

# Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2025/26

## 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 2025/26.

## 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the progress made on the 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.

## 3 Background

In accordance with authority delegated to it by the Fire Authority, the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee will consider the draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 at its December 2025 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 (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 2025/26). 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 2025/26**

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2025/26 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 2025/26 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 2025/26.

## **10 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2025/26

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date
<b>People</b>	1	Complete a review of the efficiency of the Group Support Team	Marc Millward	Service Programme Board	A temporary Station Manager was appointed to lead the review on 01/07/2025. Recommendations are being presented to SMT as they are identified. Review is due to be concluded 30/06/26.
<b>People</b>	2	Employ specialist officers to develop, enhance and embed data and improve monitoring and reporting to key stakeholders	Chris Haigh	Systems Governance Group	Following the completion of the Structure Review and the review of resources by the Head of digital and Data, this will not be progressed during 2025/26
<b>Processes</b>	3	Review current performance measures and implement a revised suite to measure, monitor and manage performance	Sam Burton	Performance and Risk Group	Research with neighbouring services and HMICFRS completed to identify common trends and benchmarking datasets. A draft suite of core, performance, and health indicators has been developed and is currently being integrated. Final revisions will follow completion of the strategic planning process in early 2026.
<b>Processes</b>	4	Continue to replace paper-based processes with streamlined electronic workflows	Chris Haigh	Systems Governance Group / Service Programme Board?	We are providing opportunities for streamlined electronic workflows in places, including providing tablet devices as an alternative to paper based forms. However, there is also an indication of staff preference to use paper forms over tablet devices. This will be something that the business analyst role will be assigned to look at (estimated start date March 2026).

<b>Area of Review</b>		<b>Improvement Required</b>	<b>Lead Officers</b>	<b>Internal Board reported to</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<b>Systems / IT Infrastructure</b>	5	Review and enhance systems and cross team processes to improve reporting and monitoring	Chris Haigh	Systems Governance Group	We are revising Systems Governance Group (SGG) as a forum for reporting and monitoring on Digital and Data reporting and monitoring. We have started documenting workloads and key activities in work trackers, to increase visibility of work for monitoring purposes, and to be more transparent in our reporting to the business – these are fed back via SGG.
<b>Systems / IT Infrastructure</b>	6	Develop systems to identify efficiencies and productivity improvements	Chris Haigh Joanne Coadey	Service Programme Board	We are supporting Power Platform usage and automation opportunities, as well as utilising existing software capabilities more fully, to increase efficiencies with minimal investment. It is expected that further opportunities for efficiencies will be possible with the recruitment of a business analyst in March 2026 to help identify gaps and map improvements.
<b>Building Facilities</b>	7	Deliver the Authority's property capital schemes and introduce improvements to station access and security at all Service sites	Andrew Stirling Chris Haigh	Service Programme Board	The Station access project has started and phase 1 for 2025/6 is on track.
<b>Building Facilities</b>	8	Review training facilities across the estate and consider feasibility study outcomes	Andrew Stirling Mark Price	Service Programme Board	Following completion of the Training Facilities Review and Training Needs analysis procurement is underway for a technical and design consultant to refresh the feasibility study on the Telford training facilities and updating part of the training infrastructure.

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date
<b>Appliances/ Equipment</b>	9	Deliver the fleet and equipment strategy to include the introduction of new pumping and specialist appliances.	Mark Price Andrew Stirling	Service Programme Board	The Fleet and Equipment strategies are being updated to link to both the CRMP and the planned vehicle replacement programme. Specialist vehicles to be replaced are the Environment Unit, Aerial Ladder Platform, Rescue Tender and Boat Towing Vehicle.
<b>Collaboration</b>	10	Oversee the replacement of the new Command and Control (C&C) system.	Mark Price	C&C Project Board	Despite several delays by Motorola, which have been addressed by a coordinated approach from the IFCC group, the project is aiming to go live in July
<b>Operations</b>	11	Improve management of protracted incidents through establishment of significant incident room at Telford	Mark Price	C&C Project Board	Equipment and facilities have been purchased, implementation and roll out is critically dependant on the C&C project implementation
<b>Operations</b>	12	Deliver against the recommendations made in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and report progress	Scott Hurford	SMT	The Service has agreed a unified approach for the year, focusing on four CRMP priorities: attendance standard, specialist rescues, asset movement for flooding, and wildfire response. Each project has a sponsor and manager developing detailed plans, with accountability embedded in existing service delivery and support structures.
<b>Operations</b>	13	Review current policies against Fire Standards	Mark Price	Performance and Risk Group	The Fire Standards app and part of the wider Organisational Assurance piece being developed by Transformation and Collaboration, will be the primary mechanisms of recording progress