

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 Martin Timmis, Head of Operations and Risk, on 01743 260285.

1 Purpose of Report

This report presents the 'Annual Governance Statement' (AGS) Improvement Plan for 2011/12, agreed by this committee in June 2011 for approval by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 26 September 2011. The report also details the progress made to date against the improvements contained in that Plan.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the progress made to date against each of the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2011/12 Plan.

3 Background

At its meeting on 26 September 2011 it is anticipated that the Fire Authority will approve the Final Accounts for 2010/11 and these will be signed off by the Chair, the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer. The Final Accounts contain 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 (AGS). Areas of the system of internal control that have been identified as requiring improvement are listed in the AGS and an action plan has been developed to ensure these improvements are progressed during the coming year; this is known as the AGS Improvement Plan.

This Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress 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 is attached as an appendix to this report; progress against each of the planned activities is also included in the appendix. The Committee will receive regular reports on the progress being made against the Plan throughout its life.

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. Any such changes will also be reported to this committee.

5 Progress to Date

Progress against each area for improvement is set out at the Appendix.

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 (Human Resources 5 Part 2) and this 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

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2011/12

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

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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	The suppliers of the AMS have now been contracted to populate the asset information onto the system. Completion date not yet agreed with supplier.	Not yet determined
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.	Martin Timmis	The Service is currently identifying suitable opportunities. It is likely that the risk reference will be vested in a different officer in the near future. This officer will be qualified to Management of Risk standards.	December 2011
Operations	4	Fire Control will be relocated to Shrewsbury (new) HQ.	Martin Timmis	The relocation project is being managed through the Shrewsbury HQ Programme. Building is complete and work to migrate Control functions is on schedule.	December 2011

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	As Phase 2 of the District Support Team Project will not 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 and Wrekin Group across to the Shropshire Rural Group.	Completed