

SHROPSHIRE AUDIT SERVICES**FINAL AUDIT REPORT ON SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE –
COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
2010/11****Introduction**

1. Audit Services have undertaken the annual review of the compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance.
2. The revised Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Fire Authority at the meeting on 14th October 2009. This is based upon the CIPFA/SOLACE publication 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Framework'.
3. During the course of the audit the Corporate Services Manager gave her time and assistance for which the auditor would like to express her gratitude.

Objectives and Conclusions

4. The code has been examined in detail and evidence obtained in each area. One minor amendment has been made as a result of the review. Two additional discrepancies, inaccuracies or potential improvements were found. Recommendations are made within this report to address these issues.

Outstanding Previous Audit Report Recommendations

There were no recommendations arising from last year's review.

Overall Conclusion

From the audit work undertaken and the explanations provided, it is the auditor's opinion that Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service has full compliance with their Code of Corporate Governance in respect of the areas examined. Two recommendations have been made as a result of this review, which should be addressed before the Code is formally adopted.

Ceri Pilawski
Head of Audit Services
August 2010

SHROPSHIRE AUDIT SERVICES

AUDIT REPORT ON SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE – COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

DATES OF AUDIT: AUGUST 2010

AUDITOR: KATHY HALL

SUBJECT AREA/CONTROL OBJECTIVE			
	FINDINGS	Rec No	RECOMMENDED ACTION
1.1	SRFS have fully embraced and adopted the CIPFA/SOLACE model framework in full; which was formally adopted by the Authority on 14 th October 2009.		None required.
	Principle 1 – Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area		
1.2	The evidence section is correct and up to date.		None required.
	Principle 2 – Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles		
1.3	The evidence section is correct and up to date.		None required.
	Principle 3 – Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour		
1.4	The evidence section is correct and up to date with one exception which needs to be addressed before the Code is approved. This relates to section 3.1.3 “Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and officers of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice”. In this section reference is made to the Register of Member’s Interests being accessible through the Service’s website.	1	<p>Before the Code is presented to Members for approval, assurance should be secured to evidence that Register of Members Interest forms can be accessed through the web site, as stated in paragraph 3.1.3 of the Code.</p> <p>Rating: Requires Attention.</p> <p>Management response: Members’ Register of Interests forms can now be accessed on the web site.</p>

	At the time of this review, this is not yet available, but is scheduled to be in place by November. In order to ensure that the statements made in the Code are accurate, this should be confirmed as in place before the Code is adopted.		<p>Responsible officer: Corporate Services Manager.</p> <p>Target implementation date: Already completed.</p>
	Principle 4 – Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk		
1.5	The evidence section is correct and up to date.		None required.
	Principle 5 – Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective		
1.6	<p>The evidence section is correct and up to date with one exception. This relates to section 5.2.1 “Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively”. The Code advises that “One-to-one individual development reviews are offered to members to review and agree learning and development needs through means of a self-assessment questionnaire”. These reviews have not, however, taken place for the last two years and it is understood that this issue was raised by a Member at the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority in July 2010.</p> <p>Consideration therefore needs to be given to either amending the wording at paragraph 5.2.1 to reflect this weakness, or to the development of an action plan and timetable, which should be referred to in the Code. This is a significant weakness in terms of ensuring that members are suitably informed and trained for their roles, especially as this has been raised as a concern by a serving Member.</p>	2	<p>Section 5.2.1 of the Draft Code should be re-examined and reworded to ensure that it reflects the current position in relation to the absence of one-to-one individual development reviews with members, and the identification of this at the FRA meeting in July 2010.</p> <p>Rating: Significant.</p> <p>Management response: This matter needs to be taken before Members to consider whether they wish to retain one-to-one individual development reviews. If so, officers will ensure that they take place. If not, section 5.2.1 of the Code will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Responsible officer: Corporate Services Manager and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (HR).</p> <p>Target implementation date: To go to 4th November Fire Authority meeting and then actioned accordingly.</p>
	Principle 6 – Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability		
1.6	The evidence section is correct and up to date.		None required.