

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Restructure

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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Executive Summary

This report is presented following approval of funds by the Fire Authority in February 2025, to conduct a review of the Service structure and allocate necessary funds to implement an effective operating model to support delivery of services into the future.

The Service Management Team (SMT) have undertaken the review, and the findings and actions are contained within this report. The purpose of presenting this information to the Fire Authority is to ensure Members are sighted and aware of spend within the Service and furnished with information to provide effective oversight and scrutiny.

Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to note the report.

Background

The Service restructure has been developed in response to feedback from staff, the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report, and the SMT, ensuring that the organisation and Authority is positioned to deliver its statutory responsibilities, strategic goals, and the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025–2028. The restructure is designed to enhance service efficiency, governance, workforce development, and operational effectiveness, ensuring the Service is well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of the communities of Shropshire while delivering value for money.

A phased approach to recruitment has been adopted, prioritising key roles while maintaining financial flexibility. The Fire Authority approved the budget for 2025–2026, allocating £250,000 for investment, alongside an additional £150,000 from the base budget to support investment in permanent roles. Reserves have also been identified to fund fixed-term positions, allowing the Service to respond to immediate and emerging needs. This approach ensures the restructure is financially sustainable while supporting the delivery of critical services.

The restructure includes key areas of investment such as health and safety, ICT, and human resources. A review identified gaps in leadership, resource management, and digital transformation, leading to targeted investment to enhance service resilience and risk reduction. Collaboration with regional partners, including the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (WMLRF), is being explored to strengthen emergency planning capabilities, while internal resource reallocation has been identified to support a data analyst role.

The restructure has been informed by engagement with stakeholders. The Fire Authority has been updated regularly, SMT Team has shaped the restructure, communicated with staff, and representative bodies have been engaged through Joint Trade Union meetings. This transparent approach ensures that all stakeholders are aligned with the objectives and implementation of the restructure.

A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been conducted to assess the impact of the restructure on protected characteristics, ensuring an inclusive and fair approach to workforce changes. Specific mitigation measures have been identified to ensure accessibility, equal opportunities, and workforce diversity, reinforcing the Service's commitment to equity and inclusion.

The need for change within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is clear, as the current structure has remained unchanged for a number of years. With the development and consultation of the CRMP (CRMP) 2025–2028, alongside the establishment of the Service's strategic goals and priorities, it is essential that the organisational structure is aligned to effectively deliver these objectives. Feedback from HMICFRS and staff has highlighted concerns regarding internal governance arrangements, including the role of statutory officers, indicating that the current structure may not fully support effective decision-making and accountability.

Additionally, HMICFRS identified a cause of concern relating to governance, further reinforcing the need for structural changes. This was considered in the approach taken to reviewing and improving governance arrangements to ensure the Service is positioned to meet its statutory responsibilities. A strong foundation for the Service relies on having the right structure in place, ensuring that key roles, skills, and capabilities exist to meet strategic goals while fulfilling statutory duties. By reviewing and refining the structure, the Service can improve its ability to manage risk, enhance governance, and deliver the best possible outcomes for the communities of Shropshire.

Approach

The SMT has been actively engaged in the structural review from the outset through a series of dedicated workshops. As part of this process, SMT members were asked to consider key factors, including the delivery of the CRMP, strategic alignment to service goals and priorities, the roles and functions required to implement the CRMP and broader strategy, and innovative approaches to achieving these objectives through both internal and external collaboration.

The structural review was conducted in parallel with Strategy Mapping workshops, which were designed to shape the Service's goals and priorities. This strategic process identified several critical areas requiring investment to strengthen the organisation's capability.

Over three sessions, SMT rigorously examined and challenged the current structure, leading to the identification of key roles essential for delivering the Service's objectives effectively.

This collaborative approach ensures that the new structure is not only fit for purpose but also future-focused and aligned with the Service's long-term vision.

The structure review was conducted alongside an assessment of the financial and budgetary arrangements to ensure a strategic approach to workforce planning and resource allocation. A comprehensive review of existing posts was undertaken to identify areas requiring investment and to evaluate the necessity of current vacant positions. The budgetary provisions outlined in Section 9 highlight £250,000 in available funding, following the increase in the precept agreed by the Fire Authority for the 2025/2026 budget.

Additionally, £150,000 is available within the base budget, earmarked specifically for growth. Furthermore, reserves have been identified to support investment in people, processes, and systems, ensuring sustainable development. The restructure will seek to balance permanent investment in roles with targeted use of reserves for fixed-term initiatives, aligning financial planning with organisational priorities.

5 Outcomes

The outcome of the structural review focused on the following areas:

5.1 Structure

Following a review of the structure, through engagement sessions the following structure has been developed. The areas highlighted in green are areas of investment or uplift on permanent or fixed term basis. The table in the Appendix provides further detail.

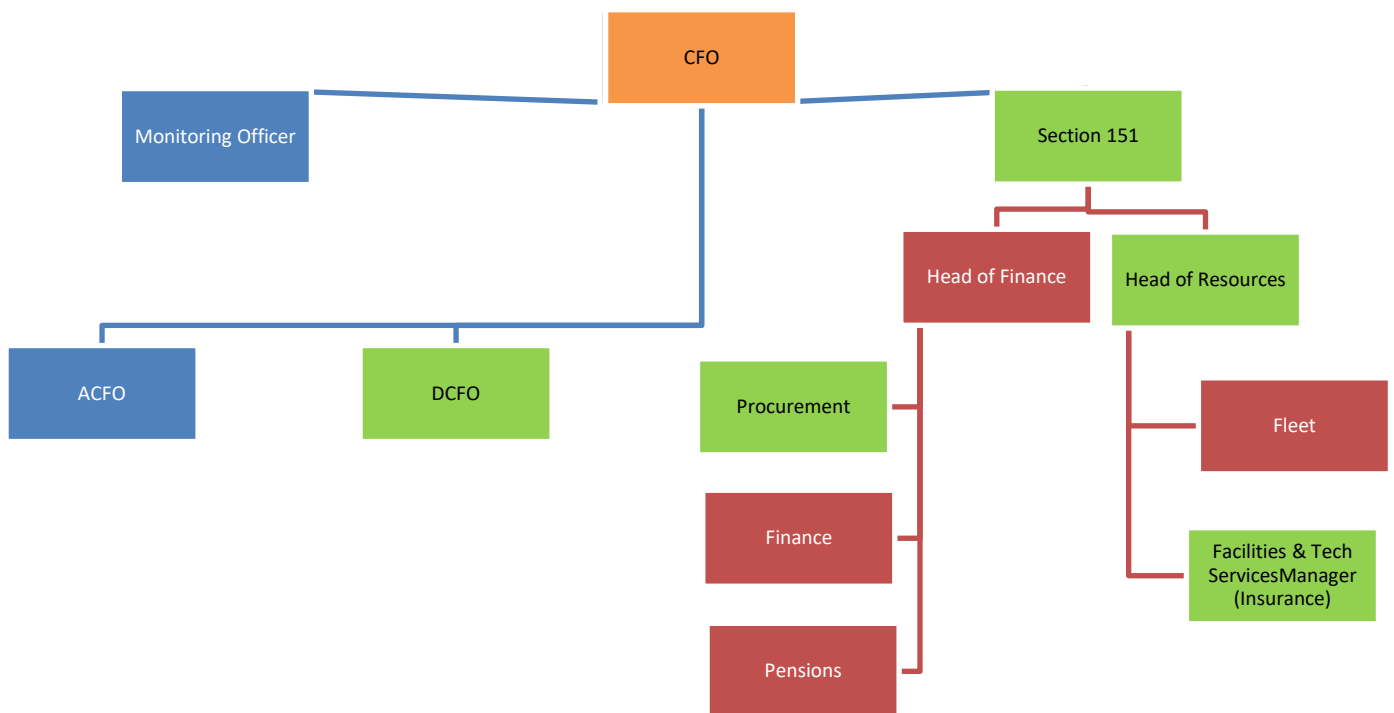
Operational Excellence

As part of the restructure, Operational Excellence will encompass the statutory officer roles, ensuring a strong link to the Fire Authority, which provides governance oversight. The statutory officer triangle, alongside capacity, is an improvement requirement to ensure effective strategic decision making and ensure that proposals are scrutinised, working together closely and robustly.

To reinforce governance and accountability, the roles of Monitoring Officer, Clerk, and Section 151 Officer will be strengthened. These changes align with findings from the 2024 HMICFRS inspection report, which highlighted the need for stronger governance, strategic risk management, and financial oversight. Strengthening these roles will help address gaps identified in the report and improve overall accountability. Additionally, investment is being made in uplifting the Deputy Chief Fire Officer role, the Monitoring Officer, and the Section 151 Officer, along with targeted investment in procurement to enhance financial transparency and efficiency.

The Section 151 Officer will take a leadership role over finance and resources, with a key change in finance, where procurement oversight will shift from resources - this function may either be managed in-house or through an external resource. This change directly responds to the HMICFRS report's concerns over financial transparency and major project funding, ensuring clearer accountability in financial processes.

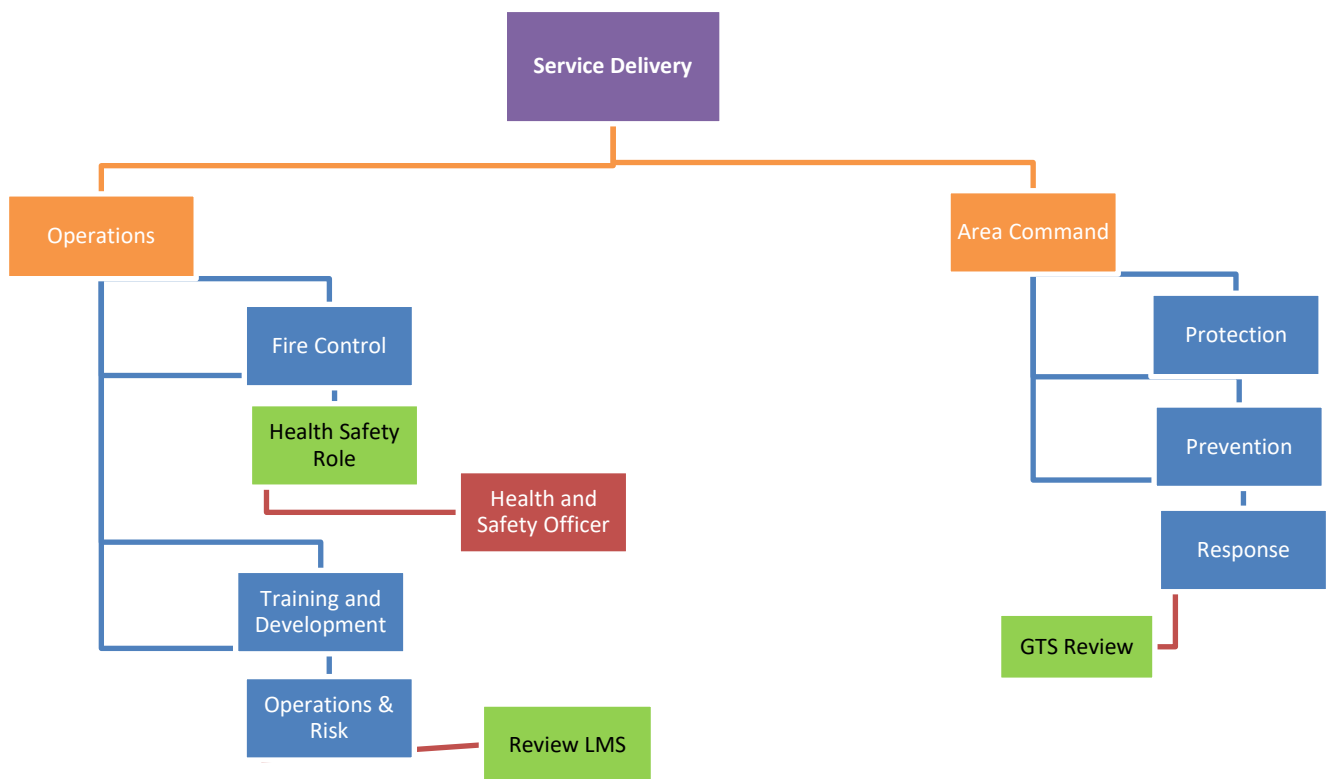
In Resources, the Head of Resources will oversee fleet and facilities management, with a notable change in structure as facilities and technical services will be combined under a single manager. This decision is informed through feedback from SMT, staff supported by HMICFRS findings on inefficiencies in resource management, including gaps in training facilities and ICT infrastructure. The new reporting line into the Head of Resources will allow for closer management, stronger leadership, and improved operational efficiency in these critical areas.



5.2 Service Delivery

A significant focus is on enhancing both resources and skills in Health and Safety, an area that has been under-resourced to date. This will not only ensure that the service fulfils its statutory responsibilities but will also continue to enable a positive culture across the service and strengthen internal H&S governance. To support this, investment has been allocated to enhance capacity in this area.

Additionally, two key areas for investment and review have been identified: The Learning Management Systems (LMS) platform and the Group Support Team (GST). To ensure both areas are optimised, dedicated roles have been established to review and improve the services approach to systems to support learning and GST over a 12-month period. These measures aim to enhance internal processes, improve resource management, and ensure that the Service continues to deliver the highest standard of service to the community.



5.3 Corporate Services

In response to SMT, Staff and the 2024 HMICFRS inspection report, a number of areas requiring improvement have been identified and the Service is implementing significant enhancements within its Corporate Services programme to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

This work also underpins our commitment to delivering the CRMP with operational excellence - ensuring improvements are not only reactive to inspection findings but embedded as part of a broader transformation agenda.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been earmarked for substantial investment, addressing current vacancies and recruitment challenges. The HMICFRS report highlighted the need for improved resource management and capacity within ICT to support digital transformation. To mitigate these issues, the Service is collaborating regionally and allocating resources to attract expertise.

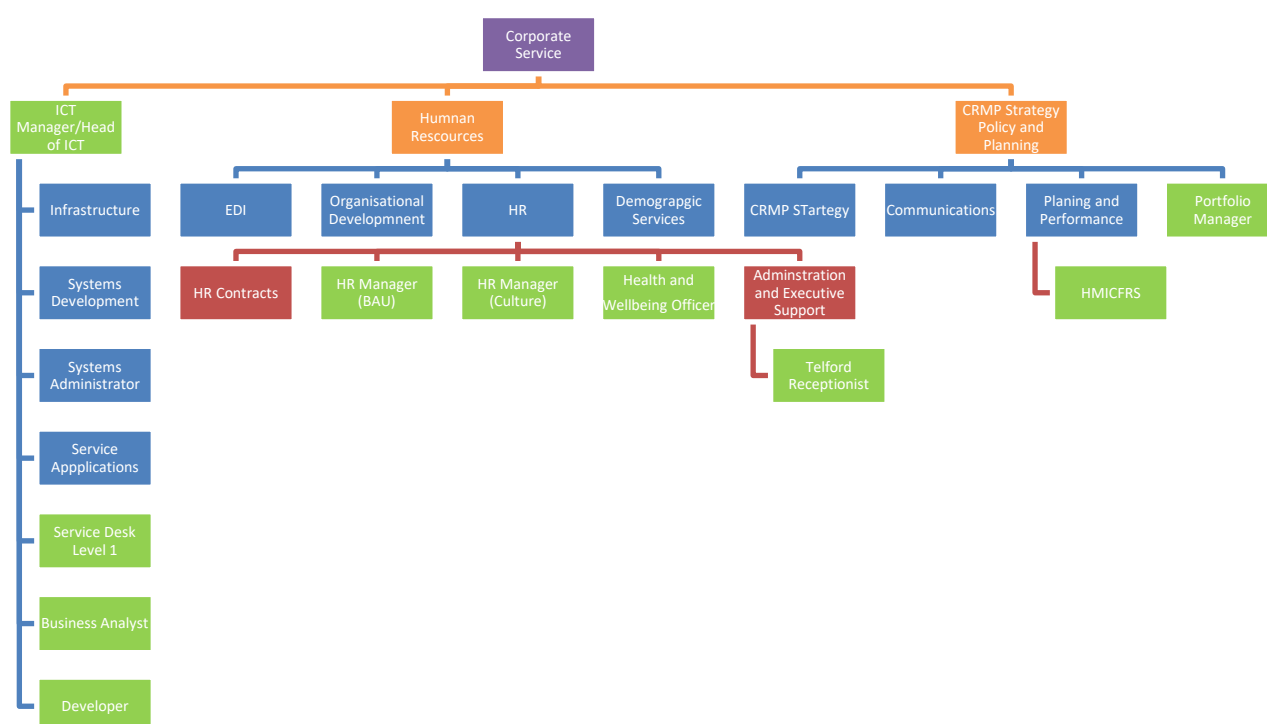
Additionally, plans are in place to recruit Service Desk Level 1 and Developer roles after six months, following the completion of ongoing recruitment efforts.

In the realm of Human Resources (HR), the report underscored the necessity for cultural enhancement and better support structures. To address these concerns, the Service is recruiting a Health and Well-being Manager to focus on staff welfare. Furthermore, the HR Manager position will be made permanent, and a new HR Manager will be appointed to concentrate specifically on culture and change initiatives, aligning with the report's recommendations to promote the right values and culture.

Within the CRMP Strategy, Policy, and Planning team, a dedicated role has been established to coordinate HMICFRS-related work over an 18-month period, ensuring a structured approach to addressing inspection requirements. Additionally, a Portfolio Manager position is being filled to replace an existing vacancy, with recruitment already in progress. This role will be responsible for reviewing and developing the Portfolio Management Office (PMO), overseeing a small team to enhance project and programme governance, thereby addressing the report's findings on internal governance, resource management and performance oversight.

While the overarching focus has been on long-term structural change, short-term operational needs have also been considered; for example, the receptionist role at Telford will be maintained on a fixed-term basis for two years to ensure continuity of support while longer-term service requirements are assessed.

These investments and structural changes within Corporate Services are designed to enhance efficiency, strengthen key functions, and support ongoing service improvements, directly addressing the areas for improvement highlighted in the HMICFRS report.



6 Conclusions

As part of the resource management restructure, the Head of Resources will oversee fleet and facilities management, with a new structural change integrating facilities and technical services under a single manager. This decision addresses inefficiencies identified in the 2024 HMICFRS inspection report, particularly regarding gaps in training facilities and ICT infrastructure. The revised reporting structure will enable closer management, stronger leadership, and improved operational efficiency in these critical areas.

This restructure serves as the foundation for key areas of work that will ensure the successful delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and the strategic goals for 2025/26. The investment to support these changes has been made possible through an increase in the budget, following the rise in precept agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2025. These restructuring efforts, alongside strategic investment in leadership roles and procurement, form part of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's commitment to enhancing service delivery, governance, and resource management, and vision of Making Shropshire Safer.

7 Capacity

The HR Team will play a critical role in supporting managers with the recruitment process for these newly established roles. These recruitment activities are in addition to HR's existing workload, which includes addressing a significant number of areas for improvement and causes of concern identified in the 2024 HMICFRS inspection report.

To ensure efficiency and accountability, managers have been allocated responsibility for recruiting roles within their respective areas, with HR providing specialist guidance and oversight. This approach ensures that recruitment progresses in a timely manner, while allowing HR to continue focusing on broader organisational priorities, workforce planning, and cultural development initiatives.

A review of the roles was undertaken to ensure an effective and sustainable approach to recruitment and resource allocation. As a result, a phased approach will be implemented over a 12-month period, allowing for strategic workforce planning, financial flexibility, and operational continuity. This approach ensures that roles are filled in a structured manner, aligning with service priorities while adapting to any changing organisational or market conditions.

8 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

As part of the phased approach to recruitment, two roles were identified as having alternative opportunities for resourcing: Emergency Planning Officer and Data Analyst. Currently, the service does not have a dedicated Emergency Planning Officer and relies on Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils for support in this area.

A potential collaboration opportunity has been identified with West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (WMLRF), where a funding stream may be available to support this role. The Head of Operational Training will explore this opportunity further to determine its feasibility and alignment with service needs.

For the Business Analyst role, it was determined that instead of immediate external recruitment, an internal resourcing approach would be more beneficial. As a result, resources will be moved into CRMP to provide support rather than investing in a new role in year one. This approach allows existing staff the opportunity to develop within their roles, with a potential review for external recruitment in year two. The Head of Operational Training and Head of CRMP will work collaboratively to agree on the best approach for implementation, ensuring that the service maximises internal talent and maintains flexibility in workforce planning.

9 Financial Implications

From a financial perspective, the Fire Authority approved the budget for 2025–2026 in February 2025, recognising the need for investment to support the delivery of the CRMP, strategic goals, service priorities, and to address areas of concern and improvement. As part of this, £250,000 has been allocated specifically for this purpose, alongside an additional £150,000 from the base budget agreed in 2024/25 for growth and investment following the Service's strategic reviews. Furthermore, reserves have been identified as a funding source for fixed-term positions, ensuring flexibility in addressing immediate and emerging needs. This investment will enable the Service to establish key roles essential for delivering strategic priorities and enhancing governance, risk management, and service effectiveness, the use of the growth funding will be reported in Fire Authority.

Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, a further financial review will be conducted as future budgets become clearer, ensuring that long-term financial planning continues to align with the Service's evolving needs. The phased approach to recruitment will allow for ongoing budget monitoring and flexibility, ensuring alignment with current financial allocations while maintaining a flexible structure in 2026, when strategic goals will be reassessed. The Service will provide updates to the Fire Authority on agreed areas of expenditure, ensuring transparency and accountability in resource allocation.

10 Legal Comment

The Service restructure is designed to ensure that Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) meets its legislative and legal obligations, while establishing the most effective structure to reduce risk and vulnerability within the communities of Shropshire. Additionally, it aims to enhance the delivery of services and uphold the health and safety of all staff.

11 Communications

Over the past five months, SMT has been actively engaged in shaping the restructure, providing valuable input and influencing its overall development. Regular updates have been provided to the Fire Authority, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the process. To maintain clear communication, the Service has prepared a brief overview of progress, and once the restructure is formally agreed, all stakeholders will be informed. This approach will support a smooth transition, ensuring clarity and alignment across the organisation.

12 Community Safety

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

13 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report or relevant UN Sustainability Goals.

14 Equality Impact Assessment

An e-EQIA has been completed.

[Service Restructure](#)

Whilst the EQIA identifies a number of areas that require mitigation, the Service has in place policies and procedures to mitigate the impact. A review of the EQIA will be completed in 6 months to ensure the mitigation is appropriate throughout each phase of the restructure.

15 Health and Safety

Health and safety remain a key area of focus for the Service, ensuring the well-being of staff and the communities it serves. To strengthen this commitment, dedicated resources have been allocated to enhance health and safety measures, ensuring compliance with best practices and legislative requirements. This investment will support a proactive approach to risk management, improving workplace safety, regional collaboration, operational resilience, and overall service effectiveness.

16 Fire Standard Core Code of Ethics and Human Rights (including Data Protection)

There are no impacts on compliance with the Fire Standards Core Code of Ethics or human rights arising from this report.

17 ICT

The impacts on ICT have been highlighted in the main body of the report.

18 Insurance

There are no insurance impacts arising from this report.

19 The On-call Service

There are no impacts on the On-call service arising from this report.

20 Public Value / Service Delivery

The restructure and targeted investments within the Service will have a significant positive impact on the delivery of services to the communities of Shropshire, ensuring a more efficient, effective, and resilient organisation. By strengthening governance, leadership, and resource management, the Service will be better equipped to reduce risk and vulnerability, improve health and safety standards, and enhance operational performance. The phased approach to recruitment ensures that critical roles are filled strategically, balancing financial sustainability with workforce development. Additionally, the investment in health and safety, digital transformation, and emergency planning will enable the Service to respond more effectively to incidents and emerging risks, ultimately enhancing public safety. The alignment of these changes with budgetary planning and financial oversight ensures that public funds are utilised responsibly, delivering value for money while maintaining the highest standards of service delivery, risk reduction, and community support.

21 Reputation

There are no reputational impacts arising from this report.

22 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

23 Training

There are no training impacts arising from this report.

24 Appendix

[Individual areas of investment and associated information.](#)

25 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Individual areas of investment and associated information

Table outlining permanent and uplifted roles for 25/26 with associated detail.

Area	Function	Role	Accountable person	Timeline
Operational Excellence	Statutory Role	151 Officer	Simon Hardiman	June 2025
Operational Excellence	Brigade Manager Role	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Simon Hardiman	April 2025
Operational Excellence	Statutory Role	Monitoring Officer	Simon Hardiman	June 2025
Service Delivery	Operational Training and Risk	Health and Safety	Mark Price	TBC
Corporate Services	HR	HR Manager (uplift)	Germaine Walker	TBC
Corporate Services	ICT/PMO	Data Analysis	Scott Hurford and Sally Edwards	In house July
Corporate Services	ICT	Service Desk Level 1	Sally Edwards	July Phase 2
Corporate Services	ICT/PMO	Business Analysis	Sally Edwards	TBC
Corporate Services	ICT	Developer	Sally Edwards	July Phase 2
Corporate Services	ICT	Head of/ICT Manager	Karen Gowreesunker	TBC
Operational Excellence	Resources	Head of Resources	Sam Burton	May 25
Operational Excellence	Finance	Procurement Officer	Jo Coady	TBC

Table outlining fixed term roles for 2025/26.

Area	Function	Role	Accountable person	Timeline	Duration
Corporate Services	CRMP Strategy Planning	HMICFRS	Scott Hurford	Live	18 months
Corporate Services	ICT Recruitment		Sally Edwards	TBC	NA
Corporate Services	HR	Health and Well-being Officer	Germaine Worker	TBC	2 years
Corporate Services	Administration	Telford Receptionist	Germaine Worker and Mark Price	TBC	2 years
Corporate Services	HR	HR Manager Culture	Germaine Worker	TBC	2 Years
Service Delivery	Area Command	Group Support Team Review	Marc Millward	TBC	1 year
Service Delivery	Operational Training and Risk	Ops Learning Review	Mark Price	TBC	1 year

Table outlining roles to be considered for 2026/27.

Area	Function	Role	Accountable person	Timeline
Corporate Services	CRMP	Communications Manager	Scott Hurford	26/27
Corporate Services	HR	EDI Assistant	Germaine Worker	26/27
Operational Excellence	Finance	Finance Manager	Jo Coady	26/27
Corporate Services	HR	Development Apprentice	Germaine Worker	26/27
Corporate Services				
Service Delivery	Operational Training and Risk	Emergency Planner	Mark Price	26/27
Corporate Services	ICT	Developer	Sally Edwards	26/27
Corporate Service	ICT	Service Desk Level 1	Sally Edwards	26/27