

SHROPSHIRE AND WREKIN FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY CHAIR'S REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2014

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. Amendments have been made to these documents to reflect changes to both the Committee structure and the Brigade Manager structure.

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 2014.

Statement of Accounts 2013/14

Closedown of the financial year 2013/14 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.

There was a surplus on the Revenue Budget of £712,000 for 2013/14, which will be held in the General Fund. The Fire Authority has approved the transfer of £153,000 from the General Fund to its revenue budget to cover expenditure for 2013/14 projects that have slipped into 2014/15.

In previous years, the General Fund Balance has been allocated to Authority reserves to alleviate specific pressures. The Service will begin revenue budget reviews in the next few months in preparation for the 2015/16 budget setting process. These reviews will focus upon the way in which the Authority funds its commitments over the next few years and the best use of revenue and capital funds. The Fire Authority has tasked officers to present recommendations for the use of the General Fund balance to the September meeting of its Strategy and Resources Committee.

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 2014.

Strategic Planning Process 2015/16

The Fire Authority has agreed its Strategic Planning Process Timetable for 2015/16. The Process is built around a number of dependencies and milestones, which overlap into the three key areas of service, financial and improvement planning. The Timetable will ensure the production of the 2015/16 budget, the Financial Strategy 2015/20, Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015/20 and the publication, in April 2015, of the 2015/16 Service Plan.

Public Value Review Update

The Public Value Review was commissioned by the Fire Authority at the beginning of 2010 to assess and address the impact of both the recession and the coalition Government's austerity measures upon the Service. The Review identified a range of initiatives which, if successfully managed and implemented, would result in an incremental and controlled 25% reduction in the Fire Authority's budget over a four-year period (2011 to 2015).

The update report summarised the savings that had been achieved in Year 3 (2013/14) of the Public Value Review. With a forecast reduction for 2013/14 of £588,000, the Fire Authority managed to achieve an actual reduction of £538,000. The savings resulted from a number of initiatives, including the cessation of permanent crewing of the Rescue Tender and reductions in various posts across the Service.

The only area in which the predicted reduction was not achieved was in building maintenance, although the maintenance budget has been reduced considerably over the past few years and maintenance activities curtailed. As the Fire Authority is concerned that reduced maintenance will result in higher costs in the long term, it has introduced a 'Major Works Reserve' to assist in funding expensive, one-off maintenance works. It has also agreed to bring forward capital spend on retained station refurbishments.

Corporate Risk Management Annual Report

The Fire Authority has received its eighth Annual Corporate Risk Management 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.

Details of Lives Saved and Those Protected from Harm

The Fire Authority has received a paper, highlighting the number of people, who have been protected from harm, or rescued by operational crews during the year 2013/14 and from April to June 2014. The total number of people for 2013/14 was 249 and for April to June 2014 was 45 people.

The report also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service. This is done by using available data on the age of casualties (persons whose lives the Service has saved), with an upper threshold of 80 years (average life expectancy in the population), and multiplying by a factor of £30,000 to give a value of lives saved. The figure of £30,000 is the threshold figure used by the NHS as an estimate to determine the financial benefit of carrying out treatment on hospital patients. The estimates are applied to the value of life for every additional year of "quality life" that the patient may enjoy as a result of the treatment. This figure can reasonably be adopted by the Service as its activity can guarantee an extended life beyond its operational intervention.

For the year 2013/14, the Service estimates that the cumulative total value of lives saved was £43,762,500 and the total cumulative figure for April to June 2014 is £6,975,000.

Partnership Working

The Fire Authority has received an overview of the partnership working undertaken by Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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 members of the community. These include the placement of an officer within Telford & Wrekin Council to set up a data-sharing protocol, which will enable the passing of data sets, held by the Council, to the Service, and work with health visitor groups relating to referral forms, used by health visitors and community midwives.

The Service continues to support existing partnerships. Of particular interest is the Fire Emergency Support Service (FESS) vehicle partnership with the British Red Cross. The FESS, which is staffed by volunteers, provides support to victims of fire and other emergencies, either whilst fire crews are still on scene or when they have left. This partnership has been recognised as an example of best practice within the West Mercia region.



Stuart West
Chair

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

July 2014

Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 9 July 2014

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 bottom of page
- Click on the 'Fire Authority' icon
- Click on 'Meetings' in the list on the right hand side of the screen
- Click on '9 July 2014' 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.