

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 authority delegated to it by the Fire Authority, the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee considered the draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 at its November 2023 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)	On-call contract bands agreed at strategic planning to progress to staff consultation and implementation, this moves from two bands to eight. Alerting - Swissphone are providing two O2 devices for test of network access, if these devices prove more reliable than the current Vodafone devices Swissphone will convert/replace at their cost. Current device performance may improve due to continued roll out of Vodafone network (May 2024), project exception report to identify options following tests of two networks for decision. Project scope has been reviewed and items moved to area command management (internal transfer process, widest possible pool). Fire Service Rota support remains as an area for Service decision on future resourcing/staffing. GST review progressing alongside area command structure.	23/24
People	2	Implementation of fitness support facilities via the refurbishment programme.	Marc Millward Chris White	New Ways of Working	The Contract to supply a 'stand-alone' fitness building at Baschurch has been awarded through a direct award framework.	23/24

				Board (NWOW)	The buildings had a lifespan of 20 – 25 years. The Service has given instruction to obtain planning permission, which will take 12-weeks. Baschurch will be the first of 6 stations to receive the improved fitness facilities.	
Process	3	Through the Service Programme Board continue to replace paper-based processes with streamlined electronic workflows.	Ged Edwards	Systems Governance Group (SGG)	Key roles are currently being evaluated within SFIA with a view to going out to advert.	23/24
Systems/ Infrastructure	4	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. Enhance the workflows in Fire Service Rota (FSR) to incorporate as many pay elements as possible so that manual processes are removed.	Sally Edwards Alec Thomas Marc Millward	Service Management Team (SMT) On Call Sustainability (OCS) Board	Following the Cyber-attack business continuity exercise, there are plans to complement the in-house provision with third party support in a Security Operations Centre (SOC) for detecting and responding to cyber-attacks. To implement FSR payments the department rota and basic functionality first needs to be corrected. This has been completed for officer rota, day staff rota is in progress. They can now be progressed to linking overtime to automated pay methods (currently this is still paper based). On-call contracts can link to a single source and align retaining fee to payment automatically and extend the payments from incidents and activities to other elements.	23/24

					Continued support for FSR will be required to complete this.	
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, with a building handover expected in April and full completion in June 2024. Some medium-term works have been completed on Training Facilities. Longer-term facility requirements will be considered when Telford is complete, and a wider training facilities/delivery method has been agreed.	23/24
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	See Item 8 for update on Resource review. Orders have been placed for 8 pumping appliances as direct replacement for those reaching the end of their lives.	23/24
Collaboration	7	Oversee the replacement of the new Command and Control (C&C) system.	Ged Edwards	C&C Project Board	Contract awarded. Report went to Fire Authority for funding for Mobile Data Terminals which will be included in the scope of the Command and Control replacement. Currently waiting for the release of the implementation plan from Motorola.	23/24

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	<p>The Resource Review remains on schedule for completion, with costings, water, safe working at height, confined space and battery storage complete. Current focus is Wildfire, with Water availability research ongoing.</p> <p>The CRMP initial findings and progress was reported to CFA STAG in February. This followed extensive data analysis as per the PID and findings from the Resource Review. The CRMP will feature these suggested improvements when it is finalised for consultation by June 2024.</p>	23/24
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