

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2010/11

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report summarises the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2010/11.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the progress made against each of the improvements contained in the AGS Improvement Plan 2010/11.

3 Background

At a meeting on 16 June 2010, the Fire Authority's Final Accounts 2009/10 were signed off by the Chair, the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer. The Final Accounts contained 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 these improvements were progressed during the coming year (the AGS Improvement Plan).

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

4 Monitoring Progress against the AGS Improvement Plan 2010/11

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2010/11 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 Performance Group, if they require any variations to the current Plan. These changes will also be reported to this Committee.

5 Progress to Date

The 2010/11 Improvement Plan contains only five areas for improvement. Progress has been made against each of the five work packages, and is briefly outlined in the Appendix.

Much of the work towards Improvement 1 has been completed. Consideration of electronic systems to simplify reporting, monitoring and payment of Retained Duty System (RDS) claims is dependent upon the ability of the new Command and Control system supplier to incorporate all of the requirements within their availability system. Work on this is ongoing.

Work on Improvement 2 is complete. However, implementing the actions resulting from this work will be ongoing for a number of years. Members will already be aware of the projects being implemented in 2011 to reduce budget in line with Government requirements.

Improvement 3 is ongoing. The cessation of the national FiReControl project, which would have seen Shropshire amalgamate with regional partners for mobilising, command and control, now means that an interim solution would be inadequate. A permanent solution will now be required, based on the original interim solution, but with increased resilience. Consequently, this project will continue into 2011/12 and will be incorporated into the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan for next year.

Improvement 4 - the implementation of a resource management system has been plagued by problems. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has carried out a full review of the project and is now managing a re-scoping and timetabling exercise. This may be carried forward to the next Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.

Improvement 5 - this is on track and will appear in the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2011/12.

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 Budgetary 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 simply reports progress 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) and this has shown that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from the report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

9 Appendix

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2010/11

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

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| Area of review | IRN | Improvement required | Improvement Owner | Completion date | Comments |
|----------------------------|-----|--|-------------------|---|--|
| Financial Management | 1 | <p>Monitoring and audit of Retained Duty System (RDS) payments is hampered by reliance on paper records.</p> <p>We plan to carry out a full review of RDS station activities resulting in payment to allow us to create more accurate budgets, including for pay, retaining fees and variable payments. This will allow us to compare like stations budgetary controls. This replaces last year's scheduled improvement, which will be incorporated into the review.</p> | Joanne Coadey | 03/2011 | <p>Work to review and compare all RDS activities, which result in payments, has been completed and the findings will now be considered as part of the four-year budget setting process. This work informs, and is dependant upon, the Public Value reviews being undertaken by the Service.</p> <p>Provision of an electronic RDS availability and payment system is currently being considered.</p> |
| Strategic Planning Process | 2 | <p>As a consequence of the current economic instability we have reviewed our processes, including Integrated Risk Management Planning, and have commenced the introduction of the Public Value Model in preference to previous planning methodologies.</p> <p>We have started a Public Value review, and will implement Public Value during 2010/11.</p> | Steve Worrall | 12/2010 Completed. Implementation will be ongoing | <p>The Strategic Risk and Planning Group oversees this activity on behalf of the Authority. The Public Value process has been well received by staff with 40 consultation sessions, from which over 200 "suggestions" have been derived. Public consultation sessions have been completed.</p> <p>Implementation of "savings projects" has commenced.</p> |

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|--|-----|--|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Fire Control Convergence | 3 | <p>The Interim Fire Control System is based on developing technology. Consequently, it may not deliver the required standard of Command and Control (C&C) for the Service.</p> <p>Substantial "live testing" of the new system is being incorporated into the contractual arrangements for ICRS. Live testing will be closely monitored by officers.</p> | Martin Timmis | 03/2011 | The C&C system is being managed as a part of the Shrewsbury Building Programme through a Prince2 project. As a result of the cessation of the national FiReControl project some measure of re-scoping has been required. The Service is now seeking a permanent, rather than interim, solution. |
| Resource Management | 4 | <p>The new Asset Management System has not yet been fully implemented. Service is not able to demonstrate compliance with standards.</p> <p>Complete implementation in accordance with reviewed project timescales.</p> | Andrew Kelcey | 12/2010 To be re-scoped | A full-time Prince2 project manager was appointed with roll-out planned for 30/11/2010. However three pilot stations revealed that a number of remote system IT issues hampered implementation. The project is ongoing with an expectation that a useable Technical Services system will be in place in 2011. Full roll-out to end users will be delayed pending IT infrastructure improvements. |
| Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning | 5 | <p>With dependence on ICT systems increasing, the Service needs to develop an AGS assurance statement for this key area.</p> <p>RM and ICT Manager will work together to provide an appropriate statement</p> | Martin Timmis | 03/2011 | This work is ongoing. A number of key improvements are likely to be required to maintain an effective and efficient IT system for the Service. A number of improvements to the system have been implemented during 2010. An AGS Insurance Statement will be incorporated into the next AGS Improvement Plan. |