

## **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Annual Meeting held on 10 July 2013**

### **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 2014.

### **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.

### **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 September 2013.

### **Statement of Accounts 2012/13**

Closedown of the financial year 2012/13 is now complete, and the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts is being audited by the External Auditor, Grant Thornton. The Treasurer as responsible finance officer has signed the Statement to certify that it presents a true and fair view of the Fire Authority's financial position.

The out turn of the Revenue Budget for 2012/13 is £1,506,000. These opportunity savings will be held in the General Fund. The Fire Authority has approved the transfer of £147,000 from the General Fund to its revenue budget to cover expenditure for 2012/13 projects that have slipped into 2013/14

The Fire Authority has also agreed that the Service Delivery Reserve, which has been established using £232,000 of government grants and other income, be used to fund initiatives in service delivery and prevention.

The General Fund Balance at the end of the year was £1,360,000. In previous years, this balance has been allocated to Authority reserves to alleviate specific pressures. However, in light of the significant financial pressures faced by the Fire Authority in the medium term, the Authority has agreed to hold the balance in the General Fund, pending officers' recommendations to the Authority in September 2013, which will suggest ways that the 2012/13 General Fund balance can be used to enable further reductions to be made to the revenue budget in future years

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 2013.

## **2020 Strategic Planning Process Update**

The Fire Authority received an updated timetable for its 2020 Strategic Planning Process which is being used to develop the Fire Authority's Strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan.

The Fire Authority is currently in Phase 5 of the Process with departmental impact assessments being undertaken on the 50 proposed options for change. This Phase will be completed by 1 September 2013 with the outcomes being considered by the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group and the Strategy and Resources Committee in early September. The final decision on which options should go forward to full impact assessment will be made by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 25 September 2013.

The Strategic Planning Process has been designed to ensure that Fire Authority Members have as much information as possible about potential impacts before they have to make the decision to formally consult on, and ultimately implement, any of the options currently being explored. The Process will also ensure that all stakeholders, including the public, will have sufficient opportunity to present their opinions on the options that are being explored.

## **Facing the Future: findings from the review of efficiencies and operations in fire and rescue authorities in England**

The findings of Sir Ken Knight's review of efficiencies and operational improvements in the delivery of fire and rescue services in England were published on 15 May 2013.

The Fire Authority received an overview report from the Chief Fire Officer which summarised each of the five chapters of the review report and where appropriate provided commentary in respect of the position of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

## **Horizon Scanning: Mergers / Amalgamation of Emergency Services**

It was reported in the press in June 2013, that the Home Secretary is pursuing the idea of merging fire, police and ambulance services under Police and Crime Commissioners.

As a response to this, and other recently published reports, including the All-Party Parliamentary Group report on Improving Efficiency, Interoperability and Resilience of our Blue Light Services, the Fire Authority has received a horizon scanning report designed to raise awareness of the current debate concerning mergers / amalgamation of the nation's emergency services.

Officers will continue to monitor the debate on behalf of the Fire Authority and should these proposals gain further momentum will prepare further reports, setting out the potential strategic implications for the Authority, Service and the community.

## **Partnership Working**

The Fire Authority received an overview of the partnership working that is being undertaken by both the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Service has developed several new partnerships in 2012/13 which primarily support its prevention activities, in particular providing a means to target some of the most vulnerable members of the community. These include the placement of a home fire safety specialist into Severnside Housing for three days a week and an agreement with the Women's Institute in Shropshire for its members to carry out home fire safety checks in remote areas on a voluntary basis.

The Service has also implemented the Burns Extrication Partnership in Shropshire. This partnership, which was started by West Midlands Fire Service, relates to the gathering and sharing of casualty history information between Fire and Rescue Services and the NHS Burns and Trauma units across our region, with the aim of improving the treatment of fire injuries.

The Fire Authority formally placed on record their commendation to all involved in the partnership with the Mihai Eminescu Trust, in the Transylvania region of Romania. The partnership, which has been extended into 2013, has provided additional appliances and equipment and has worked with the Trust and local Romanian firefighters to paint and decorate an old people's home. The partnership offers unique personal development opportunities and those involved from the Authority and Service do so on an entirely voluntary basis with all activities carried out in their own free time. Participants have raised approximately £20,000 to purchase the redundant appliances that have been donated to date.

## Corporate Risk Management Summary

The Fire Authority has received its seventh 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 2013

### Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 10 July 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 Committee Meetings, then Fire and Rescue Authority, then 10 July 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.