



# **Shropshire and Wrekin**

## **Fire and Rescue Authority**

### **Section 1**

## **Purpose, Aims and Public Value Measures**

## Particulars, Functions and Powers of the Fire and Rescue Authority

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority is a statutory fire authority constituted under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 ('the combination scheme'). Fire authorities derive their operational powers from the Act and other fire safety regulations, whilst the Combination Scheme establishes the Fire Authority and the fire brigade for the combined area of Shropshire. The Fire Authority's principal decision-making powers, affecting members of the public, are contained within the Act and the Combination Scheme, and they should be referred to when detailed information is sought.

The composition of the Fire Authority is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Combination Scheme, which allows for up to 25 Members to be appointed to the Fire Authority by Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council, the 'constituent authorities'. Fire Authority Members are expected to bring a relevant area of expertise to activities of the Fire Authority or gain specific skills during their period of appointment. The number of representative members from each authority (17 in total) is proportionate to the number of local government electors in the area of the two constituent authorities (11 from Shropshire and 6 from Telford & Wrekin Council).

The Fire Authority is responsible for the overall corporate governance of the organisation, including its strategic direction, setting its budget, establishing goals for management and monitoring the achievement of those goals. The Fire Authority's Code of Corporate Governance and other codes, policies and statements can be found later in this Section of the Handbook.

## The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

During 2002, at the request of local employers and with the approval of central government, Professor Sir George Bain led an independent review of the Fire Service. His findings were generally scathing, referring to an *"unsatisfactory industrial relations environment, a weak management system and a lack of feeling of ownership by those involved in managing the service"*. He also recognised, however, that these findings were not universal and commented that:

*"We have seen examples of good practice by fire brigades and fire authorities around the country. We have found clear evidence of fire authorities promoting change and innovation against the obstacles of unhelpful legislation, and authorities funding the local Fire Service well in excess of the funding level assumed by central government. Individual Chief Officers have achieved improvements on the ground without the support they deserve. And individual fire-fighters and their union have conducted impressive local community campaigns to encourage better fire safety."*

Professor Bain proposed a number of changes to the Service, which he envisaged would provide the capacity for the Service to continue to reform itself in response both to the Government's drive to improve public services generally and to the needs of local communities. As a result, in June 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published its White Paper entitled 'Our Fire and Rescue Service', which set out the Government's vision for the Fire and Rescue Service of the future.

The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004, which came into force on 1 October 2004, gave effect to the majority of proposals contained within the White Paper. Full details of the Act can be found on the following website:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents>

The Act repealed the Fire Service Act 1947 and contains seven parts as follows:

**Part 1 – Fire and rescue authorities (sections 1 to 5)**

This determines which body is the fire and rescue authority for an area, and provides for the combination of two or more fire and rescue authorities by order. A combination scheme under this section may be made only if it appears to the Secretary of State that, in the interests of:

- a) economy, efficiency and effectiveness, or
- b) public safety

there should be a single fire and rescue authority for the combined area.

**Part 2 – Functions of fire and rescue authorities (sections 6 to 20)**

This sets out the duties and powers of fire and rescue authorities which, amongst other things, have been expanded to include duties to promote fire safety, to make provision for rescuing people from road traffic accidents and to respond to other emergencies (which may be outside the authority's area) as defined by the Secretary of State by Order. Other emergencies have since been specified as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents; search and rescue events; major flooding incidents; and major transport incidents, including at sea.

**Part 3 – Administration (sections 21 to 31)**

This provides for the preparation of a Fire and Rescue National Framework, setting out the strategic priorities of the Fire and Rescue Service, and for the supervision of fire and rescue authorities. It makes supplementary provision for the Secretary of State to provide equipment and training centres for fire and rescue authorities.

**Part 4 – Employment (sections 32 to 37)**

This deals with employment by fire and rescue authorities, in particular the creation of negotiating bodies to determine the terms and conditions of employees, and pension schemes.

**Part 5 – Water supply (sections 38 to 43)**

This imposes duties on fire and rescue authorities and water undertakers to ensure an adequate supply of water for firefighting activities.

**Part 6 – Supplementary (sections 44 to 54 and Schedules 1 and 2)**

This concerns the powers of fire and rescue authority employees to undertake rescue work and investigations, as well as a number of consequential provisions and repeals, including the abolition of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council.

**Part 7 – General (sections 55 to 64)**

This makes general provision in relation to pre-commencement consultation, interpretation, statutory instruments, territorial extent etc.

## **The Fire and Rescue Services National Framework**

The Government's Fire and Rescue Services National Framework sets clear priorities and objectives for the Service and lays out:

- The Government's expectations for the Fire and Rescue Service;
- What Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to do; and
- What support Government will provide.

The Government's new fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for England came into effect on 1 April 2005. The target is:

By 2010, reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home by 20% and the number of deliberate fires by 10%.

The National Framework is a strategic plan, outlining how the PSA and other objectives can be delivered. Its three principal objectives remain:

- To provide clarity about the outcomes and objectives the Government wants to be achieved;
- To set out what the Government expects Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards to do in order to meet these objectives; and
- To explain what the Government will do to support Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards to meet these objectives.

The document is not a national blueprint but gives Fire and Rescue Authorities the flexibility to meet the specific needs of their local communities. The Framework is designed to give authorities a firm foundation on which to build local solutions.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 has given statutory effect to the National Framework and requires the Secretary of State to report against it. The relevant sections of the Act are as follows:

**Section 21** requires the Secretary of State to prepare and keep current a National Framework setting out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities, with the aim of promoting public safety, and the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of authorities and their functions.

He must consult representatives of the authorities and their employees before making significant revisions, and must give them effect by statutory instrument. For their part, Fire and Rescue Authorities must 'have regard' to the Framework when carrying out their functions.

**Section 22** provides the Secretary of State with the power to intervene, if he considers a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework. While Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to make progress in all areas set out in the Framework, references to what authorities 'must' or 'should' do indicate those areas that Ministers consider most important, with 'must' being stronger. Any use of intervention powers will be in accordance with the principles of the Local Government Intervention Protocol as agreed with the Local Government Association. These powers would only be used as a measure of last resort.

**Section 23** requires the Secretary of State to consult on, and publish, an intervention protocol. This requirement has been fulfilled by consultation on the application of the Local Government Intervention Protocol to these powers.

**Section 24** explicitly extends the Audit Commission's powers to inspect – contained within the Local Government Act 1999 – to include performance expectations in the Framework that might not be covered by the Best Value inspection powers in the 1999 Act. These expectations were taken into account by the Audit Commission during the Fire Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.

**Section 25** requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament on the extent to which Fire and Rescue Authorities are acting in accordance with the Framework, and any steps taken by him to ensure that Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare and consult upon a Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, to which fire and rescue authorities **must** have regard in carrying out their functions. The explanatory notes state that "the purpose of the Framework is to provide strategic direction from central government whilst ensuring that authorities continue to make local decisions".

## National Framework 2004/05

A draft version of the first National Framework was published by the Government in December 2003, with the final version being published in July 2004.

In referring to the introduction of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for the Service, the Framework made clear that "the expectations set out in the National Framework will be central to assessing the performance of authorities".

## National Framework 2005/06

Through the issue of Fire and Rescue Service Circular 27-2004, the Government consulted upon revisions to the 2004/06 National Framework and published the 2005/06 Fire and Rescue National Framework in December 2004.

The 2005/06 National Framework reflected progress made since the publication of the 2004/05 document and took into account comments received in response to the consultation exercise.

## National Framework 2006/08

In April 2006 the Government published the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2006/08.

The Framework was divided into nine chapters:

- **Chapter 1** - Fire prevention and risk management
- **Chapter 2** - Working together: the regional approach
- **Chapter 3** - Effective response
- **Chapter 4** - Resilience and New Dimension
- **Chapter 5** - Fire and rescue staff
- **Chapter 6** - Workforce development
- **Chapter 7** – Finance
- **Chapter 8** - Performance management
- **Chapter 9** – Research

Each section addressed the Government's objectives; what the Government would do to help; and action for Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards.

## National Framework 2008/11

Following consultation in November 2007 upon revisions to the 2006/08 document, the Government published the National Framework 2008/11. The main changes to the previous document included:

- Scaling down the narrative to key 'must/should' messages;
- Lifespan – moving to a three-year document, to run alongside the Fire and Rescue Service's financial commitments; and
- Structure – moving away from nine to four new chapters focused on key strategic priorities:

**Chapter 1 - Prevention, Protection and Response**

**Chapter 2 - Resilience**

**Chapter 3 - Diversity and Workforce**

**Chapter 4 - Governance and Improvement**

The key priorities for fire and rescue authorities set out within the Framework are ensuring that public expectations of fire and rescue authorities are met and ensuring delivery of an enhanced resilience capability. The Framework also cites equality and diversity as a key priority, with the Government looking to see a step change in this area from fire and rescue authorities between 2008 and 2011.

The Government still sees a role for regional management boards and views them as essential to delivering efficiency, effectiveness and an enhanced resilience capability for fire and rescue authorities. The Framework recommends that regional management boards now 'take stock' of how effectively they have delivered the core functions, which were set out for them in the Fire White Paper, Our Fire and Rescue Service in 2003.

## **National Framework 2012**

In July 2012, the Government published the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which has an open-ended duration.

The priorities set out in the Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:

- identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately
- work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service
- be accountable to communities for the service they provide

The Framework is divided into four chapters

- **Chapter 1** – Safer Communities
- **Chapter 2** – Accountable to Communities
- **Chapter 3** – Assurance
- **Chapter 4** – Context, timescales and scope



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## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**1997 No. 2702**

### **FIRE SERVICES**

#### **The Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997**

*Made - - - -*

*8th November 1997*

*Coming into force*

*9th November 1997*

Whereas it appears to the Secretary of State that it is expedient in the interests of efficiency that a combination scheme should be made for the areas of the fire authorities referred to in paragraph 3 of the scheme set out in the Schedule hereto ("the scheme"), and a scheme has not been submitted to him by those authorities;

And whereas notice of the general nature of the scheme has been given in accordance with section 6(2) of the Fire Services Act 1947(a) ("the 1947 Act");

And whereas the Secretary of State has been notified by the fire authorities concerned of their assent to the scheme;

And whereas a draft of the Order containing the draft scheme has been laid before Parliament for a period of forty days pursuant to section 6 of the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 (b), and that period has expired without either House resolving that the Order be not made;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by sections 6, 8 and 10 of the 1947 Act, and section 7(2) of the Fire Services Act 1959 (c), the Secretary of State hereby makes the following Order:

#### **Citation**

**1.** This Order may be cited as the Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 and shall come into force on the day after the day on which it is made.

#### **Combination Scheme**

**2.** The combination scheme set out in the Schedule to this Order, which shall be known as the Shropshire Fire Services Combination Scheme, shall have effect.

Home Office  
8th November 1997

*George Howarth*  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

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- (a) 1947 c.41. Sections 6 and 10 of the 1947 Act were amended respectively by paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 3 to the Local Government Act 1992 (c.19). For the purposes of making the scheme set out in the Schedule to this Order, sections 5(2) and 10 of the 1947 Act have effect as indicated in article 4 of the Shropshire (District of The Wrekin) (Structural Change) Order 1996 (S.I. 1996/1866).
- (b) 1946 c.36.
- (c) 1959 c.44.



## SCHEDULE

### THE SHROPSHIRE FIRE SERVICES COMBINATION SCHEME

#### PART I

##### CITATION, COMMENCEMENT AND INTERPRETATION

##### Citation and commencement

1. This scheme may be cited as the Shropshire Fire Services Combination Scheme and shall come into force –

- (a) for the purposes of constituting an authority as the fire authority for the combined area constituted by the scheme, and the performance by that authority of any functions necessary for bringing the scheme into full operation on 1st April 1998, on the day on which the Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 (a) comes into force, and
- (b) for all other purposes, on 1st April 1998.

##### Interpretation

2. In this scheme any reference to a paragraph or a Part is a reference to a paragraph or a Part of this scheme, and –

- "the Authority" means the fire authority constituted for the combined area by virtue of paragraph 4;
- "the combined area" means the fire authority area comprising the areas referred to in paragraph 3;
- "the combined fire service fund" means the combined fire service fund established by virtue of paragraph 6;
- "constituent authority" means a council referred to in paragraph 3; and
- "the fire brigade" means, unless otherwise indicated, the fire brigade established for the combined area by virtue of paragraph 5.

#### PART II

##### GENERAL

##### The combined area

3. The areas of the following councils, namely the council of the district of The Wrekin and Shropshire County Council shall be combined and shall become the combined area.

##### Combined Fire Authority

4. - (1) There shall be constituted as the fire authority for the combined area an authority to be known as the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority.

- (2) The Authority shall be constituted in accordance with the provisions of Part III.

##### Fire brigade for combined area

5. - (1) There shall be established a fire brigade for the combined area which shall be known as the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, or by such other name as the Authority may determine.

- (2) The first chief officer of the fire brigade shall be I. H. Kerr Esq.

(3) The Authority shall submit an establishment scheme for their area to the Secretary of State in accordance with section 7 of the Fire Services Act 1959(b).

##### Financial provisions etc.

6. - (1) The expenses of the Authority shall be paid out of a combined fire service fund constituted and administered in accordance with the provisions of Part IV.

(2) Contributions shall be paid into the combined fire service fund by constituent authorities in accordance with the said provisions.

7. The Authority shall appoint a treasurer of the combined fire service fund.

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(a) S.I. 1997/2702.    b) 1959 c.44.

## **Officers and employees**

**8.** The provisions of Part V shall have effect with respect to officers and employees of the Authority.

**9.** The Authority may appoint such other officers and employees as they think necessary for the efficient discharge of their functions.

**10.** The Authority may make arrangements with any constituent authority for the use by the Authority of the services of officers and employees of the constituent authority and for the making of contracts and payments on behalf of the Authority by the constituent authority.

## **PART III**

### **CONSTITUTION OF COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

**11.** - (1) The Authority shall consist of not more than 25 members save that, where the minimum number of members of the Authority resulting from the operation of paragraph 12 would be greater than 25, the Authority shall consist of that number of members.

(2) Each member of the Authority shall be appointed by a constituent authority from its own members in accordance with this Part.

**12.** Each constituent authority shall, so far as is practicable, appoint such number of representatives to be members of the Authority as is proportionate to the number of local government electors in its area in relation to the number of such electors in the other constituent authority's area.

**13.** A member of the Authority shall come into office on the date of his appointment and shall, subject to paragraphs 14 to 16, hold office for such period or periods as shall be determined by the constituent authority which appoints him.

**14.** A member of the Authority may resign his membership by giving notice in writing to that effect to the officer of the Authority whose function it is to receive such notice.

**15.** - (1) A member of the Authority who ceases to be a member of the council which appointed him shall cease to be a member of the Authority.

(2) A person shall be disqualified from being a member of the Authority if he holds any paid office or employment (other than the office of chairman or vice-chairman), appointments to which are or may be made or confirmed by the Authority, by any committee or sub-committee of the Authority, or by a joint committee or board on which the Authority are represented.

**16.** - (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), if a member of the Authority resigns, becomes disqualified or otherwise ceases to be a member of the Authority before the expiry of his period of office, the council which appointed him shall appoint a representative to replace him, who shall come into office on the date of his appointment and, unless he resigns, becomes disqualified or otherwise ceases to be a member of the Authority, shall hold office for the remainder of the period for which his predecessor would have held office had he not resigned, become disqualified or otherwise ceased to be a member of the Authority.

(2) If a member of the Authority resigns, becomes disqualified or otherwise ceases to be a member of the Authority within six months before the end of his period of office, the council which appointed him shall not be required to appoint a representative to replace him for the remainder of such period unless, on the occurrence of the vacancy (or in the case of a number of simultaneous vacancies, the occurrence of the vacancies) the total number of unfilled vacancies in the membership of the Authority exceeds one third of the number of members of the Authority referred to in paragraph 11.

**17.** - (1) The Authority shall elect a chairman, and may elect a vice-chairman, from among its members.

(2) The chairman and the vice-chairman, if elected, shall, subject to paragraphs 13 to 16, hold office for such period not exceeding one year as the Authority shall determine.

(3) Sub-paragraph (2) shall not prevent a person who holds or has held office as chairman or vice-chairman, as the case may be, from being elected or re-elected to either of those offices.

(4) On a casual vacancy occurring in the office of chairman or vice-chairman, the Authority shall elect from its members a person to replace the chairman, and may so elect a person to replace the vice-chairman, as the case may be.

(5) The election to replace the chairman under sub-paragraph (4) shall take place not later than the next following ordinary meeting of the Authority.

**18.** The first meeting of the Authority shall be held as soon as it is practicable to do so and shall be convened by the Head of Administration and Legal Services of The Wrekin Council and subsequent meetings shall be convened in such a manner as the Authority shall determine.

**19.** At a meeting of the Authority the quorum shall be one third of the total number of members of the Authority, or such greater number of members as the Authority may determine, including at least one representative from each constituent authority.

**20.** - (1) The following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (a), namely sections 82(1), 94 to 98, 101 to 106, 99 and Part VI of Schedule 12 shall, subject to sub-paragraph (2), apply to the Authority and its members as if references in those provisions to a principal council or to a local authority, other than references to a parish council, were references to the Authority.

(2) Section 101(6) of the Local Government Act 1972 shall have effect, by virtue of sub-paragraph (1), as if for the words "levying, or issuing a precept for, a rate" there were substituted the words "assessing or varying the contributions to be paid into the combined fire service fund by the constituent authorities".

#### **PART IV**

#### **COMBINED FIRE SERVICE FUND**

**21.** - (1) Each constituent authority shall, in respect of each financial year, pay into the combined fire service fund, in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph, a contribution equal to its appropriate proportion of the net expenses of the Authority in respect of that year.

(2) The Authority shall, before 31st December in any year, submit to each constituent authority an estimate of its net expenses for the next financial year, and shall subsequently, before 15th February, give notice to each constituent authority of the amount of the contribution to be paid by that authority under this paragraph in the next financial year.

(3) Subject to sub-paragraphs (4) and (5), each constituent authority shall, at such intervals as are agreed between it and the Authority, make an interim payment into the combined fire service fund of such an amount as is so agreed on account of the said contribution.

(4) Subject to sub-paragraph (5), if a constituent authority and the Authority fail to agree, or subsequently disagree, as to the intervals at which payments should be made under sub-paragraph (3) or as to the amounts of such payments, each payment shall, until the end of the financial year or subsequent agreement between the two authorities, whichever is sooner –

(a) be made on the first working day of each month, and

(b) be of such an amount as would, if added to payments of an equal amount made on the first working day of each remaining month of the financial year, equal the outstanding balance of the contribution to be paid by the constituent authority under this paragraph.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-paragraphs (3) and (4) any payments made under those sub-paragraphs shall be made at such times, and shall be of such amounts, as are at all times sufficient to enable the financial obligations of the Authority to be met.

(6) The Authority may, after consultation with each constituent authority, revise the estimate referred to in sub-paragraph (2) at any time before the end of the financial year to which that estimate relates and shall, as soon as is practicable, give notice in writing to each constituent authority of the revised amount of the contribution to be paid by that authority under this paragraph.

(7) Where a constituent authority receives notice under sub-paragraph (6) the interim payments payable thereafter under sub-paragraph (3) or (4) shall, subject to sub-paragraph (5), be so increased or reduced as to adjust to the difference.

(8) If the Authority makes arrangements with any constituent authority under paragraph 10 for the making of payments on behalf of the Authority by that constituent authority, the interim payments to be made by that constituent authority under this paragraph shall, subject to sub-paragraph (5), take into account payments made by that constituent authority on behalf of the Authority.

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(a) 1972 c.70.

(9) For the purposes of this paragraph the net expenses of the Authority, in respect of any financial year, shall be the amount of its expenditure in respect of that year less all income which is credited to the combined fire service fund in respect of that year, other than contributions paid or payable under sub-paragraph (1), but may, for the purposes of preparing the estimate referred to in sub-paragraph (2) and if the Authority so resolve, include such amount or amounts as the Authority consider appropriate with a view to minimising any upward revision of an estimate under sub-paragraph (6).

(10) In this paragraph -

"appropriate proportion" means the proportion of the total amount of the constituent authorities' council tax base which is represented by the council tax base of the constituent authority in question;

"council tax base" means the council tax base for the year calculated by the Secretary of State for the Environment for Revenue Support Grant purposes in accordance with the local government finance report for that year made under section 78A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (a);

"financial year" means the period of twelve months beginning on 1st April; and

"working day" means a day other than a Saturday or a Sunday, Good Friday, Christmas Day or a day which is, or is to be observed as, a bank holiday, or a holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 (b) in England and Wales.

**22.** The Authority shall have the power to pay out of the combined fire service fund compensation to persons employed by Shropshire County Council who in consequence of this scheme, or anything done thereunder, suffer direct pecuniary loss by reason of the determination of their appointments or the diminution of their emoluments.

## PART V

### OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE AUTHORITY

**23.** There shall be transferred –

- (a) to the fire brigade members of the fire brigade maintained by Shropshire County Council, and
- (b) to employment by the Authority persons employed by that council wholly or mainly for the purposes of the fire brigade maintained by that council.

**24.** The following provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, namely sections 114, 115, 116, 117(1), (2) and (3), 118 and 119, shall apply to the officers and employees of the Authority as if references in those provisions to a local authority, other than references to a parish council, were references to the Authority.

## PART VI

### PROPERTY, RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES

**25.** There shall be transferred from Shropshire County Council to the Authority any property which is held by that council solely in connection with the provision of fire services, and rights and liabilities held or incurred by that council in respect of -

- (a) any contract of employment with a person transferred in accordance with paragraph 23;
- (b) the Firemen's Pension Scheme as set out in Schedule 2 to the Firemen's Pension Scheme Order 1992(c); and
- (c) any contract for the provision of services or the delivery of goods solely in connection with the provision of fire services.

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(a) 1988 c.41. Section 78A was inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (c.14), section 104 and Schedule 10, paragraph 10.

(b) 1971 c.80.

© S.I. 1992/129.

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

This Order makes a scheme which combines the areas of the council of the district of The Wrekin (which would otherwise become an individual fire authority on 1st April 1998 by virtue of the Local Government Act 1992) and the Shropshire County Council into a combined fire area. The scheme comes into force on the same day as the Order comes into force for the purpose of doing anything which is necessary to bring the scheme fully into operation on 1st April 1998. The scheme establishes a fire authority for the combined area, to be known as the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, and provides for the appointment and terms of office of its members, and for meetings of the Authority. The scheme establishes a fire brigade for the combined area, to be known as the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service or by such other name as the Authority determines, appoints its first chief officer, and provides for the submission of an establishment scheme to the Secretary of State. The scheme establishes a combined fire service fund and provides for the administration of the Authority's finances. The scheme also provides for the transfer of staff, and certain property, rights and liabilities, directly from the Shropshire County Council (the fire authority for the same area as the combined area prior to 1st April 1998) to the new combined authority.

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Source: The Stationery Office Limited

## **Equality and Diversity at Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority**

Equality and Diversity is important to all aspects of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority. It ensures that we provide all the people of Shropshire with an equitable service regardless of their personal circumstances, and that as an employer we work towards achieving a representative workforce.

The Fire Authority ensures that this happens and measures its progress in several ways, including the Fire Service Equality Framework which covers the Protected Characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

The Fire Authority has statutory duties to implement an Equality Scheme to cover these characteristics, and has approved a Single Equality Scheme, developed in consultation with service users and employees, and an accompanying Action Plan. The Authority is also regulated by the government's Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018, which provides a framework for equality and diversity action, monitoring and reporting for all Fire and Rescue Services.

The Service ensures that it meets its statutory duties through processes such as Service-wide Equality Impact Assessments and best practice initiatives such as awareness-raising sessions in recruitment for under-represented groups.

Further information can be found below and on the following pages, and additional information is available on the Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity web pages:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/engine/careers/equality-and-diversity.htm>

### **Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008/18**

The national Equality and Diversity Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service was launched in May 2008. It is available in full at:

[communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/equalitydiversitystrategy](http://communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/equalitydiversitystrategy)

The vision for the strategy is:

- 'We will make fairness and inclusion fundamental to everything we do to ensure:
- That we reduce the impact of fire and other risks on all the communities we serve, by effective prevention, protection and emergency response;
- That our workforce better reflects the diversity of the communities we serve; and
- That all our employees are equally respected and valued.'

The strategy is divided into five priority areas:

**1. Leadership and promoting inclusion**

This section emphasises the importance of positive leadership at all levels, including elected Members of Fire and Rescue Authorities. It states that senior managers must demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity through their personal behaviour and by making resources available to deliver change.

**2. Accountability**

It is clear that elected Members and employees will be held accountable for delivering the strategy.

**3. Effective service delivery and community engagement**

Here the focus is on tailoring services to meet the needs of the people we serve through sustained dialogue with them and assessing the impact of our policies, plans and procedures through the use of Equality Impact Assessments.

**4. Employment and training**

This section refers to recruiting, developing and retaining a workforce which better reflects the diversity of local communities, and providing sustained commitment to staff development.

**5. Evaluation and sharing good practice**

Evidence is collected and analysed to ensure continuous improvement and the best use of resources.

Each of the priority areas clearly sets out the activities required at national, local and individual level to ensure that the Strategy's aims and objectives are delivered.

## **Monitoring progress**

The Fire Authority is required to provide annual evidence to Communities and Local Government (CLG) of progress for publication in the Fire and Rescue Service Diversity Report including:

- Statistical information on recruitment, progression, and retention of employees across all diversity strands; and
- Qualitative information as evidence of progress made on policies, procedures, practices and processes, which support equality and diversity.



## **Key Principles of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework**

The fire and rescue service has been seeking a bespoke equality framework for a number of years. Therefore, following the publication of the Equality Framework for Local Government, which superseded the Equality Standard for Local Government, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) has worked with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) to produce the new Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRS EF). The FRS EF recognises and addresses equality and diversity objectives that are a priority for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The FRS EF is outcome-focused and based upon the same principles as the Equality Framework for Local Government, including the use of three achievement levels:

- 'developing'
- 'achieving'
- 'excellent'

It has been cross-mapped with the national Fire and Rescue Service: Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 - 2018 to incorporate the same five priority areas:

- leadership and promoting inclusion
- accountability
- effective service delivery and community engagement
- employment and training
- evaluation and sharing good practice.

The Framework complements and supports the Services' national core values:

- service to the community
- people
- diversity
- improvement.

The Framework makes it possible to provide evidence that will be relevant to meeting statutory duties. CLG has recognised the Framework as an appropriate means to measure and accredit the equality and diversity performance of individual Fire and Rescue Services.

Cross-mapping with the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008 - 2018 has ensured the inclusion of a number of areas that are particularly important to the Fire And Rescue Service, such as integrated risk management planning (IRMP), workplace facilities, recruitment and dealing with bullying and harassment.

## **Results of external assessment**

An external assessment of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority took place in August 2008. The assessors confirmed that the Fire Authority satisfies the criteria and have awarded the Authority Level 3 of the Standard. Subsequently a feedback report and a peer assessment report have been received, and are being used to progress equality and diversity within the Service. The Authority has achieved Level 4 of the Standard through self-assessment.

# **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority**

## **Aims and Public Value Measures**

### **Background**

At the very first meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, on 29 April 1998, Members agreed a three-year Service Plan, which established the vision and strategic aims of the Fire Authority and included linked corporate objectives, performance indicators and targets. These provided the impetus for the early modernisation of the Service, as confirmed by various audits carried out by the Audit Commission.

The Fire Authority's vision, strategic aims and directorate objectives have served well in defining the long-term direction of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. They have for many years been incorporated throughout the organisation, including within the Service's policies and procedures and in departmental, station and watch plans, where they form the basis for all activities of the organisation.

### **The Need for Change**

Following the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2004/05 officers carried out an analysis to see how the Fire Authority's strategic aims and objectives aligned with the Act and the Framework. The analysis demonstrated that all of the statutory responsibilities imposed by the Act and the Framework could clearly be linked to existing Fire Authority priorities. Consequently the Fire Authority agreed that only minor amendments to some objectives were required rather than a root and branch change to all of strategic aims and objectives.

Each year since then the Fire Authority has reviewed the strategic issues it faces in future years and the Service's ability to respond to them, taking into account not only the requirements of the current National Framework Document but also the results of assessments conducted by the Audit Commission. The annual review also ensures that the Service is accurately aligned to the needs of the community and the Government's ambitions for the Fire and Rescue Service in England. The Fire Authority also adopted the nationally agreed core values for the Fire and Rescue Service.

### **Public Value**

In October 2010 the new Coalition Government announced the Spending Review which resulted in dramatic cuts to public sector budgets. Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority recognised early in 2010 action would be necessary to address the accumulating national debt and implemented the most comprehensive staff engagement exercise ever undertaken.

Entitled the “Public Value Review” the Member led staff engagement exercise created the Service culture of One Team, with One Vision, to deliver One Service.

The outcomes of the Public Value Review provided a unified outlook regarding:

- A new vision for an uncertain future
- The Service’s core priorities to the community
- A new deal with the community
- The key performance measures necessary to provide assurance and community confidence.

# Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

## Our Vision

**“Putting Shropshire’s Safety First”**

## Our Purpose

**Save and protect life, property and environment from fire and other emergencies**

The organisation’s vision and purpose is most readily identifiable through its corporate logo and motto



## Our Core Values

**Service to the Community**

**Valuing all our people**

**Valuing diversity in the Service and the community**

**Valuing improvement at all levels**

## Our Aims and supporting Service Targets

### Aims

1. To be there when you need us in an emergency with a professional and well equipped team

2. To reduce the number of fires in our community

### Service Targets

The first fire engine will arrive at an emergency incident with at least 4 firefighters within 15 minutes on 89% of occasions.

All accidental fires will be reduced to not more than 433 during 2019/20

Accidental dwelling fires to be reduced to not more than 186 during 2019/20

Deliberate fires will be reduced to not more than 547 during 2019/20

<p>3. To reduce the number of fire related deaths and serious injuries</p>	<p>Fire related deaths and serious injuries in the community will be reduced to not more than 16 during 2019/20.</p>
<p>4. To deliver a fire and rescue service which provides value for money for our community now and into the future</p>	<p>Injuries sustained to staff through firefighting will be reduced to not more than 21 injuries during 2019/20.</p> <p>Fire and heat damage emanating from accidental fires in domestic dwellings and regulated business will be confined to the room of origin on not less than 89.5% of occasions during 2019/20</p> <p>To obtain an unqualified Value for Money (VfM) conclusion from External Audit.</p>

Performance against the aims and service targets is further monitored through the departmental business plans and reported to Audit and Performance Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

# Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

## Code of Corporate Governance 2018/19

### Principle 1 -Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

1.1 Behaving with integrity	Supporting Text
<p>1.1.1 Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation</p>	<p>The Authority has a wide range of codes, policies and procedures governing the conduct of members and officers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published Core Values</li> <li>Code of Corporate Governance</li> <li>Members' Code of Conduct</li> <li>Employee Code of Conduct</li> <li>Members' Protocol and Officers policy on Gifts and Hospitality</li> <li>Complaints procedures and log</li> <li>Discipline and Grievance policies</li> <li>Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy</li> <li>Whistle-blowing policy</li> <li>Equality of opportunity in employment, service delivery and engagement with the public policy</li> <li>Freedom of Information and Data Protection</li> <li>Alcohol and Drugs Policy.</li> </ul>



1.1.2 Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)	<p>The Authority is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and has adopted this Code of Corporate Governance, which is reviewed and audited annually and a compliance report produced by Internal Audit for scrutiny by the Audit and Performance Management Committee.</p> <p>The standards of the Authority are made clear in its Core Values, which are fundamental to all it does. Each Member must complete a register of interests.</p>
1.1.3 Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions	<p>Both the Member and Employee Codes of Conduct state clearly that they must not be influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in any matter relating to the Authority.</p> <p>Each Member must complete a Register of Interests, which is held at Brigade headquarters and is open to public inspection. The Register, which is also accessible via the Service's website is updated as necessary, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.</p>
1.1.4 Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively	<p>The Code of Corporate Governance is reviewed annually. Core Values are reviewed annually through the Annual Plan.</p> <p>Officers adhere to Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which are reviewed and updated annually.</p>
<b>1.2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
1.2.1 Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance	<p>The Fire Authority's systems and processes comply with ethical standards set down in legislation and Government guidance or derived from best practice. Appropriate Members and/or officers regularly review procedures and codes to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.</p> <p>Ethical standards are included within our procurement policies and our environmental management system.</p>
1.2.2 Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation	The Employee Engagement Survey (October 2017) created tangible feedback about engagement and behaviour which the Service works with the Unions to improve upon.

	<p>The Authority achieved the 'Moving towards excellent' level within the National Fire and Rescue Equality Framework, which ensures that it mainstreams equality and diversity into all aspects of its business.</p> <p>The Authority has in place policies, procedures and plans to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance, associated targets for improvement and systems to monitor effectiveness and progress.</p> <p>Officers operate standardised recruitment policies and processes, including employee reference checks and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for designated posts.</p> <p>Ethical standards are included within our procurement policies and our environmental management system.</p> <p>A new Employee Engagement Survey is due to take place in October 2019.</p>
1.2.3 Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values	<p>The Equality and Diversity Steering Group (which has Union representation) discuss issues and initiatives relating to ethics, values and relevant agenda items.</p> <p>The Standards and Human Resources Committee ensures that the core values of the Authority are at the heart of its decision making.</p> <p>There are quarterly meetings between union representatives and senior management, and staff are consulted on policy changes and major service developments.</p> <p>Consultation with staff sits at the core of the Authority's 2020 change management and strategic planning process and Integrated Risk Management Planning, thus ensuring that staff are fully engaged.</p> <p>Ethical standards are included within our procurement policies and our environmental management system.</p>

1.2.4 Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the organisation	Ethical standards are included within our procurement policies and our environmental management system.
<b>1.3 Respecting the rule of law</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
1.3.1 Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations	<p>The Authority has two statutory officers; the Monitoring Officer whose duties include ensuring the legality and fairness of decision making, and a Treasurer who as the most senior Finance professional is responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Authority. In addition, the Service has a Deputy Monitoring Officer and deputy S151 Officer.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer or the Deputy Monitoring Officer attends all meetings of the full Authority and reviews reports to the Authority and its Committees prior to publication.</p> <p>Relevant legal obligations are communicated to staff through policy and relevant training e.g. in recruitment and driving</p> <p>Internal and External Audit also provide assurance that proper probity exists and legal obligations are met</p>
1.3.2 Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders, and members, are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements	<p>The general roles, rights and obligations of Members are contained in the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations and the Code of Conduct</p> <p>The more specific roles of Members, Members with special responsibilities and of Member Champions are set out in the role descriptions.</p> <p>There is also a Role Description for the Fire Authority's Independent Person, who will be consulted on the decision to investigate complaints and before a decision on an investigated complaint is made. The Independent Person may also be consulted on other standards matters, including by the Member, who is subject to an allegation.</p>

	<p>Financial Regulations Standing Orders set out specific financial and other duties / functions of the Fire Authority, its committees, the Chief Fire Officer, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer. Delegations to specific officers are documented in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.</p> <p>Job descriptions are in place for all senior officers, which clearly state their respective roles and responsibilities including political restrictions placed upon them.</p> <p>Pay Policy Statement is reviewed by the full Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and published annually as required by the Local Government Act 2011.</p> <p>The Authority has service level agreements, detailing the roles and responsibilities of its Clerk, Monitoring Officer and Solicitor, and a Protocol for the Role of Monitoring Officer. It also has a service level agreement, setting out the role of its Treasurer and Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>Details of allowances payable to Members of the Authority are laid down in the Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances.</p>
1.3.3 Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders	<p>The Authority is committed to openness in all of its dealings and to this end has adopted a procedure for public participation at its meetings and those of its committees, which the public may attend. The procedure is set out in its Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business. It also has in place a policy relating to filming, photographing, recording and using social networks at its meetings.</p> <p>Its agendas and reports are available to the public and publicised on its website and intranet in advance of meetings. The Fire Authority also has very clear rules governing access to information and the grounds on which information should be excluded from the public domain.</p> <p>All meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees are held in public. The public will only be excluded if information to be considered is classed as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act and the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing</p>

	<p>the information, or where a Government Minister has directed that information is to be classed as confidential.</p> <p>Rules concerning exempt information are clearly laid down in the Fire Authority's constitution with a presumption that items will remain open to the public unless they meet specific criteria.</p>
1.3.4 Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively	<p>The Authority has appointed a Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer, whose duties include ensuring the legality and fairness of decision making. The Monitoring Officer is the Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement and Commissioning and his Deputy, the Legal Services Manager.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer, or his Deputy, attends all meetings of the full Authority and reviews reports to the Authority and its committees prior to publication. They provide advice and guidance on new legal developments and have access to specialist legal officers.</p> <p>The ACFO is the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for the Service and logs and monitors relevant breaches for action and learning. These are appropriately discussed at the Systems Governance Group.</p>
1.3.5 Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively	<p>Officers and Members of the Authority should lead by example and ensure adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.</p> <p>All individuals coming into contact with the Authority should act with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud, bribery and corruption.</p> <p>The Authority encourages a culture of honesty and opposition to fraud, bribery and corruption.</p>
<b>Principle 2 - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b>	
<p>Local government is run for the public good, organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.</p>	

2.1 Openness	Supporting Text
<p>2.1.1 Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness</p>	<p>The Core Values are communicated in the Authority's plans. The complaints procedure is used and monitored.</p> <p>The Service has an active social media presence engaging in dialogue around key issues such as diversity in recruitment.</p> <p>All Authority meeting papers are published on the website along with other data transparency requirements.</p> <p>The employee engagement survey enabled staff to voice their opinions and allowed the Service to identify where future work should be targeted. An action plan was created and a number of workshops were held with staff to create the staff charter.</p> <p>Considerable public consultation is undertaken when considering changes and assessing risk.</p>
<p>2.1.2 Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided</p>	<p>The Authority is committed to openness in all of its dealings and to this end has adopted a procedure for public participation at its meetings and those of its committees, which the public may attend. The procedure is set out in its Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business. It also has in place a policy relating to filming, photographing, recording and using social networks at its meetings.</p> <p>Agendas and reports are available to the public and publicised on its website and intranet in advance of meetings. The Fire Authority also has very clear rules governing access to information and the grounds on which information should be excluded from the public domain.</p> <p>All meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees are held in public. The public will only be excluded if information to be considered is classed as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.</p> <p>Rules concerning exempt information are clearly laid down in the Fire Authority's constitution with a presumption that items will remain open to the</p>

	public unless they meet specific criteria.
2.1.3 Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear	<p>There is a standard format for all committee reports, which includes sections for legal comment and financial implications, prompting the writer to seek advice in these areas.</p> <p>Prior to publication Authority and Committee reports are assessed by a solicitor representing the Clerk and Monitoring and legal comment added, where appropriate.</p> <p>The Treasurer/Head of Finance reviews those with financial implications.</p> <p>The Treasurer and Monitoring Officer receive the papers for, and attend many of the monthly meetings of the Service Management Team, enabling them also to have input to the decision-making process at this level.</p>
2.1.4 Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action	<p><b>Integrated Risk Management Planning</b>  Since 2004, all Fire and Rescue Authorities have been required to produce Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs). In its IRMP each Fire Authority sets out how it will 'identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The plan has regard to the Community Risk Registers produced by Local Resilience Forums and other local risk 'analysis', as defined in the terms of the Department for Communities and Local Government National Framework document. The Fire Authority's IRMP combines with its financial and transformation plans to set the Service Plan 2015-2020 for Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p><b>2020 Programme</b>  The 2020 Programme has been a process of engagement with the staff of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, the public of Shropshire and other key stakeholders in the community. The purpose of the Programme is to deliver improvement and change, whilst ensuring that the Service is meeting the needs of the community.</p>



	<p>The methods within the Programme, such as engagement and consultation, will continue to be applied and will address the next tranche of work up to 2020 and beyond. The work includes reviews of work patterns, business processes and adoption of any other innovations, which can yield a benefit to the people of Shropshire. The aim is to seek improvements in both the frontline and support elements of the Service. Significant changes will be fed into the IRMP or other parts of the Service Plan, as the annual reviews take place.</p> <p>Service priorities will be communicated to all staff to ensure that they are aware of them and can take responsibility for their own contribution to the range and quality of the service they provide. These are based on current and future risks and resource requirements. The detailed actions to meet the priorities within the IRMP Action Plan are contained within the five-year action plan.</p>
<b>2.2 Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
2.2.1 Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably	<p>Each partnership entered into is supported by a partnership agreement, which sets out clearly and succinctly what the partnership aims to achieve and what each of the partners will do. The agreement also states to which of the Fire Authority's strategic aims the partnership contributes.</p> <p>Officers have developed a method of assessing partnerships to ensure that officers, Members and partners are clear in the aims and purpose of any partnership working and know their respective responsibilities and commitments. Partnership agreements formally set out the aims of the partnership, expectations, roles and reporting requirements.</p> <p>The partnership process is currently under development to include internal audit recommendations.</p>
2.2.2 Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively	<p>Each formal partnership is supported by a partnership agreement, which sets out clearly and succinctly what the partnership aims to achieve and what each of the partners will do and to which of the Fire Authority's strategic aims the partnership contributes.</p>

	<p>The Authority also engages in collaborations in some areas which tend to have less formal arrangements to enable opportunities to be seized. The Fire alliance with H&amp;W is currently the most significant collaboration that the Service is undertaking.</p> <p>Officers have developed a method of assessing partnerships to ensure that officers, Members and partners are clear in the aims and purpose of any partnership working and know their respective responsibilities and commitments. Partnership agreements formally set out the aims of the partnership, expectations, roles and reporting requirements.</p>
<p>2.2.3 Ensuring that partnerships are based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• a shared commitment to change</li> <li>• a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners</li> </ul> <p>and that the added value of partnership working is explicit</p>	<p>Each partnership is supported by a partnership agreement, which sets out clearly and succinctly what the partnership aims to achieve and what each of the partners will do. The agreement also states to which of the Fire Authority's strategic aims the partnership contributes.</p> <p>Officers have developed a method of assessing partnerships to ensure that officers, Members and partners are clear in the aims and purpose of any partnership working and know their respective responsibilities and commitments. Partnership agreements formally set out the aims of the partnership, expectations, roles and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Following legal guidance from T&amp;W all partnerships are going through a process to ensure they are GDPR compliant.</p>
<b>2.3 Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
<p>2.3.1 Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<p>The Authority is required to consult with 'persons subject to non-domestic rates' as part of its budget setting strategy – Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Authority consults with the public about its budget on the website and through social media.</p> <p>The Authority consults with all relevant stakeholders on all relevant matters pertaining to its proposals for change within its Integrated Risk Management Plan.</p>

	<p>The Service uses its Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) process to inform on its consultation with relevant protected groups who may be impacted by changes to current policies.</p> <p>IRMP is subject to a full consultation programme and stakeholders are listed in the five year Service Plan.</p>
2.3.2 Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement	<p>The Service employs a range of methods to communicate and engage with external and internal audiences in line with its Corporate Communications Strategy and Communications Action Plan.</p> <p>An inter-active, online survey platform is used to consult and engage staff. These survey and consultation projects are actively supported and promoted by means of the Service's intranet, internal newsletter and email. Issue-specific staff surveys of different kinds are conducted each year.</p> <p>A range of online and "conventional" communication methods are used to inform and engage the public other external audiences. These methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press releases and face-to-face interviews</li> <li>• Social Media activity across all platforms</li> <li>• External Surveys accessible via social media (e.g. Facebook)</li> <li>• Service website</li> <li>• Live Events: Open Days, Recruitment Events, Campaign Events</li> </ul> <p>The Service has held positive action taster sessions to inform the public about the role of an on call firefighter and wholetime posts</p>
2.3.3 Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs	<p>IRMP is subject to a full consultation programme and stakeholders are listed in the five year Service Plan.</p> <p>The Service has engaged with a multitude of partners and is currently working with following groups. This is by no means an exhaustive list.</p> <p>Safe and Well Project (linking to the NHS Service Transformation Project) for Shropshire, Telford and Mid Wales.</p>

	<p>Shropshire Prevention Leads Group The Health and Wellbeing Board Health and Wellbeing Board Delivery Group Healthy Lives Steering Group Social Prescribing in Shropshire Shropshire Telford Suicide Forum Domestic Abuse Forums Telford and Shropshire</p> <p>Drug Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) Board SC and TW Safeguarding Shropshire Children's Board (SSCB) Early Help Partnership Board Shropshire Keeping Adults Safe in Shropshire Board (KASIB) KASIB Development Delivery sub group. Shropshire Prevent (Counter terror) Strategy Group</p> <p>Other: Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Dementia Action Alliance Fairness, Respect Equalities Shropshire (FRESH) Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) MIND – Blue light pledge</p>
2.3.4 Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account	See comments for 2.3.2 and 2.3.3
2.3.5 Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity	The Service consults with a large range of stakeholders from constituent authorities to small local groups and individual members of the public. These groups are outlined in the five year Service Plan. In addition to that we use the local Fairness Respect Equality Shropshire (FRESH), Rainbow Film Festival groups, Shropshire Disability Network and national Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) group where necessary.
2.3.6 Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users	The long term financial consequences of capital projects are considered when making strategic financial decisions, as detailed in the Authority's Capital Strategy. Where possible, authority reserves and balances have been used to fund capital projects to avoid debt charges for up to 50 years.

<b>Principle 3 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</b>	
<p>The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the organisation's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.</p>	
<b>3.1 Defining outcomes</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
<p>3.1.1 Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions</p>	<p>The fundamental purpose of the Fire Authority is to provide and maintain a fire and rescue service capable of fulfilling the statutory requirements of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.</p> <p>Our Vision is most readily identifiable through our logo and strapline "Putting Shropshire's Safety First" which is displayed on all letter headings, compliments slips, corporate documents, vehicles and buildings.</p> <p>The Service Plan defines our purpose, aims, measures and targets, while the Annual Plan sets our immediate priorities and what actions we are going to take to deliver the Service Plan in a timely manner.</p>
<p>3.1.2 Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer</p>	<p>The Service uses Performance Measures to set out the expected outcomes. These are in the form of ambitious reductions in the numbers of fire related incidents and injuries to both the public and our staff</p>
<p>3.1.3 Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available</p>	<p>The Service made the decision in 2015 to include the integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Service Transformation Plan in one overarching document (the Service Plan 2015-2020). In doing so it brought about a greater level of consideration and interrelation between the need to deliver a high quality service that actively manages community risk and the need to recognise and operate within the existing financial constraints.</p>

3.1.4 Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes	As part of the strategic planning process a review of the risk register is undertaken along with the ear marked reserves to cover against any foreseeable risks.
3.1.5 Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available	The Authority's strategic planning process demonstrates the effects of today's decisions on medium to long term budgets. Prudent funding assumptions are used to ensure that an honest picture of the financial position can be shown to members and the public. This means that the Authority's consultation processes are meaningful and useful.
<b>3.2 Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
3.2.1 Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision	<p>The Service has a Sustainability and Environmental Policy.</p> <p>Initial impact assessments and financial comments are included in all authority reports and decision documents.</p> <p>These are supported by a full environmental management system, which includes sustainability assessments.</p>
3.2.2 Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints	<p>Members will consider the medium and long term effects of any strategic financial decision that is made in the short term. Strategic planning models are available to demonstrate how planning decisions will affect a number of years.</p> <p>The combination of the IRMP and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) encourage the service to take a longer term view and to factor in the potential effects of both a change in risk profile and a change in financial resources. Committee reports will demonstrate that the Fire Authority has consistently taken an approach that is best for the service.</p> <p>The more formal planning process is also supported by the Strategy and Planning (StraP) Working Group which allows Members and officers to explore the more uncertain aspects of the future and consider very early on what mitigation or development may need to be considered.</p>

3.2.3 Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs	<p>IRMP is subject to a wide ranging consultation process the outcome of which forms part of the five year service plan.</p> <p>The economic, environment and social issues would be discussed at meetings that are accessible to the public.</p>
3.2.4 Ensuring fair access to services	Equality and Diversity support with hard to reach and vulnerable communities.
<b>Principle 4 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b>	
<p>Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision- making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.</p>	
<b>4.1 Determining interventions</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
4.1.1 Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided	<p>The Senior Management Team (SMT) consider reports and supporting information in their decision making provided by the specialists within the Service. SMT consists of the most senior members of all teams with a mix of operational and non-operational remits to properly consider issues in the round.</p> <p>The StraP group consider and debate issue and options to challenge Officers to provide all appropriate and necessary information for decision making before reports are prepared for the full Authority.</p> <p>There is no separate cabinet or scrutiny function and so all Members are sighted on all matters through their attendance at meetings, or by receipt of meeting papers and minutes.</p>



<p>4.1.2 Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts</p>	<p>Proposals relating to significant changes to the current resourcing of the Service are consulted upon with all relevant stakeholders. This specifically includes those stakeholders potentially impacted by that change e.g. closure of fire stations, removal/relocation of fire appliances and changes to response standards.</p> <p>Improvements in targeting particular vulnerable groups are discussed and delivered through collaborative working with other organisations and strategic planning groups around the county, thereby ensuring that customer needs are placed at the centre of the decision making e.g. Change from 'Home Fire Safety Checks' to 'Safe and Well' visits.</p>
<p><b>4.2 Planning interventions</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Text</b></p>
<p>4.2.1 Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets</p>	<p>The Authority has a well-defined strategic planning process which is agreed by the CFA at its annual meeting. The report sets out timescales for developing the annual plan, department plans and service targets. The report gives an overview of the planning documents that are produced and what information will be reported to each committee throughout the year.</p>
<p>4.2.2 Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered</p>	<p>The service uses a change model that relies heavily on stakeholder engagement. This can be evidenced by how the IRMP objectives move through the engagement and consultation phase, into a Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) decision on direction and back to an engaged model of delivery. This can also be evidenced through the co-ordinated manner in which the Service Transformation Board oversee all medium and largescale projects.</p> <p>The Service also proactively engages with a broader group of stakeholders to identify where synergies exist between its objectives and others with a duty for community inclusivity, health and welfare.</p>

<p>4.2.3 Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks</p>	<p>Each partnership entered into is supported by a partnership agreement, which sets out clearly and succinctly what the partnership aims to achieve and what each of the partners will do. The agreement also states to which of the Fire Authority's strategic aims the partnership contributes.</p> <p>Officers have developed a method of assessing partnerships to ensure that officers, Members and partners are clear in the aims and purpose of any partnership working and know their respective responsibilities and commitments. Partnership agreements formally set out the aims of the partnership, expectations, roles and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Partnership register contains details on financial, legal reputational and resource based risks.</p>
<p>4.2.4 Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances</p>	<p>Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) uses NHS Exeter Data to support vulnerability targeting. The data provided is 65 years plus, however the Service will use a pragmatic approach in order to service the safe and well visits in the county, this data set is in excess of 100,000 residents.</p> <p>Agreement has been reached between Telford and Wrekin Council to offer a Safe and Well visit to those receiving an annual Care Package.</p> <p>It is hoped this will also be replicated in Shropshire Council for 2019.</p> <p>Shropshire Council and Telford &amp; Wrekin Council share Strengthening Families data, this allows SFRS to support the Accidental Dwelling Fire Strategy 2018/20 by targeting a more diverse age bracket. This will assist with matching resources to risk rather than to just age profiles.</p> <p>Lone Working has successfully expanded across the RDS areas.</p> <p>The Safe and Well process has linked the Prevention Team to both local authorities. This is an automated secure electronic pathway that is underpinned by data sharing agreements. In addition to Safe and Well, referral mechanisms are in place for public health, police and housing partners. This is becoming increasingly useful in hoarding cases.</p>

	<p>Reinforcement agreements for operational incidents are in place with all bordering Fire and Rescue Services through a legal framework as part of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.</p> <p>Outside of the Section 13, 16 Agreements the Service also has access to and provides resources to other FRS nationally through the NCAF Arrangements.</p>
4.2.5 Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are developed as part of the annual strategic planning process. They are agreed by S&R in March each year and progress is monitored by SMT monthly and APMC quarterly.
4.2.6 Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly	<p>There is an operational monitoring and debriefing process which includes improvements and lessons learnt. This looks at identifying the quality of service delivered at the operational level, using expected minimum standards as the indicator, against which gaps (and best practice) are identified and, where necessary disseminated wider.</p> <p>A quality performance measure has been established for fires confined to room of origin. This judges the speed of response and how successful the Service's education strategy is in terms of the 'get out stay out' message, as well as the effectiveness of fire safety campaigns regarding the importance of locations of fire alarms.</p>
4.2.7 Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan	The budget setting process is one element of the strategic planning process and ensures that the Service's plans are quantified. The Authority takes a strategic view of the Service's financial requirements and these requirements are managed within the resources available over the planning period.
4.2.8 Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy	Strategic financial planning for the Authority includes a planning tool which models varying revenue and capital scenarios. This allows members and officers to flex the amounts and timings of its service decision within the funding streams available.

4.3 Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	Supporting Text
4.3.1 Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints	The medium term strategy is designed to quantify the plans within the Service, and will incorporate Workforce Planning, IRMP, Asset Management and Fleet Planning, and Service Transformation. In some of these areas, such as IRMP, cuts have been necessary to remain within the funding available. In others, such as Assets and Fleet and STB, the Authority's reserves strategy has ensured that funds are available to pay for replacements and improvements without the need for additional costs within the revenue budget.
4.3.2 Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term	The budget setting process includes an annual review of the base budget and any committed costs to ensure that current operations are accounted for correctly. It also considers the full revenue cost of any new capital schemes, including borrowing costs, any ongoing running costs, and where applicable, replacement costs, into the longer term. Officers are also instructed to consider the longer term effects of any decision making in the short term.
4.3.3 Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage	The use of short to medium term planning ensures that officers and members can consider the impact of any decisions or events both now and over the foreseeable planning period. The longer term planning estimates cannot be used with any certainty in the current climate and should not be used to base any future decisions on. However, as an estimate, it can give an indication of what may need to be considered in the long term, and may be used to formulate options.
4.3.4 Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning	<p>SFRS have been able to work with other agencies to ensure our combined staffing is used to best effect across multiple service agendas. This has provided access to all the below groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and Well Project is linking to the NHS Service Transformation project for Shropshire, Telford and Mid Wales</li> <li>• The Safe and Well project supports and links into the Telford Healthy Lives project and the Shropshire Healthy Lives Steering Group</li> <li>• Age UK have been commissioned by Telford &amp; Wrekin to support the safe</li> </ul>

	<p>and well health delivery. SFRS are liaising with Shropshire Council and Age UK to enhance the use of Age UK to support Safe and Well in Shropshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shropshire Prevention Leads Group</li> <li>• The Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Board Delivery Group</li> <li>• Healthy Lives Steering Group</li> <li>• Social Prescribing in Shropshire</li> <li>• Shropshire Telford Suicide Forum</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse Forums Telford and Shropshire</li> <li>• DAAT Board SC and TW</li> <li>• SSCB (Children's) Safeguarding Board Shropshire</li> <li>• KASIB (Adults) Safeguarding Board Shropshire</li> <li>• KASIB Development Delivery sub group.</li> <li>• Shropshire Prevent (Counter terror) Strategy Group</li> <li>• Early Help Partnership Board Shropshire</li> </ul> <p>Telford and Wrekin Council now commission the Service to use its Fire Control facility for its Out of Hours calls service.</p>
<b>Principle 5 - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b>	
<p>Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.</p>	
<b>5.1 Developing the entity's capacity</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
<p>5.1.1 Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness</p>	<p>The Service has clearly defined its aims and the activities it will carry out to achieve those. The effectiveness of activities are reviewed through debriefing and performance review meetings.</p>

	<p>The asset management strategy and supporting plans have been developed to ensure the provision, availability and reliability of assets to support the identified activities. Asset provision is reviewed when potential improvements or efficiencies are identified through the debriefing or review processes.</p> <p>The Service reviews its performance through debriefing, operational monitoring and Key Performance indicators against its corporate aims.</p> <p>It develops asset management plans to ensure it provides assets to meet identified needs.</p>
5.1.2 Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently	<p>The Service continues to use comparative data where it is available within the sector.</p> <p>This includes information on Health and Safety and the “Basket of Goods” analysis carried out by the Home Office.</p>
5.1.3 Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved	<p>Reinforcement agreements for operational incidents are in place with all bordering Fire and Rescue Services through a legal framework as part of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.</p> <p>Outside of the Section 13, 16 Agreements the Service also has access to and provides resources to other FRS nationally through the NCAF Arrangements.</p> <p>The Service has entered into a range of collaborations and partnerships incorporating Local Authority, NHS and other Emergency Services as well as volunteer organisations, Housing Associations &amp; the Police and Crime Commissioner).</p> <p>Many examples of operational collaboration between local partners, particularly with regards to protecting vulnerable people, are evident through partnerships such as Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Health and Wellbeing Boards. New initiatives such as Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG) (aimed at drug gangs) and Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement Strategy MATES (aimed at people trafficking and child sexual exploitation) have been developed by West Mercia Police and are supported by the Service.</p>

	Future workstreams will target best practice in developing evaluation and measurement of collaboration and partnerships.
5.1.4 Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources	<p>A People Strategy is in place to ensure that activity and resources are focused on identified priorities</p> <p>Regular establishment meetings including retirement planning and forecasting.</p> <p>A four year core module training programme is in place to ensure workforce competence</p> <p>A HR Dashboard has been developed to give real-time access to information and trends to improve the ability to forecast and plan.</p>
<b>5.2 Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
5.2.1 Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	<p>The Authority's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations sets the tone for member / officer relations generally. The Chair, Vice Chair and the Leaders of the Opposition Groups attend a Chair's Briefing with the senior officers once a month.</p> <p>There are agreed role descriptions for each chair and vice chair position.</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer's annual appraisal is carried out by the Chair, where the CFO's job description is reviewed and objectives set.</p>
5.2.2 Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body	<p>Financial Regulations Standing Orders 2.1 and 2.2 set out the specific matters reserved for the collective decision of the Authority.</p> <p>Delegations to specific officers are documented in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Financial Regulations Standing Order.</p> <p>Each of the Authority's Committees has terms of reference which clearly state their powers and any authority delegated to them.</p>

<p>5.2.3 Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority</p>	<p>The Chief Fire Officer's job description and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers state that the CFO is responsible and directly accountable to the Authority for all aspects of operational management.</p> <p>The role of the Chair is specified in the Member Handbook.</p> <p>The Protocol on Member/Officer relations also supports the understanding of the delineation of roles.</p>
<p>5.2.4 Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged</li> <li>• ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis</li> <li>• ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including</li> </ul>	<p>As members receive comprehensive training and development from their constituent authorities, the Fire Authority provides an induction for new members which focusses specifically on the Fire Service, in order to avoid duplication of resources. In addition members regularly receive presentations and development sessions on various topics to ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date.</p> <p>Specialist training is provided to members of Committees, to improve knowledge on technical issues and update members on new developments.</p> <p>There is a tailored induction and a programme of organised training for officers. Further learning will be identified through skills assessments.</p> <p>All Brigade Managers have attended the Executive Leadership Programme run at Warwick University.</p> <p>Group Managers undertake the Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management. Middle Managers are undertaking a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management through University of Worcester. Supervisory managers complete a non-accredited programme covering a number of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) modules. The Service is offering Supervisory Managers an accredited Institute of Learning and Management (ILM) Level 3 Leadership and Management qualification to replace the current non-accredited programme.</p>



<p>lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external</p>	<p>There is an appraisal system in place for officers, part of which is to consider training and development needs. The Development Officer and Training and Development Centre organise and deliver a wide range of professional and personal development courses including management development.</p> <p>There is also regular 1-2-1 supervision for staff by their line managers.</p> <p>Members of staff in specialist roles such as finance and human resources maintain their Continuous Professional Development as required by their own professional body</p> <p>A debrief process exists for operational incidents and exercises.</p> <p>SIRO breaches log and shared experience at SGG</p> <p>Officers use Internal Audit in a constructive manner to invite scrutiny in any areas of concern as well as maintaining regular audit of key areas such as finance and payroll.</p>
<p>5.2.5 Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation</p>	<p>This process starts with the IRMP and continues into the transparency associated with the governance model but the Authority has many ways of encouraging and promoting public participation, both in the community and as part of the democratic process.</p>
<p>5.2.6 Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections</p>	<p>The Authority and each Committee has a work plan for the year, with an end of year report brought to show activity against that work plan.</p> <p>External Audit's annual Value for Money conclusion considers and gives an assessment on economy, efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>Staff engagement survey provides feedback from those employed with the Service</p> <p>Following the new national Fire Service inspection regime the Local Government Association (LGA) will looking at gaps and themes where they may be able to support Services'. As well as looking to learn from the outcomes of its own individual inspection, the Service will also look to participate in any national initiatives.</p>

<p>5.2.7 Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs</p>	<p>The CFO has an annual appraisal with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority.</p> <p>For all other staff an annual appraisal provides a one to one opportunity for managers and staff to contribute to the production of mutually agreed personal development plans.</p>
<p>5.2.8 Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing</p>	<p>Occupational Health (OH) services are available to all Authority employees including the services of a nurse, suitably qualified OH physician and counsellors.</p> <p>Staff conditioned to the Grey Book also have an annual fitness assessment and a general medical every three years.</p> <p>The People Strategy 2016-2020 introduced a new requirement for the Service to develop and implement a Health and Well-being action plan.</p> <p>The Service has signed up to the MIND Blue light pledge and action plan.</p> <p>There is also a module available on Learning Environment On-line (LEO) for all staff to access, entitled Leading and Managing Change and Transition.</p>

## **Principle 6 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.

A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability.

It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

6.1 Managing risk	Supporting Text
6.1.1 Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making	The Service has an established RMG which is responsible for ensuring the Authority has an effective risk management process in place. Risk management reports are taken to APMC and the review of the corporate risk /programme risk registers are standing agenda items at SMT/STB meetings.
6.1.2 Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively	<p>The risk management process is subject to an annual assessment by Internal Audit. The process is underpinned by the monitoring of the corporate, departmental and programme risk registers.</p> <p>Statements of Assurance are completed in line with the development of the Annual Plan and supporting Departmental Plans. The statements of assurance are signed off by the departmental head and lead executive officer and include departmental risks. Progress is monitored by RMG and RMG minutes are forwarded to SMT. RMG also includes the Chair and Vice Chair of APMC as well as Service Officers. The corporate risk register is monitored by APMC quarterly.</p> <p>Officers and Members also receive risk training from the Service's insurance provider Zurich.</p> <p>All Operational Incidents are debriefed in line with the Service Policy. Any Incident attended by a Flexible Duty Officer is also subject to Operational Monitoring procedures, all findings, both those of merit and development needs, are recorded and managed through an action plan. Where necessary Significant Event Investigation can be instigated by the Principal Officer to provide a formal comprehensive report into specific events or incidents.</p>
6.1.3 Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated	All risks on the corporate risk register are assigned a risk owner. Departmental risks are updated by the Head of Department and signed off by the Executive Lead through statements of assurance.
6.2 Managing performance	Supporting Text
6.2.1 Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review	An established performance management process exists, which provides reports to meetings of the SMT and the APMC on the Service's performance against service targets.

	<p>The Authority has agreed seven service targets in order to monitor service delivery. In addition there are supporting objectives, which are managed through departmental plans.</p> <p>Major projects are monitored through STB with reviews carried out and system user feedback captured for lessons learned purposes.</p>
6.2.2 Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook	There is a standard format for all committee reports, which includes background to the report and any recommendations for decision together with reasons behind those recommendations. All reports contain a section for legal comment and financial implications and list the background papers, which are integral to understanding the report. EQIAs are completed where appropriate.
6.2.3 Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which provides constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.	<p>SMT offers oversight on policy and performance and STB oversees all major delivery projects within a programme of change. Both groups are made up of executive officers and departmental leads. Minutes and actions are taken at both meetings to capture discussions and decisions.</p> <p>Strategy and Resources Committee offers oversight on strategic direction, Value for Money and monitoring of budget and financial performance. Audit and Performance Management Committee provide independent assurance and independent scrutiny.</p>
6.2.4 Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement	<p>SMT meets every month and STB every 2 months. Management reports and progress reports against major projects are reported.</p> <p>Progress on the Capital Programme is reported to S&amp;R Committee.</p> <p>Programme Benefits are reported to APMC.</p>
6.2.5 Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements)	A robust and structured budget setting and management system is in place and is well documented through Authority and senior management reporting. Officers ensure that the budget that is set at the beginning of the financial year is consistent through to the Statement of Accounts.
<b>6.3 Robust internal control</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
6.3.1 Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives	Statements of Assurance are completed in line with the development of the Annual Plan and supporting Departmental Plans. The Statements of Assurance are signed off by the departmental head and lead executive officer and include departmental risks and areas for improvement. Progress is monitored by RMG and RMG minutes are reported to SMT.

6.3.2 Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis	<p>The Risk Management Brigade Order and the Risk Management Protocol are reviewed annually.</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement is reviewed annually and the accompanying improvement plan is reviewed quarterly.</p>
6.3.3 Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place	A comprehensive Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy and Fraud Plan is in place and is reviewed every financial year. This is approved by members and widely circulated amongst staff.
6.3.4 Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor	The Risk Management and Statements of Assurance processes are reviewed annually by Internal Audit. Any recommendations/actions are monitored by RMG and reported to APMC every six months.
<p>6.3.5 Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group/ function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment</li> <li>• that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon</li> </ul>	<p>The terms of reference for APMC includes scrutiny of the corporate risk register and the AGS improvement plan on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The Chair of APMC who is also the Member champion, along with the Vice Chair of APMC sit on RMG.</p>
<b>6.4 Managing data</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
6.4.1 Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data	<p>An all-round approach of electronic safeguards through permissions, training for staff; and established agreements for sharing data with other agencies covers risks from an electronic, personnel and legislative angle.</p> <p>All staff have completed the Protecting Information On-Line Course.</p>

6.4.2 Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies	<p>Data sharing protocols and regular scrutiny by SMT, as well as monitoring through the Statements of Assurance ensures that arrangements in place are monitored.</p> <p>All staff have completed the Protecting Information On-Line Course.</p>
6.4.3 Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring	<p>The Service has developed a data warehouse that supports the monitoring and improvement of data quality. It acts as a central repository that stores data from key departmental systems. Departmental systems have assigned System Owners and System Administrators who are responsible for ensuring data quality standards.</p> <p>The data warehouse also allows System Administrators to more easily query data from their systems, and check the data for problems. As the data warehouse pulls in data from multiple sources then the data from different systems can be compared.</p> <p>The process of developing the data warehouse itself helped data and system owners understand how their data might be used, determine definitions for reporting and identify any data entry or data quality issues which they needed to resolve before reports could be created.</p>
<b>6.5 Strong public financial management</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
6.5.1 Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance	The use of short to medium term planning ensures that officers and members can consider the impact of any decisions or events both now and over the foreseeable planning period. Plans will be put in place for current organisational requirements, but reserves and precept strategies will ensure that future financial commitments can also be met.
6.5.2 Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls	A robust and structured budget setting and management system is in place and is well documented through Authority and senior management reporting. In addition, project management processes include financial implications and monitoring. In terms of financial risks and control, the corporate and departmental risk registers and the Authority's reserves are aligned.

## Principle 7 - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

7.1 Implementing good practice in transparency	Supporting Text
<p>7.1.1 Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate</p>	<p>The Fire Authority and its Committees each has an annual work plan which sets out the reports required for each meeting and the officers involved in producing them. The information provided by officers in these reports is to a standard format and is relevant, timely and clear, thus facilitating the decision making process.</p> <p>Prior to publication, Authority and Committee papers are assessed by Legal Services and the Head of Finance, for legal and financial comment.</p> <p>Agendas and reports are available to the public and publicised on its website and intranet in advance of meetings.</p> <p>Meetings are minuted to a standard format and include a summary of debate, motions, results and decisions resolved.</p> <p>Officers at all levels have been offered plain English and grammar check skills courses. Report writing forms part of the Management Development Programme.</p>

<p>7.1.2 Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand</p>	<p>The Information Officer (Planning and Programmes Officer) ensures that the requirements of the Transparency Scheme and the Publication Scheme are met.</p> <p>The Authority and Monitoring Officers preference is that as far as possible information should be considered in public session with exempt reports kept to a minimum.</p> <p>To avoid conflicts of interest, the Fire Authority requires that, having disclosed a pecuniary interest in a matter, a Member should leave the room whilst the matter is discussed.</p> <p>Specialist officers are available at public meetings to expand the information contained within reports.</p> <p>Reports are written in a clear consistent manner and the use of technical terms and acronyms is kept to a minimum.</p>
<p><b>7.2 Implementing good practice in reporting</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Text</b></p>
<p>7.2.1 Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way</p>	<p>The Authority and its Committees receive quarterly reporting on operational and financial performance. Value for money is also reported, both on performance reports as a performance indicator, and by external auditors as part of their Audit Findings Report.</p> <p>Reports detailing Use of Assets are taken to Strategy and Resources Committee.</p>
<p>7.2.2 Ensuring members and senior management own the results reported</p>	<p>Each report has a main author named on the front of the report as a point of contact for further information. The author will present the report at the meeting and take questions from Members.</p>



7.2.3 Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the annual governance statement)	<p>Internal Audit carry out an annual review and produce a report on the Annual Governance Statement. Any recommendations/actions falling out of the review will be monitored by RMG and progress reported to APMC every six months.</p> <p>Any high level actions that carry a significant risk would be included within the AGS improvement plan and reported to APMC on a quarterly basis.</p>
7.2.4 Ensuring that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate	This code is applicable to Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Limited.
7.2.5 Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations	The Statement of Accounts contains a Narrative Report, which details the Authority's performance over the financial year. This is consistent with budgets set and reported upon during the year. The backward looking Annual Report also includes financial information, which is consistent with other financial reporting.
<b>7.3 Assurance and effective accountability</b>	<b>Supporting Text</b>
7.3.1 Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon	On completion of the external audit on the Statement of Accounts, the external auditor produces an audit findings report. Where recommendations are made within the report, these are incorporated into the following year's closedown process.
7.3.2 Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon	The Authority's internal audit function is carried out by Audit Services at Shropshire Council. The audit plan is based on a risk assessment carried out by officers and auditors. Timely audit reports are issued and any recommendations acted upon and monitored by RMG. Audit Services provide an annual assurance based on the audits carried out and this feeds into the AGS. There is an arrangement in place whereby both internal and external audit can meet with members without officers present, to discuss any relevant issues.

<p>7.3.3 Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations</p>	<p>The Service has previously taken full advantage of the LGA Fire Peer Review process and will continue to do so within the renewed inspection framework.</p> <p>The Service also participates in a regional health and safety inspection programme which encourages the implementation of best practice.</p> <p>The Service actively engages with external bodies such as British Standards Institute for environmental assessment and fleet transport association for fleet compliance.</p>
<p>7.3.4 Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement</p>	<p>The Service risk assesses contracts and contract providers to establish appropriate contract and risk management strategies.</p>
<p>7.3.5 Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met</p>	<p>Each partnership entered into is supported by a partnership agreement, which sets out clearly and succinctly what the partnership aims to achieve and what each of the partners will do. The agreement also states to which of the Fire Authority's strategic aims the partnership contributes.</p> <p>Officers have developed a method of assessing partnerships to ensure that officers, Members and partners are clear in the aims and purpose of any partnership working and know their respective responsibilities and commitments. Partnership agreements formally set out the aims of the partnership, expectations, roles and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Included on the partnership agreement template is a section that requires each partner to provide named individuals for complaints.</p> <p>The partnership process is currently under development to include internal audit recommendations.</p>

## Abbreviations

ACFO	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	LGA	Local Government Association
AGS	Annual Governance Statement	MTFP	Medium Term Financial Plan
APMC	Audit and Performance Management Committee	NCAF	National Co-ordination Advisory Framework
BCF	Better Care Fund Shropshire	OH	Occupational Health
CFA	Combined Fire Authority	RDS	Retained Duty System
CFO	Chief Fire Officer	RMG	Risk Management Group
CFS	Community Fire Safety	S&R	Strategy and Resources Committee
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment	SFRS	Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
FRA	Fire and Rescue Authority	SGG	Systems Governance Group
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service	SIRO	Senior Information Risk Officer
HFSV	Home Fire Safety Visit	SMT	Service Management Team
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan	STB	Service Transformation Board
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators	StraP	Strategy and Planning Working Group

# **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy**

## **Introduction**

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority employs over 600 staff, and manages a revenue budget of over £21m per year. In administering its responsibilities, the Authority has a zero tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption, whether it is attempted from inside or outside of the organisation. To this end, it is committed to an effective anti-fraud, bribery and corruption strategy designed to:

- encourage prevention
- promote detection and
- identify a clear pathway for investigation.

Work to counter fraud, bribery and corruption links closely to the Fire Authority's Core Values, which are:

### **Service to the Community**

We value service to the community by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

### **People**

We value all our employees by practising and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

### **Diversity**

We value diversity in the Service and the community by:

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

### **Improvement**

We value improvement at all levels of the Service by:

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

## **The Fire Authority's Service Target:**

'To obtain an unqualified Value for Money (VFM) conclusion from External Audit'

also supports this strategy.

The key objectives of this Strategy are to minimise losses through fraud, bribery and corruption, and to embed further the management of fraud risk within the culture of the organisation.

This Strategy is based on a series of comprehensive and inter-related procedures, designed to prevent, detect and deter fraud and to take effective action against any attempted or actual fraudulent act affecting the Authority:

- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Members Code of Conduct
- Registration and declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests
- Contract Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Protocols on Gifts and Hospitality for Members and Staff

## **What is Fraud, Bribery and Corruption?**

Fraud is a crime and involves a deception, which is deliberate and intended to provide a direct or indirect personal gain, for example false expenses, exaggerated pay claims, altering accounting records, bogus invoices, forged cheques, fixing tender results, contract irregularities etc.

Bribery is an inducement or reward offered, promised or provided to gain personal, commercial or regulatory advantage.

Corruption is the deliberate misuse of someone's position for direct or indirect personal gain, such as offering, giving, requesting or accepting a bribe or reward, which influences a person's actions or someone else's.

Theft is where a person steals cash or other property belonging to someone else with no intention of returning it.

## **Scope**

It is expected that all officers (permanent and temporary) and Members of the Authority will lead by example, and ensure adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.

The Authority also expects that the individuals and organisations that it comes into contact with (i.e. suppliers, contractors, service providers and consultants) will act towards the Authority with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud, bribery or corruption.

## Authority

The responsibility for an anti-fraud, bribery and corruption culture is the joint duty of those involved in giving political direction, determining policy and management. The Standards, Audit and Performance Committee is key in recommending that sufficient authority is given to anti-fraud, bribery and corruption activity. The Authority's management teams are responsible for ensuring a strong anti-fraud culture within their areas, and that staff accept their responsibility for preventing and detecting fraud, bribery and corruption.

In order for the Authority to deal effectively with suspected incidents of fraud, those responsible for investigating matters must be fully supported by all officers and Members.

## Culture

The Authority encourages a culture of honesty and opposition to fraud, bribery and corruption. Members and officers at all levels are expected to lead by example in ensuring adherence to established rules and procedures and to ensure that all procedures and practices are legally sound and honest.

The Authority's employees are an important element in its stance on fraud, bribery and corruption, and they are positively encouraged to raise any concerns that they may have on these issues, where they are associated with the Authority's activity.

The Authority's Brigade Order, "Reporting of Illegality and Malpractice (Whistleblowing)", gives details about the support and safeguards that are available to those, who do raise concerns.

Members of the public can also report concerns through the Authority's complaints procedure, external audit or the Local Government Ombudsman, or, where the conduct of Members is concerned, through the Fire Authority's Monitoring Officer.

The Authority participates in the National Fraud Initiative, the Cabinet Office's bi-annual data matching exercise, which seeks to detect fraudulent payments from the public purse. In addition, the Authority proactively incorporates anti-fraud work into its Internal Audit plans.

## Prevention

### Staff

A key preventative measure in the fight against fraud, bribery and corruption is to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the previous record of potential staff, in terms of their propriety and integrity. In this regard, temporary and casual staff are treated in the same manner as permanent staff.

Once officers are recruited in accordance with Human Resources guidelines, they must adhere to the Authority's procedures, practices and policies. Officers, who are members of professional bodies, must follow that body's Code of Conduct. Officers may also voluntarily register membership of other bodies. The Authority's Brigade Order on "Gifts and Hospitality" outlines the procedure to be followed by officers, if they are offered gifts or hospitality from a supplier or other stakeholder.

## Members

Members are subject to the Authority's Code of Conduct. Any allegations of breach of the Code are dealt with by the Fire Authority's Monitoring Officer and may, in certain instances, be referred on to its Standards, Audit and Performance Committee. Members are also required to declare their interests in accordance with the law and with the provisions of the Code of Conduct.

A register of interests of Members is maintained by the Fire Authority's Monitoring Officer and is available for inspection by the public at Service Headquarters.

The register is also accessible on the Service's website at the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/managing-service/fra-members>

The Fire Authority also has in place a detailed Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality for Members and staff.

The agenda for every meeting of the Authority includes an item on disclosable pecuniary interests, at which point Members must declare if they have an interest in any business to be considered at that meeting in accordance with statutory provisions. Having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in an item, a Member must leave the meeting room, prior to commencement of the debate on that item.

Members are also required annually to declare any related party transactions.

## Systems and Procedures

Financial regulations and standing orders relating to contracts and for the regulation of business are in place to ensure that Members and officers act in accordance with best practice, when dealing with the Authority's affairs. The Authority has a statutory duty under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, and ensure that one of its officers has responsibility for the administration of these affairs. The Authority's designated Chief Finance Officer is the Treasurer. In the absence of the Treasurer the Head of Finance acts as the deputy section 151 officer.

The Authority has developed systems and procedures, which incorporate efficient and effective internal controls, and which include adequate segregation of duties. The Treasurer is responsible for the operation and documentation of such systems. Their existence and appropriateness is independently reviewed and reported upon by Internal Audit Services at Shropshire Council.

Members and officers should avoid any situations where there is potential for a conflict of interest.

## Reporting of Financial Malpractice

The Authority is committed to ensuring the prevention and detection of fraud, bribery and corruption, and will investigate all potential occurrences in a prompt and timely manner.

In the event that an employee is concerned about suspected unlawful conduct, they should speak in the first instance to their line manager, or, if this is not appropriate, to a senior manager.

Senior management are responsible for following up any allegation of fraud, bribery or corruption received, and will deal with it urgently, referring it to the Treasurer, or, if this is not appropriate, to Internal Audit Services. This person must also refer the matter to the Head of Human Resources and Administration.

The Treasurer has statutory duties in relation to financial administration and stewardship on behalf of the Authority.

Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Treasurer to report to the Authority, if one of its officers:

- has made, or is about to make, a decision, which involves incurring unlawful expenditure
- has taken, or is about to take, an unlawful action, which has resulted or would result in a loss or deficiency to the Authority
- is about to make an unlawful entry in the Authority's accounts

## **Outcomes**

There are a number of possible outcomes to a fraud investigation.

- Criminal prosecution
- Disciplinary action
- Recovery through civil or criminal proceedings
- Identification of weaknesses in systems of controls, which require improvement

Full details of outcomes are set out within the Fraud Response Plan below.

## **Conclusion**

This Strategy demonstrates that Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority has systems and procedures in place to assist in the fight against fraud, bribery and corruption. The Strategy will be brought to the attention of all employees and Members, and will be reviewed at least annually by the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee, to ensure that its contents remain up-to-date.



## **Fraud Response Plan**

The Fire Authority has a zero tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption, whether it is attempted from inside or outside of the organisation.

This Response Plan is part of the Authority's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy, and gives advice and information to employees and Members about what to look for, and how to act, if fraud or corruption is suspected.

Fraud might happen in the following areas:

### **Invoices for goods or services**

- Claiming for services not performed or goods not received
- Claiming for a higher level of service from that performed or a higher specification of goods than that received
- Claiming for a service or goods provided to an employee on a personal basis

### **Travel and expense claims**

- False journey claimed / same journey claimed twice
- Mileage inflated
- Excessive or inappropriate expenses claimed
- Two employees claiming for a journey taken together
- Altering documentation to disguise theft of cash

### **Petty cash**

- Reimbursement sought for receipted but inappropriate expenditure
- Vouchers or receipts submitted but no expenditure made

### **Procurement Cards**

- Use of a card for payment of non Fire Authority expenditure

### **Payroll**

- 'Ghost' employees introduced onto the payroll system, the salary being paid to the perpetrator
- Hours worked overstated – misuse of flexible working or overtime systems
- Changing employee pay rates or hours without authorisation

### **Ordering**

- Goods ordered for personal use or from a specific supplier in return for some form of benefit
- Goods ordered from own, relatives' or friends' businesses
- Accepting a lower number of items than ordered, but certifying an invoice for a higher number
- Creating / certifying false invoices, for which no order has been raised

## **Stocks and assets**

- Using a computer, fax or telephone for running a private business or for other private purposes
- Using a franking machine for personal mail

## **Claims for damages**

- Personal injury claims falsely alleged as work related or wrongly inflated
- Claims for damage to personal effects falsely alleged as work related or wrongly inflated
- Sick pay / loss of earnings / claims falsely alleged as work related or wrongly inflated.

The following controls should be in place to prevent and detect fraud:

- Procedures should be documented and staff trained in their use.
- Managers should ensure compliance with those procedures.
- Duties should be segregated between staff, to avoid a single employee being solely responsible for the initiation to the completion of a task.
- An independent check should be made to verify calculations and documentation of employees, i.e. travel claims should be checked by managers.
- Unused parts of claim forms should be crossed through, to ensure that no additions are made following approval.
- Cash holdings should be minimised, and cash and cheques banked regularly.
- Budget statements and any associated trends should be reviewed.

If you suspect fraud, you should speak in the first instance to your line manager, or, if this is not appropriate, to a senior manager.

Senior management are then responsible for following up any allegation, and will be expected to deal with it urgently, referring to the Treasurer, or if this is not appropriate, to Internal Audit Services. This person must also refer the matter to the Head of Human Resources and Administration.

Procedures are in place within Internal Audit Services to investigate any allegations presented to them. The Treasurer, together with Internal Audit Services, will:

- Undertake an independent investigation
- Deal promptly with the matter
- Record all evidence received
- Ensure that evidence is sound and adequately supported
- Ensure security of all evidence collected
- Contact other agencies where necessary, e.g. the Police
- Implement the Authority's disciplinary procedures with the Head of Human Resources and Administration, where appropriate.

There are a number of possible outcomes to a fraud investigation.

### **Criminal prosecution**

The Treasurer, in consultation with the appropriate manager and Internal Audit Services, will authorise the referral to the Police for investigation.

### **Disciplinary action**

At the end of the investigation, Internal Audit Services will produce an investigation report. If this involves an employee and fraud is proven, the likely outcome will be dismissal. If fraud is not proven, there may still be matters, which need to be considered under the Fire Authority's disciplinary procedures.

### **Recovery through civil or criminal proceedings**

The Fire Authority will seek to recover all losses, subject to legal advice and where it is cost effective to do so. It will recover any loss caused by an employee through salary, pension or insurance.

### **Identification of weaknesses in systems of controls, which require improvement**

An action plan will be produced to address any system or management weaknesses and to reduce the risk of fraud and error in the future.