

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Annual Meeting held on 23 June 2021

Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice-Chair

The Fire Authority has elected Councillor Eric Carter as its Chair and appointed Councillor David Minnery as its Vice-Chair until June 2022.

Vote of Thanks and Welcome

The Fire Authority has given a vote of thanks for Councillors Peter Adams, Karen Blundell, Pauline Dee, Chris Mellings, Paul Milner and Keith Roberts, who left the Fire Authority in May.

The Fire Authority welcomed Councillors Roy Aldcroft, Garry Burchett, Roger Evans, Nick Hignett and Christian Lea from Shropshire Council to the Fire Authority, along with Councillor Gemma Offland from Telford & Wrekin Council.

The Fire Authority also welcomed Councillor Dean Carroll back to the Fire Authority as a temporary replacement for Councillor Roy Aldcroft.

Code of Corporate Governance 2020/21

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 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee that the Code be formally adopted.

Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

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

Committee Membership and Appointments

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 Roger Evans as its Risk Management

and Audit Member Champion.

Fire Authority Terms of reference and Committee Constitutions

Following a recent review of Committee delegations by officers and Authority members, a formal terms of reference document for the Fire Authority was agreed. The Terms of Reference have been developed to ensure that the Fire Authority is discharging its purpose and responsibilities correctly.

Extensive changes were also agreed to the constitutions of the Strategy and Resources and Standards, Audit and Performance Committees. These changes were also an outcome of the review of Committee delegations.

Review of Member Role Descriptions

The Fire Authority has agreed the Member Role Descriptions listed below:

- Member
- Chair of the Authority
- Vice-Chair of the Authority
- Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups
- Chair of Strategic Advisory Group
- Equality and Diversity Champion

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.

This includes the addition of a Protocol for the Role of Monitoring Officer to the Scheme of Delegation which provides clarification of the role and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer.

Statement of Accounts 2020/21

The Fire Authority has received a report, setting out the key revenue issues, which have arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 and has approved the use of the General Fund balance in 2021/22.

The Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2021/22

The Fire Authority has agreed its Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances 2021/22.

This includes an increase in both the basic member allowance and special responsibility allowances of 2.00%. 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 for firefighters which was effective from 1 July 2020.

Firefighters Pension Scheme – Age Discrimination Remedy and Employment Appeal Tribunal

The Fire Authority received a report outlining the current position in relation to the Firefighters Pension Schemes age discrimination remedy and Employment Appeal Tribunal judgement.

Having considered the range of information and guidance that had been gathered by the Service to ensure a fully informed decision was made, the Authority agreed in principle to approve the application of the Home Office guidance note Version 2 (issued June 2021) to individuals within the Firefighter Pension Schemes who are eligible as immediate detriment cases.

This agreement in principle will only be enacted upon receipt of confirmatory legal advice. This approach will ensure that the Service is able to apply the Home Office guidance in a timely manner, whilst also being cognisant of the national position. If the legal advice received is contrary to current views and recommendations, a further report will be brought to the Fire Authority for consideration.

Annual Report on Collaborative and 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.

The Fire Authority received the annual report on collaborative and partnership working which gave an overview of the partnership working that the Service is currently engaged in together with a summary of collaborative work that has been undertaken in the past 12 months.

The report highlighted the work that the Service has undertaken, since January 2021, to support the rollout of the Covid vaccine programme. This includes appointing an officer to act as a liaison to partners and co-ordinate activities

including marshalling at the county's three mass vaccination sites, providing managerial resilience, delivering fire safety advice and training, assisting with logistical support and providing the infrastructure and support for a mobile community 'pop up' vaccination clinic. Around 70 members of Service staff have volunteered and trained as non-registered vaccinators and have delivered more than 18,000 vaccines across the county.

Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2020/21

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, including two new risks which have been added during this reporting year.



Eric Carter
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
June 2021

Background Papers

Agenda and Papers for the Annual Meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 23 June 2021

The agendas and reports (apart from exempt or confidential items) for all Fire Authority and Committee meetings are on the Service'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 '23 June 2021' 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.