

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Annual Meeting held on 26 June 2019

Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Fire Authority has elected Councillor Eric Carter as its Chair and appointed Councillor Chris Mellings as its Vice-Chair until June 2020.

Vote of Thanks and Welcome

The Fire Authority has given a vote of thanks for Councillors Miles Hosken, Janice Jones, Jane Pinter and Alex Phillips, who left the Fire Authority in May.

The Fire Authority welcomed Councillors Karen Blundell and John Thompson from Telford & Wrekin Council, who have both previously sat on the Fire Authority, back to the Authority.

The Fire Authority also welcomed Councillor Dean Carroll to the Fire Authority. Councillor Carroll has replaced Councillor Keith Roberts on the Fire Authority whilst Councillor Roberts recovers from back surgery.

Code of Corporate Governance 2018/19

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.

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

Following the changes agreed to its governance structures in April 2019, including reducing the number of members from 17 to 15 and the change to a two-committee structure, the Fire Authority has agreed the number of seats on its Committees and the allocations of those seats 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 Kevin Pardy has been appointed as the Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Member Champion and Councillor Kuldip Sahota as its Risk Management

and Audit Member Champion.

The Fire Authority agreed the constitution for each of its Committee and Panels following the changes to the governance structure. This includes the Strategy and Resources Committee, the newly formed Standards, Audit and Performance Committee and the Strategic Advisory Group.

Councillor Chris Mellings was elected Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee and Councillor Kuldip Sahota was elected Chair of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee.

Review of Member Role Descriptions

The Fire Authority has agreed the Member Role Descriptions listed below, following amendments to reflect the governance changes:

- Member
- Chair of the Authority
- Vice-Chair of the Authority
- Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups
- Chair and Vice-Chair for Strategy and Resources Committee
- Chair of Strategic Advisory Group
- Chair and Vice-Chair of Standards, Audit and Performance Committee
- Risk Management and Audit Champion
- Equality and Diversity Champion
- Independent Person, including Skills and Competencies

Review of Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Financial Regulations

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.

The Fire Authority has also approved amendments to its Financial Regulations. In order to support the work of the Strategic Alliance that has been entered into by the two Services, a review has been undertaken which aligns the Financial Regulations of both Services. All aspects of current regulations have been incorporated and any evident contrasting regulations across the Services have been clearly reflected within the document.

Statement of Accounts 2018/19

The Fire Authority has received a report, setting out the key revenue issues, which have arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2018/19.

Service Targets for Integrated Risk Management Plan Extension 2020/21

At its meeting in December 2018, the Fire Authority agreed to extend the lifespan of its current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP 2015-20) by one year. This is to allow sufficient time for a review of the IRMP processes across Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services to be undertaken with the aim of establishing a standardised methodology for the process across both Services.

The Fire Authority has now considered the rationale that it may wish to use when considering the setting of targets against each of the Plan's Performance Indicators for that extra year. Having discussed each individual Indicator, the Fire Authority has delegated responsibility for the setting of the actual targets against each Indicator, based on the agreed rationale, to the Strategy and Resources Committee in March 2020.

The Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2019/20

The Fire Authority has agreed its Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2019/20.

This includes the second part of the 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, which was agreed last year. 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 2018/19

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 one new risk that has been added during this reporting year.

Strategic Fire Alliance Update

The Fire Authority received an update on the Strategic Fire Alliance and the progress that has been made in preparing the three priority projects that were approved by both Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authorities in December 2018. These projects were as follows:

1. Fire Control
Scoping future requirements for ensuring a resilient Command & Control function
2. Integrated Risk Management Plan
Reviewing options for aligning integrated risk management planning processes
3. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
Developing organisational arrangements for provision of ICT functions.

Good progress has been made on all three priority projects with project teams, lead managers and work programmes in place. Progress is reported regularly to the Strategic Alliance Board and Programme Delivery Board.

This report provided Members with an overview of each work programme and next steps for each project over the coming months with Members receiving further updates as the projects develop.



Eric Carter
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
June 2019

Background Papers

Agenda and Papers for the Annual Meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 26 June 2019

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 '26 June 2019' 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.