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REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

PROGRESS AGAINST THE STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2006/07

1   Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of the progress being made against the Fire Authority's Statement on Internal Control (SIC) Improvement Plan 2006/07.

2   Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report

3   Background

At the meeting of the Fire Authority on 14 June 2006, the Chair, Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer signed off the Authority's Statement on Internal Control (SIC), for inclusion in the Final Accounts Statement for 2005/06. The purpose of the SIC is for the Authority to state how effectively its system of internal control has operated over the period covered by the statement. During the process used to develop the SIC, areas for improvement within the system were identified and a plan was created to ensure these improvements are effectively implemented. The action plan was published at the same time as the SIC and is called the SIC Improvement Plan 2006/07.

Progress made towards the objectives specified in the SIC Improvement Plan is on target. The appendix to this report provides further details on the progress made on all aspects of the SIC Improvement Plan.

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## 4	Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## 5	Legal Comment

The SIC 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.

## 6	Appendix

SIC Improvement Plan Progress Summary Report

## 7	Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority 14 June 2006 report 14 - Final Accounts 2004/05

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity		Retained	
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	*
Environmental		Staff	
Financial		Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link		West Midlands Regional Management Board	

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201.

Appendix to report on
Progress against the Statement on Internal Control Improvement Plan 2006/07
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Audit and Performance Management Committee
7 September 2006

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Responsible Officer	Target date	Progress
1. **Corporate Objectives**	1.1	A review of the current consultation processes will be conducted to ensure that external stakeholders are given appropriate opportunity to comment on the Authority's Corporate Aims and Objectives.	Ged Edwards	April 2007	• Not yet started, but working towards completion target date.
2. **Corporate Governance**	2.1	Awareness of the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance will be increased amongst staff.	Sharon Lloyd	Ongoing	• The revised Code of Corporate Governance (2006) was taken to Policy Group in May, when it was agreed that it would be raised at Watch Briefings and departmental team briefings. • Item also to go in the Brigade's weekly newsletter.
	2.2	The Authority's partnership procedures will be further embedded.	Ged Edwards	April 2007	• Brigade Order has been updated and has received approval from the Partnership Group. Now going through the process of consultation and dissemination • Work is ongoing with additional awareness raising of the Authority's updated Partnership risk assessment requirements being undertaken with all appropriate officers.
3. **Performance Management**	3.1	The Authority's performance management policies will be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the Authority.	Ged Edwards	December 2006	• Brigade Order is to be developed. • This is included in the Programme Office's Business Plan
	3.2	The IT Strategy is to be reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements of Fire Service National Framework document and other local and national requirements.	Glyn Williams	April 2007	• The Brigade Order has been reviewed and amended and is currently going through the consultation and dissemination process.

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Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Responsible Officer	Target date	
4. Risk Management	4.1	The Risk Management Protocol document will be reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements of the Authority's maturing risk management procedures.	Andy Johnson	July 2006	• The Brigade Order has been reviewed and amended and is currently going through the consultation and dissemination process.
	4.2	Departmental Risk Registers will be created in collaboration with Heads of Departments	Andy Johnson/ Heads of Departments	July 2006	• Draft Departmental Risk Register (based on Microsoft Excel) developed by the Head of Risk Management in July • Draft Departmental Risk Register and proposed implementation and monitoring procedures put forward for Policy Group members' consideration and comment during August. • Formal adoption of Departmental Risk Registers and monitoring process during September.
	4.3	All relevant staff will receive appropriate training in risk management.	Andy Johnson	Ongoing	• Policy Group Members and Councillor Allen received training at the end of March • Fire Authority training session held during their Annual Meeting in July. • Risk Management and Audit Member Champion receiving ongoing training
	4.4	Additional information on risk identification in Partnership working will be included in Partnership Procedures.	Andy Johnson/ Ged Edwards	July 2006	• The Brigade Order has been reviewed, amended and disseminated via the Brigade weekly newsletter.
	4.5	A Risk Management newsletter will be developed to raise awareness amongst all staff about risk management issues.	Risk Management Group	December 2006	• Not yet started, but working towards completion target date.
	4.6	The ongoing work to integrate the Authority's risk management processes with its budgetary reserves planning processes will be completed.	Andy Johnson/ Joanne Coadey	February 2007	• Liaison started and will continue as part of the upcoming budget planning process for 2007/08
	4.7	Use of the corporate risk registers to capture and manage 'opportunities' will be further explored.	Andy Johnson	April 2007	• Continuing progress being made. • Risk register now contains two 'opportunities'.

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Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Responsible Officer	Target date	
5. Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy	5.1	Awareness of the Authority's Anti-Fraud and Corruption policies will be increased amongst staff.	Joanne Coadey	Ongoing	• Strategy circulated to all staff via the Brigade's weekly newsletter on 21 July 2006
6. Code of Conduct	6.1	Code of Conduct will be developed for all staff.	Lisa Vickers	July 2006	• Brigade Order has been written and is going through the process of consultation and dissemination
	6.2	A Staff Handbook will be developed	Lisa Vickers	April 2007	• Not yet started, but working towards completion target date.
7. Business Continuity	7.1	The Authority's Business Continuity Plan will be approved by the Authority.	Andy Johnson	July 2006	• Authority's first Business Continuity Plan has been put to Policy Group. • Authority report, informing that BCP now in place, due for October. • Initial testing of the Authority's Business Continuity Plan to be conducted during the autumn.
	7.2	The resilience of the information and communication technology back-up arrangements will be improved, including meeting the level of departmental business continuity requirements that is commensurate with the level of resources and finances made available.	Glyn Williams	December 2006	• Report to Policy Group, highlighting options for investment in this area due during the autumn. • This will be informed by outcomes from the first test of the Authority's Business Continuity Plan, which will specifically explore the threats in this area.
8. Assurance Framework	8.1	The various methods used to provide assurance in the Authority will be reviewed and an overarching assurance framework will be developed.	Risk Management Group	July 2006	• A review of the Assurance Gathering Process used within the SIC Process has been conducted by the Head of Risk Management and Treasurer. • A report on recommendations for change will be sent to Policy Group and the Strategy and Resources Committee, during September. • The revised SIC Assurance Gathering Process will be implemented in February/March 2007.
9. Statement on Internal Control Improvement Plan	9.1	This Improvement Plan will be implemented and monitored, with progress being regularly reported to Policy Group and the Audit and Performance Management Committee.	Risk Management Group	Ongoing	• Ongoing • Report to Policy Group – August 2006 • Report due for the Audit and Performance Management Committee – September 2006

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