Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2012/13

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond,
Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or Ged Edwards, Planning and Performance
Manager, on 01743 260208.

1 Purpose of Report

This report summarises the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2012/13.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note:

a) The progress made against each of the improvements, contained in the AGS Improvement Plan 2012/13; and

b) The amendment to one workstream, as detailed in section 5 and the appendix to the report.

3 Background

At its meeting in February 2012, the Fire Authority delegated authority to the Audit and Performance Management Committee to consider and approve the Statement of Accounts for 2011/12. This was agreed at the September meeting of the Committee.

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 these improvements are progressed during the coming year (the AGS Improvement Plan 2012/13).

This Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress, which the Service makes against the Plan.

4 Monitoring Progress against the AGS Improvement Plan 2012/13

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2012/13 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 due to changes in the external environment that guides our work, as well as the internal environment that dictates whether we have the capacity to achieve our 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 or Service Transformation Board, if variations to the current Plan are required. These changes in turn will be reported to this Committee.

5 Progress to Date

The 2012/13 Improvement Plan contains ten areas for improvement. The progress that has been made against each of the work packages is detailed briefly in the appendix to the report.

A revised target date for work stream 4 (Operations and Fire Control) has been agreed.

6 Financial Implications

Any significant budgetary implications, brought about by the improvements proposed in the 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

This report has been assessed against the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Human Resources 5 Part 2), which has shown that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore been completed.

9   Appendix

Appendix A
Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 Improvement Plan

Appendix B
Asset Management Update Report from Head of Resources

10   Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Appendix A to report 7 on
Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2012/13
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Performance Management Committee
22 November 2012

Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 Improvement Plan

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
Financial Management	1	Ensure that strategic financial planning takes account of likely changes to funding streams, in terms of business rates retention and localisation of council tax support, as a result of new legislation.	Joanne Coadey	The Fire Authority responded to DCLG's technical consultation on Business Rates Retention in September. Head of Finance is in contact with relevant officers in constituent authorities responsible for council tax support schemes, and has attended Telford and Wrekin's stakeholder consultation on their proposed scheme.	February 2013
	2	Public Value and the 2020 Strategy will consider how the Service is structured and meets the challenge of further budget settlements.		Outcomes of the Public Value process will be incorporated into the Authority's revenue budget proposals for 2013/14 and future years. This will go to Strategy and Resources Committee in November.	December 2013
Resource Management	3	The Service needs to complete the implementation of the Asset Management System. Existing systems will be audited to seek assurance that they are robust and fit for purpose.	Andrew Kelcey	Further discussions have been held between users, suppliers and our ICT team. It is now believed that the required simplified user interface can be developed in-house following on-line training of an IT specialist. This is anticipated to take place during November, and trials will be carried out at Bridgnorth. This will be followed by a further review of the information produced in use and how best to use it within the Technical Services team. The availability of additional technical support in-house, and the use of the system by the ICT team, will be of great assistance in progressing the project, but full implementation will remain a long term project. Please see Appendix B update report from Head of Resources.	Ongoing. Brought forward from the 2011/12 Improvement Plan.

**Putting Shropshire's
Safety First**

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
Operations and Fire Control	4	Embedding of the Command and Control system to suit the needs of the Service and the Community.	Andy Johnson	At the time that the Improvement Plan was developed, there were two major functionality issues, associated with the Command and Control (C&C) System that were outstanding before the system could be deemed as fully embedded. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and replacement Station End Equipment (SEE). Following changes to software and some elements of hardware, AVL has now been deemed as fit for purpose and removed from the Project Issue Log at the beginning of October. Previous issues with the legacy SEE have been addressed (with the system now relatively stable) and a roll out plan is currently being developed by the C&C integrator (Telent) to replace and upgrade the legacy SEE. Proposals for SEE including costings have been received and are currently undergoing evaluation.	March 2013
	5	Determine and implement an appropriate in life support arrangement for the Command and Control System.	Andy Johnson	Current arrangements are in place to support on-going maintenance of the C&C. Once the new SEE has been installed a long term in life support arrangement will be agreed and implemented with the system integrator.	To be determined
	6	Consideration to be given to the outcomes of the Operational Assurance (OpA) Peer Review.	Steve Worrall	Outcomes of OpA process developed into OpA Self-Assessment Report (incorporating OpA Action Plan). Report currently (22/10/12) undergoing external challenge via LGA led OpA Peer Review Team.	December 2012

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
Health and Safety Management	7	Implement the action plans following the review of the Health and Safety Executive consolidation report based on the eight inspections completed in 2009/10.	Andy Perry	The outcomes of the Action Plan have been disseminated to the relevant departments. Some of the proposals have been linked together, due to their similarity, and Departments have produced Delivery Plans for staged implementation. There are currently 15 Delivery Plans.	Various dates as the Action Plan has been divided into 15 Delivery Plans
Service Transformation Programme	8	The Service Transformation Programme (STP) will monitor key areas including the implementation of a number of systems (Human Resources, Performance Management and Information Management Review). The programme will aid in embedding and supporting appropriate systems to ensure the most efficient use of our resources.	Ged Edwards	A Programme Plan and Brief has been developed to include Projects/Work packages together with respective Project Managers and Senior Responsible Owners. The Programme Manager who is responsible for overall delivery of the Programme reports on activity/finance/issues and risks to a Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Fire Officer on a regular basis. A summary of Programme Progress is then communicated through to SMT.	As detailed in the Programme Brief. The Service Transformation Programme is a 3-5 year programme of activities.
ICT and Communications	9	Improved resilience of the shadow site at Telford Central needs to be fully assured when installation is complete. This will include the provision of secure Business Continuity information, accessible at all times to appropriate managers.	Sally Edwards	Replication has now been completed at Telford Central and is in operation as a shadow site for the IT Network Infrastructure. Business Continuity information is currently being replicated and a review is taking place to update information that is currently held. Appointments have been arranged with Managers to update their respective Business Continuity Manuals and it is envisaged that this work will be completed before the December deadline.	December 2012

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning	10	Internal audit has identified that members of the Risk Management Group require some measure of training and/or qualification to ensure that all risk-related issues are dealt with in line with best practice.	Ged Edwards	This has been completed. Members of the Service Management Team and Risk Management Group attended training provided by Zurich on 1/11/12.	November 2012. (Brought forward from the 2011/12 Improvement Plan)

Putting Shropshire's Safety First

Appendix B to report 7 on
Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2012/13
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Performance Management Committee
22 November 2012

Asset Management System

Purpose

The Asset Management System (AMS) was originally developed as a tool to assist Technical Services to demonstrate that the Service (including the Department and users) complied with its policies and legal requirements regarding inspection, maintenance and record keeping. Most of these were at the time paper based systems, and it is the updating of these systems that formed part of the AMS project. There was no concern regarding actual compliance, merely in the demonstration of compliance. The system would also improve understanding of performance and communication between the Department and its internal customers.

What has been achieved

A large amount of the required information, affecting approximately 50,000 operational and information and communication technology (ICT) assets, has been gathered, formatted and entered into the System as the asset database. This data is being updated to an electronic system and maintained by the Technical Services and ICT Departments. There is now a single point record of the Service's operational equipment assets.

Maintenance regimes associated with this equipment have been defined and linked to the equipment (including processes to record these changing regimes as the same piece of equipment changed location).

Changing needs

During the implementation period a number of other equipment and procedural changes has taken place, changing the needs of the System. For example, a total care maintenance arrangement for fire kit has been introduced, resulting in the contractor holding maintenance histories for the garments. The introduction of log books to record wears also provides for the recording of inspections on other protective items. The Service has also developed its Workshops management system (TrACE) and this now records asset management information about equipment maintained by the Workshops team.

Additionally, the Service has implemented a station audit system, which offers improved assurance that station inspections and tests have been completed and recorded.

Issues

The Service has experienced difficulties in fully implementing the System, including:

- Underestimating the complexity of the System and the procedures it was required to manage;

- Allocation of people with appropriate skills to the project: it is led by officers with a detailed understanding of the equipment and legal requirements, but a limited understanding of data structures and the commercial management of IT suppliers; and
- Managing the project at a time of significant change and other major projects, and while the Service's IT infrastructure was unable to cope with the System.

These issues, which have also affected other systems and organisations, have been recognised and addressed within the Service; however the implementation of multiple systems will place excessive demands on a small number of people with the appropriate technical skills.

It is also essential that management of the System does not become a task in itself, and that the value of the information provided by the System exceeds the cost of maintaining it.

Priorities

Having reviewed the issues above, the Service has developed a number of the required skills within its ICT team, and these skills will be available to the System. However, there are a number of other ICT projects in the Service Transformation Programme which will require these skills, including finalisation of the Command and Control System, updating or replacing the ResourceLink human resources system and availability system and the performance monitoring system.

As the Asset Management System, total care maintenance packages and station audits now meet the needs identified for the System it is suggested that we should now focus our limited technical resources on higher priority projects, while continuing to develop the Asset Management System as resources allow.

The Way Forward

The wider Asset Management System (including the AMS IT system, alternative record keeping and total care contracts) is now achieving what is required for the Service within the constraints of 8 years of change and development. Assets are now being managed within a number of discrete regimes but all are within a system that ensures there is a robust, secure testing and maintenance regime for all assets. The essence of the change to an AMS approach was to convert ad hoc systems, which were mainly paper based to electronic systems to improve efficiency, and that process continues. It is, therefore, appropriate to close down the AMS as a project and incorporate it into the Service's business as usual. This will free up scarce resources in ICT and the Programme Office for other work within the Service Transformation Programme.

Follow-on Actions

As usual, when a project is closed, there are a number of minor actions required to embed or further develop the project.

ICT System Actions

As well as recording data, a simple station user interface was desired to enable stations to record work completed and problems identified. A further user interface may be required within the Technical Services team, to enable the easy identification, reporting and management of issues raised by stations. Training has been arranged with an internal resource to develop the skills required to produce the user interfaces. However this person forms part of the team tasked with other ICT projects within the Service Transformation Programme, and may not have the time available to devote to this work.

Web administrator training, enabling in-house development of the user interface	Mid November 2012
Development of the user interface	End December 2012
Trial of station user interface at Bridgnorth, and further development	End March 2013
Consideration of reported information gathered from trial, and development of Technical Services user interface	End May 2013
Roll-out of user interface to further stations	To be confirmed but likely to be at least 1 year as the system is incrementally developed to cope with the large number of assets and reports expected

Other System Actions

The Service has put in place a programme to review the maintenance and record keeping for assets.

Assets maintained by Workshops, including appliances, ladders and some operational equipment	Complete
Breathing apparatus (BA)	Ongoing as part of implementation of new BA sets
Personal protective equipment	On-going as part of implementation of new fire kit
Station audits and site record keeping	Annually by Area Command staff
Fire hose	January 2013
Line safety equipment	March 2013
Other operational equipment	May 2013
Electrical equipment (PAT testing)	July 2013
Hydrants	September 2013
Hydraulic equipment, following move on to Workshops system	November 2013