority with any new formula to be used from 2011/12 onwards.

Meeting Schedule 2010

The Fire Authority has agreed the 2010 dates for its meetings and those of its Committees. The 2010 Meeting Schedule is attached as an appendix to this report.

Review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and of Standing Orders

The Fire Authority has reviewed its Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders and agreed that, in view of the fact that Members have for the last two years suspended Standing Order 2.2, it be permanently deleted.

Standing Order 2.2 states:

“In the year when the Chair is a Member of Shropshire County Council the Vice Chair shall be a Member of Borough of Telford & Wrekin and vice versa.”

Committee Rationalisation

The Fire Authority has agreed the recommendation of its Human Resources Committee that its Health Panel, Appeals Committee and Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal be merged into one Appeals Committee.

The rationale behind this decision is that processes and responsibilities elsewhere within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service have changed since the committee structure was set up and the merger will result in a more streamlined structure. Furthermore, it will make more effective use of Member time and assist in the maintenance of Member competence.

The constitution of the new Appeals Committee has been agreed and authority has been delegated to the Assistant Chief Officer and Corporate Services Manager to review and amend the procedures used by the three committees, in order to ensure consistency in the operation of the new Appeals Committee.

Role of the Integrated Risk Management Planning Members' Working Group

The Fire Authority has agreed recommendations made by its Strategy and Resources Committee regarding the role of the Integrated Risk Management Planning Members' Working Group.

The terms of reference of the Group, which will now be known as the 'Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group', have been extended to cover consideration of all major issues effecting service levels and the financial position of the Authority, in particular potential service developments and reductions, efficiencies and major capital projects. The Group will now report to the Strategy and Resources Committee, rather than directly to the Fire Authority.

Code of Corporate Governance

The Fire Authority has considered and adopted a new Code of Corporate Governance, which is based upon the latest guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE). Whilst in essence good governance remains unchanged, the five dimensions in the original guidance have been replaced by six core principles, each of which is supported by sub-principles to provide a governance framework.

Single Equality Scheme

In accordance with legislation the Fire Authority currently has the three separate equality schemes:

- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Race Equality Scheme

The introduction of The Equality and Human Rights Commission brought an end to the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. The new Commission will address all issues of equality and diversity and is supported by the Government's Single Equality Bill.

In light of the Single Equality Bill the Fire Authority has agreed to replace its current schemes with a Single Equality Scheme, which will cover the following seven strands:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender

The Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Steering Group will oversee the development of the new Single Equality Scheme.

Member Champions

Equality and Diversity Champion

At the October meeting Councillor Dr Jones, the Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Champion, gave a presentation on her activities over the past year. During her presentation Councillor Dr Jones encouraged those Members, who had not already done so, to sign up to the Members' Equality Charter.

Information and Communications Technology and Data Quality Champion

The Fire Authority has appointed Councillor Minnery as its Information and Communications Technology and Data Quality Champion and agreed changes to the Role Description to take into account recommendations made by its auditors.

Supporting Local Area Agreements across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

The Fire Authority has agreed its current position regarding the Local Area Agreements (LAAs) for both the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin areas. Having been involved in the LAAs since their inception by the current Government, the Authority is seen as a very effective and supportive partner. Although it supports a large number of LAA objectives, the Authority does, however, limit this support to outcomes closely related to its core function or those objectives, which add value to its Service.



Stuart West
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
November 2009

Background Papers

Agenda and papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 14 October 2009

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 Fire and Rescue Authority, then 11 February 2009 and the various reports and appendices will be listed.

If you have any difficulty with the website, please contact Amanda Thomson, Management Support Officer on 01743 260201.

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Meetings Schedule 2010

Meeting	Date	Time	Venue
Fire Authority	10 February 2010 28 April 2010 16 June 2010 21 July 2010 (Annual Meeting) 13 October 2010 15 December 2010	2.00 pm	2010 venues to be confirmed
Strategy and Resources Committee	22 January 2010 * 4 March 2010 20 May 2010 23 September 2010 11 November 2010	2.00 pm	All at Headquarters, Shrewsbury
Audit and Performance Management Committee	18 February 2010 13 May 2010 9 September 2010 25 November 2010	2.00 pm	All at Headquarters, Shrewsbury
Human Resources Committee	14 January 2010 27 May 2010 30 September 2010	2.00 pm	All at Headquarters, Shrewsbury
Standards Committee	1 March 2010 12 July 2010 1 November 2010	5.15 pm	All at Headquarters, Shrewsbury

* Although originally scheduled for 21 January 2010, this meeting has been put back to 22 January, because it clashes with the revised date for a Shropshire Council meeting.

**Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Meetings Schedule 2010 continued**

Meeting	Date	Time	Venue
Budget Working Group	11 January 2010 10 September 2010	2.00 pm	All at Headquarters, Shrewsbury
Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group	Meetings of the Group will be scheduled throughout 2010 in order to report to the Strategy and Resources Committee	Various	All at Headquarters, Shrewsbury