

# Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2011/12

## 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 2011/12.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the progress made against each of the improvements contained in the AGS Improvement Plan 2011/12; and
- b) Agree to receive the AGS Improvement Plan 2012/13 at the September meeting of the Committee.

### 3 Background

At its meeting on 26 September 2011, the Fire Authority's Final Accounts 2010/11 were signed off by the Chair, the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer. The Final Accounts contained, as an appendix, a statement as to how effective the Authority's various systems of internal control had 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 2011/12).

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

#### **4 Monitoring Progress against the AGS Improvement Plan 2011/12**

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2011/12, attached as the appendix to this report, shows the progress made against each of the planned activities.

As is the case with most plans, the activities included 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, if they require any variations to the current Plan. These changes will also be reported to this committee.

#### **5 Progress to Date**

The 2011/12 Improvement Plan contains seven areas for improvement. Progress has been made against each of the work packages, and is briefly outlined at the appendix. Five areas are now completed, one is partially completed and one area is still outstanding.

#### **6 AGS Improvement Plan 2012/13**

The process for developing the AGS Improvement Plan for 2012/13 is currently being undertaken and involves officers signing 'Assurance Statements' within areas of the Service, for which they are responsible. Officers' statements are then reviewed by the Lead Executive Officer to ensure the areas identified for improvement are appropriate and achievable. This allows the officer responsible for Risk Management to provide a forward-looking improvement plan.

This process is currently taking place and the subsequent improvement plan will be brought to this committee for approval in September. Any outstanding actions within the 2011/12 Improvement Plan will be carried forward into 2012/13 Improvement Plan.

#### **7 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.

## **8 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.

## **9 Equality Impact Assessment**

This report simply details progress made against a previously agreed improvement plan and has no impact on people. It has been assessed against the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 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.

## **10 Appendix**

AGS Improvement Plan 2011/12

## **11 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

**Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2011/12**

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
Financial Management	1	As a result of anticipated retirement the Service needs to review tasks and structures associated with financial matters and to ensure that the duties of the Treasurer are continued effectively.	Joanne Coadey	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority has entered into a Service Level Agreement with Shropshire Council to provide both Treasurer Services and Section 151 Officer.	Completed
Resource Management	2	The Asset Management System (AMS) has not yet been implemented. The Service is not able to demonstrate compliance with standards.  Complete implementation in accordance with reviewed project timescales.	Andrew Kelcey	As a result of further slippage in the implementation of AMS a review of current equipment maintenance regimes is to take place. This review will aim to give assurance that the systems and arrangement that are currently in place still meet the needs of the Service. As part of this review consideration will be given as to the most appropriate method for rolling out AMS.	September 2012
Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning	3	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	A new officer responsible for Corporate Risk Management was appointed on the 1 April 2012. The officer holds a qualification in Office of Government Commerce Management of Risk (MOR). Arrangements are currently being made to source an appropriate course for Risk Management Group members.	Partially completed April 2012

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
Operations	4	Fire Control will be relocated to Shrewsbury (new) HQ.	Martin Timmis	The relocation project has been managed through the Shrewsbury HQ Programme. Fire Control has relocated and a new command and control system installed.	Completed
Health & Safety	5	Review to identify any improvements, and, if necessary, develop an action plan, to assess and implement the findings of the Health and Safety Executive consolidation report based on the eight inspections completed in 2009/10.	Andy Perry	Recommendations have been reviewed and an action plan is in place. Whilst not all actions have yet concluded and/or will continue into the future, this improvement is complete.	Completed
Area Command	6	The reduction in Group Managers in the Department, as a consequence of the budget cuts, meant that the structure of the Department would not continue to be able to deliver the Service's stated Aims and Objectives in the most effective way.	Andy Johnson	Structural change within Area Command is complete and is now embedded within the Service. The Department has been restructured into 2 Groups, rather than 3 Districts.	Completed
Area Command	7	Due to Phase 2 of the District Support Team Project not being able to proceed, because of the budget cuts, there will be a shortfall in the resources originally planned to support Retained Duty System (RDS) management and development, which will impact on our ability to continue to professionalise the RDS service.	Andy Johnson	Resources within the Department as a whole have been redistributed to take account of this change. We have moved one of the Station Managers from the Shrewsbury, Telford & Wrekin Group across to the Shropshire Rural Group.	Completed