

# **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Annual Meeting held on 14 June 2017**

## **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.

## **Vote of Thanks and Welcome**

The Fire Authority has given a vote of thanks for Councillors Joyce Barrow, Chris Turley and Stuart West, who left the Fire Authority in May.

The Fire Authority also welcomed new Members Councillors Pauline Dee, Janice Jones, Paul Milner, Kevin Pardy, Alex Phillips and John Price.

## **Code of Corporate Governance 2016/17**

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), entitled:

The guidance has been refreshed following publication, in April, of a new governance framework for local authorities and police and fire authorities, for application for the 2016/17 year. The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance has been reworded to reflect the key changes in the guidance.

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, agreed amendments to the Strategy, which ensure that it aligns to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) code of practice on managing the risks of fraud and corruption (produced in October 2014).

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.

## **Statement of Accounts 2016/17**

The Fire Authority has received a report, setting out the key revenue issues, which have arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2016/17.

## **Technical Collaboration Funding**

The Fire Authority has approved the transfer of £262,000 from the 2016/ 17 General Fund balance to the Service Transformation Programme staff reserve to support in-house technical development and technical collaboration with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS).

The Service Transformation Programme began in 2012/13, following the Public Value initiative where the Service sought to reduce the budget to meet reductions in grant funding. The Programme was based on the principle of investing to save, using underspend generated from cutting costs early to save in the longer term as financial pressure was anticipated to grow in future years. This has been an effective strategy and has seen considerable transformation in the use of technology across the Service.

Previous and current phases of the transformation work have been discussed with, and demonstrated to HWFRS and recently an opportunity has arising to jointly fund staff to support both transformation agendas. This would enable HWFRS to progress with their technical transformation programme and enable this Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to continue some technical development by reducing the associated costs and making continued employment of some staff with specialist technical skills possible to March 2019.

SFRS will maintain the employment relationship for the staff concerned and their time will be allocated / seconded to HWFRS as necessary with HWFRS meeting all reasonable costs for that work. In addition to the technological benefits for both Services, the collaboration will also provide evidence of the Services' meeting the legal 'Duty to collaborate' which was recently introduced in the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

## **Police and Crime Commissioner Initial Business Case**

The Chief Fire Officer has held a staff briefing regarding the Initial Business Case and, having explained the process, has encouraged all staff to read the Business Case and respond to the consultation questionnaire. The Representative Bodies have also been briefed with regard to the Business Case.

The views of the constituent authorities are being sought and the Fire Authority's views will be set out in its response to the Business Case.

## **Integrated Risk Management Plan IRMP 3 Telford Central Project**

The Fire Authority has approved progression of the Telford Central Project which will see significant investment in the site to bring it up to modern standards.

Following the introduction of the legal 'Duty to collaborate' within the Police and Crime Bill, officers have worked with West Mercia Police to explore all possible opportunities for collaboration, both in Telford and across the whole of the county. With regard to Telford, the outcome of this has been the acknowledgment that there is significant potential to improve future collaborative working if both Services' Learning and Development Centres are located on the same site. The Feasibility Study for the project has therefore been updated to include the potential for the sharing of facilities between the two Services and indicative costs of the overall project have been calculated.

A number of possible cost apportionment options have been identified and discussions regarding these options have begun between SFRS and West Mercia Police. The Fire Authority has approved officers to explore the 'Fixed Percentage capital share' cost apportionment option with West Mercia Police. This would see a sharing of the risk, by both organisations, in the event that the costs were significantly different to those indicated by the Feasibility Study

## **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 several new 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, with the aim of meeting its community fire safety aims and objectives.

## **Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2016/17**

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 eleven risks on the Service's Corporate Risk Register, which includes one new risk that has been added during this reporting year.



Eric Carter  
Chair  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
June 2017

## Background Papers

Agenda and Papers for the Annual Meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 14 June 2017

**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 the 'Managing the Service' icon at the top of the page
- Click on the 'Fire Authority' icon
- Click on 'Meetings' in the list on the right hand side of the screen
- Click on '14 June 2017' 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.