

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2023/24

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Executive Summary

This report summarises the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2023/24.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the progress made on the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.

3 Background

In accordance with the authority delegated to it by the Fire Authority, the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee will have considered the draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 at this meeting.

The Statement of Accounts contains, as an appendix, a statement as to how effective the Authority's various systems of internal control have been in governing the risks, to which the Authority is exposed. This is known as the Annual Governance Statement or the AGS. Areas of the system of internal control that had been identified as requiring improvement were listed in the AGS and an action plan was developed to ensure that these improvements are progressed during the coming year (the AGS Improvement Plan 2023/24). This Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress, which the Service makes against the Plan.

4 Monitoring Progress against the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2023/24

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2023/24 is attached as an appendix to this report; progress against each of the planned activities is also included in the appendix.

As is the case with most plans, the activities included within it are often subject to change. This can be as a result of changes in the external environment that guides the work, as well as the internal environment that dictates whether the Service has the capacity to achieve its stated objectives. To ensure there is control over any slippage, the Officers responsible for delivering this work must obtain approval from the Service Management Team (SMT) or Service Programme Board (SPB), if they require any variations to the current Plan. Such variations will also be reported to this committee.

5 Conclusions

The Committee is asked to note the progress made on the 2023/24 AGS Improvement Plan.

6 Financial Implications

Any significant budgetary implications, brought about by the improvements proposed in the Improvement Plan, have already been considered, either as part of the Fire Authority's budget planning process or within each Department's business planning process.

7 Legal Comment

The AGS is a legal requirement under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom and must be included in the Fire Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendix

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2023/24.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2023/24

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date	Reporting Year
People	1	Implement the actions identified in the On-Call Sustainability Review through the delivery of the On Call Sustainability Project.	Alec Thomas	New Ways of Working Board (NWOW)	Alerting devices testing has resulted in a change in roll out with charging devices, capital budget increase in place. Preliminary work for contract banding to progress, this will enable the Service to assess costings and whether progress is made outside of the national pay offer. Fire Service Rota (FSR) identified as a key area to resource and progress as a priority. Group support team review scoped and will involve engagement of key department managers.	2023/24
People	2	Implementation of fitness support facilities via the refurbishment programme.	Marc Millward Chris White	New Ways of Working Board (NWOW)	All stations have fitness equipment available to use. Fitness associate trainers provide advice, guidance and early intervention to support staff to achieve and maintain fitness standards. A fitness champions group is being formed to expand this level of support. Six on-call stations have been identified as requiring improved fitness facilities. A dedicated 'fitness pod' will be provided at these stations. Baschurch station will be the first. This work has been postponed until December 2023 due to other building project priorities.	2023/24

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date	Reporting Year
Process	3	Through the Service Programme Board continue to replace paper-based processes with streamlined electronic workflows.	Ged Edwards	Systems Governance Group (SGG)	Evaluation of roles within Service Development and ICT departments has concluded. Recruitment into some roles has commenced along with a departmental restructure.	2023/24
Systems/ Infrastructure	4	<p>Continual improvement of network security to a standard for adopting the implementation of the Emergency Service Network that guards against cyber threats and minimises disruption to daily operations.</p> <p>Enhance the workflows in Fire Service Rota (FSR) to incorporate as many pay elements as possible so that manual processes are removed.</p>	Sally Edwards Alec Thomas Marc Millward	Service Management Team (SMT) On Call Sustainability (OCS) Board	<p>The next phase for network security is taking place following the successful implementation of on-line data protection and recovery software during the summer. This phase aligns with the 3-year renewal of the Microsoft licence agreement. Therefore, the MS licences have been upgraded and include advanced security. In the next few months, we will examine these MS security features and compare with the current security products in use. The aim is to rationalise security on the MS platform which will streamline the management tasks and possibly make some financial savings without compromising network security.</p> <p>Recruits' payments, training, overtime and officer hours are all within plans for improvements. They are sequenced after alerting.</p> <p>GM Alec Thomas has been appointed to manage the update and development of FSR to provide improvements to the basic functionality.</p>	2023/24

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date	Reporting Year
					The new officer rota has been developed with accurate tracking and approval of positive hours worked and reclaimed, this addresses findings from an external audit. Overtime and recall to duty work also follows this process of enhanced tracking and approval within the new officer rota, we are attempting to automate payment of these two elements to reduce manual processes, the remaining items of pay which can be automated through FSR will be sequenced after this due to development capacity.	
Building Facilities	5	Deliver the property capital schemes including the Telford Central Fire Station redevelopment project. Introduce improvements to station access and security at all SFRS sites. Review training facilities across the estate and consider feasibility study outcomes.	Andrew Kelcey Sally Edwards Adam Matthews	Telford Programme Board	Telford works are ongoing, and progress is reported separately. Some medium-term works have been completed on Training Facilities with further temporary structures agreed. Longer-term facility requirements will be considered when Telford is complete, and a wider training facilities/delivery method has been agreed.	2023/24
Appliances/ Equipment	6	Deliver the fleet and equipment strategy to include the introduction of new pumping and specialist appliances.	Marc Millward Jan Morris (Scott Hurford) Andrew Kelcey	Operations Board	Orders have been placed for 8 pumping appliances as direct replacement for those reaching the end of their lives. See Item 8 for update on Resource review.	2023/24
Collaboration	7	Oversee the replacement of the new Command and Control (C&C) system.	Ged Edwards	C&C Project Board	Contract still in the process of being agreed before final sign off and production of an implementation plan.	2023/24

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date	Reporting Year
Operations	8	Undertake an operations resource and capability review to support the next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which will come into effect in 2025.	Guy Williams Jan Morris	SMT	The Project Initiation Document for this project is complete and the initial milestones of costed savings options, Electrical vehicle fire response reports have been completed and going through the Service's governance process. Detailed data analysis which will underpin the CRMP process has been commissioned with a partner organisation and initial findings due in late November 2023.	2023/24