

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2009/10

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 2009/10.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the progress made against each of the improvements contained in the AGS Improvement Plan 2009/10.

3 Background

At a meeting on 3 July 2009, the Fire Authority's Final Accounts 2008/09 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 are progressed during the coming year (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 2009/10**

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2009/10 is attached as an appendix to this report and 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 as a result of 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's Policy Group, if they require any variations to the current Plan. These changes will also be reported to this Committee.

5 **Progress to Date**

As part of September's AGS monitoring report to this Committee it was noted that Policy Group was considering how Improvement ID 4 (the implementation of the Asset Management System) could be progressed, and what the deadline for completion should be. The box below reports the outcome from those discussions.

Improvement ID:	4
Improvement required:	The new Asset Management System (AMS) will be implemented enabling the Service to clearly demonstrate compliance with all relevant standards.
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Kelcey, Head of Resources
Initial target completion date:	August 2009
Progress/reason for slippage:	Policy Group has approved a proposal, from the Head of Resources, that will ensure the AMS is implemented by April 2010. This involves allowing the Project Manager to commit his time to the project between January and March 2010, with the critical elements of his normal role being picked up by other members of the Resource Department.
New target completion date:	April 2010

The other six improvements have either been completed or, at this stage, are believed to be on track for completion by their target completion date.

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 it 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 this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

9 Appendix

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10 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
3 July 2009, Paper 12, Annual Governance Statement

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.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	*
Financial		Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*

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Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2009/10
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Performance Management Committee
26 November 2009

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Completion date	Comments
Financial Management	1	Retained duty system personnel payment documentation (FB76) can only be checked manually. All retained duty system personnel payment documentation (FB76) is checked manually. An electronic recording system is being looked at with funding in the capital programme.	Joanne Coadey	09/2010	This links with the possible solution for a replacement Command and Control system (see 7 below). The manual system is continuing until a decision about the C&C is made.
Strategic Planning Process	2	With no formal communication strategy in place, the Authority cannot be sure it is providing information to, and getting feedback from, everyone that has a vested interest in the Service. A Communication Strategy will be included within the new Communications and Consultation Strategy.	Steve Worrall	12/2009	On track for completion by December.
Fire Safety	3	Our current risk profiling process is not adequate to enable us to focus on those homes most at risk from fire. Improve information provision by other agencies who are in contact with vulnerable people and develop our profiling processes.	Mike Ablitt	03/2010	Shropshire Council Signpost scheme is now up and running. Telford and Wrekin to be incorporated into scheme following 12 month pilot. On track for completion by deadline date.
Resource Management	4	The new Asset Management System has not yet been fully implemented. Service is not able to demonstrate compliance with standards. Complete implementation in accordance with project timescales.	Andrew Kelcey	04/2010	Policy Group have approved a proposal to allow the Equipments Contract Manager to devote his time to this project from January to March 2010. This should ensure the AMS is fully operational by April 2010.

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Completion date	Comments
Human Resource Management and Training	5	There are currently no separate formal procedures on the management of capability/performance of personnel. Produce a policy, brigade order and consult with the representative bodies on the management of capability /performance of personnel.	Louise McKenzie	03/2010	Draft Brigade Order has been developed. On track for completion by the target date.
Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning	6	Departmental "Battle Boxes" have not yet been finalised due to questions raised due to uncertainties around the resilience of the IT systems backup available for each department. Ensure our IT system backup capabilities are able to support departmental requirements during all likely business continuity situations, allowing each department to finalise the contents of its Battle Box.	Andy Johnson	09/2009	This improvement is dependent upon the IT infrastructure improvements being undertaken at Telford Central. Completion of this work may slip into October, but will certainly be completed before the Committee's next meeting.
Fire Control Convergence	7	No formal contingency plan is available if the national FiReControl project fails to meet its objectives. The development of a contingency plan for Fire Control if the national project fails to deliver its objectives.	Jim Cameron	12/2009	Currently exploring possible options. Business cases for options will be developed, with final decision to be made prior to the December deadline.