

Annual Review 2015/16

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205.

1 Purpose of Report

This report presents the draft Annual Review (also known as the Annual Statement of Assurance) for 2015/16 and gives the Committee an opportunity to make comment on the draft, prior to its going forward to the full Fire Authority for consideration and approval.

2 Recommendation

The Committee is asked to comment upon the draft Annual Review 2015/16.

3 Background

A National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service has been in existence since 2004 and has been regularly revised. During 2012 the Coalition Government published a new Fire and Rescue National Framework, which placed particular requirements on the Fire Authority regarding the development and publication of an Annual Review.

With Fire and Rescue Authorities ultimately accountable to their local communities, the Framework states that they need to be transparent about decisions and actions taken, and engage with communities, so local people can scrutinise and influence service delivery. They should also ensure that local communities can access information to compare the performance of their Authority with that of others.

The Annual Review is the means by which the Authority is required to communicate such information clearly. It is in effect a report, which looks back at the last financial year and explains the Fire Authority's objectives, performance, risks and initiatives, along with its plans for the future. It also acts as a signposting document to other information, which may be of interest to the audience. Last year, for the first time, this was posted on the Service's website, rather than produced as a printed document.

4 Web-Based Annual Review 2015/16

Attached at the appendix is the draft Annual Review for 2015/16. It is again intended that this will be posted on the Service's website.

In future, officers plan to look to make the document more interactive and easy to update, drawing on information hosted on the internal network through the SharePoint project. This means information will be easier to co-ordinate and collect and more news stories, which occur throughout the year, can be included, as they best demonstrate the range of activities, in which the Service is involved.

5 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory authority for the Fire Service National Framework and requires fire authorities to have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. The proposed Annual Review addresses the requirements of the Framework (and associated Government guidance), but should not be considered as representing a 'qualified' statement or opinion regarding the Authority's or Service's performance. There are currently no Government arrangements in place to verify formally Annual Reviews / Annual Statements of Assurance.

7 Initial Impact Assessment

An Initial Impact Assessment has been completed.

8 Appendix

Draft Annual Review 2015/16

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.



Annual Review 2015/16

Foreword from the Chief Fire Officer, Rod Hammerton, and the Chair of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, Stuart West.

Our Annual Review, also known as the 'Annual Statement of Assurance', describes our progress in making Shropshire safer over the last year. It aims to demonstrate how the Service continues to meet its statutory duties and operational objectives and put 'Shropshire's Safety First'.

2015/16 saw the first year of work against our new 5 year Service Plan. In accordance with the year one objectives we have continued to transform our Service through the use of technology, reviewed ways of working for our Firefighters and Control staff and reviewed the design of Telford Central Fire Station and Training Centre.

Partnership and collaboration have continued to form a large part of our work. West Mercia Police are now able to use our facilities in Newport helping them to reduce costs. Close working with Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils continues to turn our home fire safety visits into a 'Safe and Well' visit that meets our shared objectives of improving the lives of the most vulnerable. We have extended the 'Honest Truth' new drivers education initiative into Shropshire with Approved Driving Instructors, and we're working to improve rescue outcomes for all members of the 'family' through staff support for fundraising for an animal charity initiative.

Over the course of the past year we have also been keenly involved in the campaign to increase awareness of Hate Crime and operate as a Hate Crime Reporting Centre. We have continued to work towards being a diverse and inclusive organisation by welcoming our first 5 Apprentices; continuing our excellent work promoting Dyslexia awareness and support for our staff; and holding a number of successful taster sessions for females and those from minority groups who may be interested in becoming firefighters.

Our Service Plan sets out our objectives for the year ahead which include implementing the changes to the shift systems and deciding on and planning for the future development of our facilities at Telford. We will be conducting a staff engagement survey in April 2016 and working to roll out our 'Make Every Contact Count' initiative with Telford and Wrekin Council to further improve the quality of life for the people of Shropshire.



**Chief Fire Officer
Rod Hammerton**



**Chair
Councillor
Stuart West**



The communities we serve

We serve a community of approximately 473,000 residents, who live within the two administrative council areas of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. We also protect the many visitors, who come to Shropshire each year for business and leisure.



Shropshire is England's largest inland county (3,487 km² / 1,347 sq. miles) but one of the most sparsely populated. It has a rich historic and cultural heritage, dating back to the times of the Celts and the Romans. Shropshire boasts some of the nation's most innovative businesses, with a vibrant and growing business sector based in Telford. A new town, Telford includes a tourist economy based on the Ironbridge Gorge area, which hosted the birth of the industrial revolution in the 17th century and a farming and livestock industry, which is one of the largest in the UK.

Governance Arrangements

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is accountable to the community and is governed through locally elected councillors from both Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council, who form Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority. Our Members play a very active role in governing and they are involved in consultation with local communities and staff across the County.

A number of committees exist to support the Fire Authority in carrying out its functions. Meeting dates and reports are available on our website.

National legislation places the statutory responsibility for provision of fire and rescue services upon the Fire Authority. The key responsibilities are set out within:

- ❖ **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004**
- ❖ **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**
- ❖ **The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

In addition to the legislative requirements, the Fire Authority is also required to deliver the Government's priorities for the nation's fire and rescue services, which are set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework (July 2012):

- 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

Full details of the Fire Authority's governance and financial arrangements are published on the Service's website.

In January 2016, responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service moved from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Home Office and with that came a change of ministerial control. New legislation has been drafted in the form of the Policing and Crime Bill 2016 and the finalisation of that legislation and the powers it brings in is expected in 2017.

Statement of Contracts Involving a Transfer of Staff

The Local Government Act 1999 requires all Best Value authorities to provide a statement of contracts involving a transfer of staff. Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority has not been party to any contracts, involving a transfer of staff to or from the Authority during 2015/16.

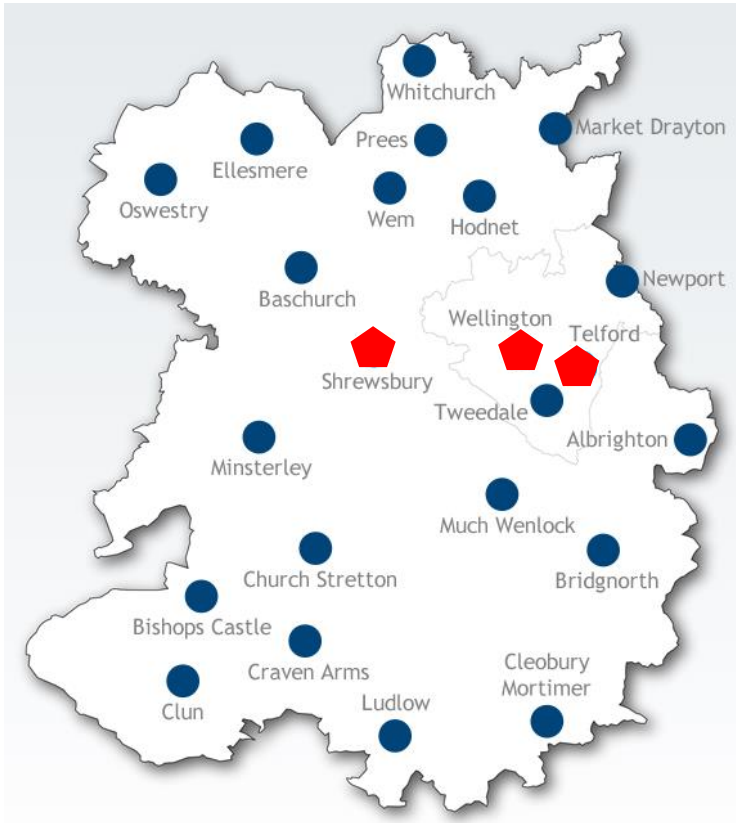
Overview of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Service is led by the Chief Fire Officer with two main directorates, one responsible for **Service Delivery**, and one responsible for **Corporate Services**, each led by a Brigade Manager. The directorates are comprised of a range of functional departments and the latest organisational diagram is available on our website.

The Service employs approximately 600 staff in full and part-time roles, based across 23 locations. Our Headquarters, Workshops, Fire Control and Community Safety / Prevention functions are based in Shrewsbury, with the Training and Development facilities located at Telford.



Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service



There are 23 fire stations, located strategically across the County, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The majority of our fire stations are crewed by part-time staff on the retained duty / on-call system. This means that, whilst they have other employment, they are available at short notice to respond to incidents.

Fire stations located in the Shrewsbury, Wellington and Telford areas have full-time firefighters and retained duty / on-call firefighters.

Where possible, we aim to prevent, rather than respond to, incidents. Working with partners, the Service engages widely with the local community and businesses to raise awareness of the dangers of fire and offers education (and where necessary enforcement) to achieve its aims.

As well as preventing and responding to incidents, we perform an essential civil protection role and provide an emergency response to road traffic collisions, flooding, animal rescues, chemical incidents, and rescues from height or water.

 Wholetime stations

 Retained stations

Our Vision, Purpose and Core Values

Whilst the Fire Authority's statutory responsibilities are enshrined in law, the vision and purpose of the Service are:

Vision:

Putting Shropshire's Safety First

Purpose:

To save and protect life, property and the environment from fire and other emergencies

Our Core Values

The Service has, for many years, adopted the national Fire and Rescue Core Values of:

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
- Challenge 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 risks we face

Although the risks faced by the Service largely arise from providing a fire and rescue service in a predominately rural and sparsely-populated area, we also face the need to be able to provide resilience against the impact of adverse weather and other civil emergencies both locally and nationally. A thorough analysis of our risks is provided in our Service Plan 2015 to 2020, which is available on our website.

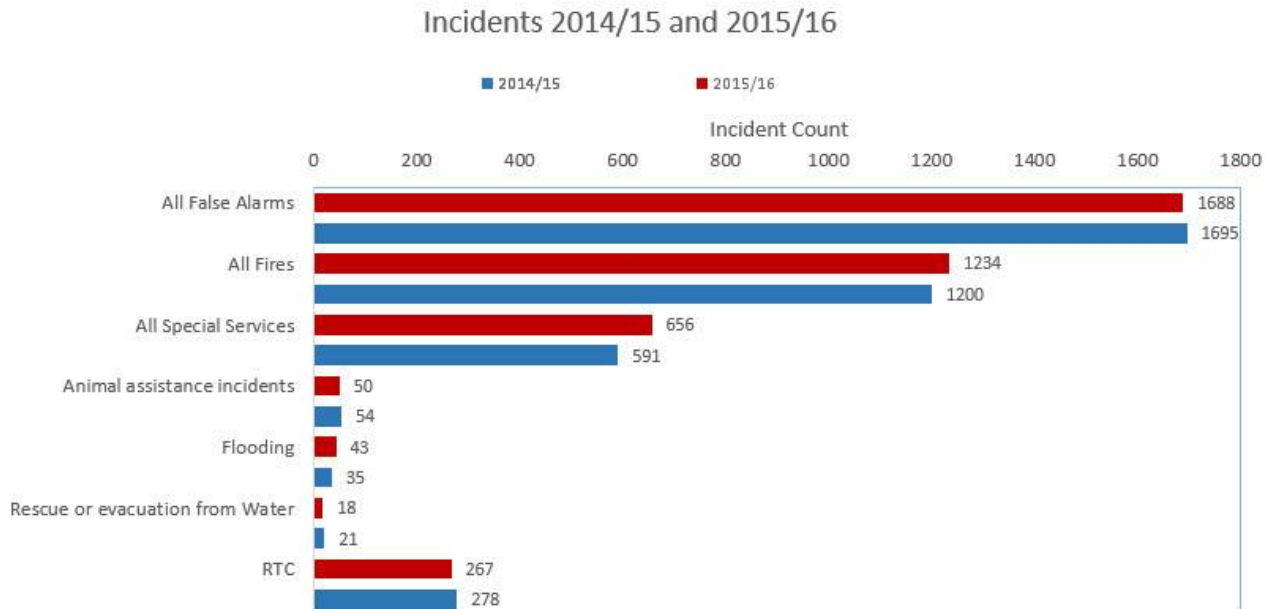
Our priority will always be the preservation of life, and the protection of property from fire and other emergencies. We also respond, where needed, to mitigate the impact of fire and other emergencies in the natural environment.

We know that within Shropshire we have an increasingly older population which poses particular issues for the Fire Service because older people are more vulnerable to fire. In general the County does enjoy a high standard of living but still has areas and incidences of social deprivation and isolation in both the rural areas and the towns.

The Service is very clear on the importance of a thriving business sector to the local economy and the community and so a proactive prevention and protection strategy exists to reduce the incidence and impact of fire on local businesses. The strategy extends to include the numerous heritage risks that lie within Shropshire, many of which are of national and, in the case of Ironbridge Gorge, of global importance.

Risks which the Service, together with its partners, is tasked to address, are recorded within local and national risk registers.

During 2015/16 the Service attended 3,576 incidents compared to 3,486 incidents in 2014/15. A comparison and breakdown of the incidents is shown below:



The Service experienced 1 fire death in 2015/16. This compares with 1 in 2014/15.

Progress against activities set out in the Annual Plan 2015/16

Each year we create an Annual Plan setting out a number of activities which directly affect the way we manage and respond to the risks within our community. Each activity is shown below along with a summary of the outcome achieved.

1. Review our current staffing model to improve service delivery and increase efficiency

Following receipt of a report from officers in October 2014, the Fire Authority agreed to undertake a project to identify all possible options that could reduce the current wholetime staffing costs by approximately £400k per annum, whilst continuing to deliver a service matched to risk. This project ran for one year from April 2015. By March 2016 work had been completed with a recommendation being prepared for the Fire Authority planned for May 2016 that both maintains existing levels of operational capability and provides the potential to reduce costs.

2. Review Fire Control to improve service delivery and cost effectiveness

In 2014 the Authority decided to suspend merger proposals, to monitor the partner collaboration opportunities which may arise in the future, and undertake a Fire Control Review project. The aim was to identify alternative options for improving the cost-effectiveness of the Fire Control function by up to £300k per annum. By March 2016 work had been completed with recommendations being prepared for the Fire Authority planned for May 2016 that would increase the capacity for Fire Control to undertake a fuller role in managing operational risk and provide a more resilient and reliable crewing model.

3. Review of Telford Site

Facilities at Telford have been reviewed over the past year with the intention of updating the station and training facilities whilst also being ambitious about creating a multi-agency capability. The aim is to bring together Fire and Rescue Service Operations, Local Authority Emergency Planning and other partners to create a local command centre that is able to integrate with, and augment, the existing function of the Local Resilience Forum. As with the other review projects recommendations will be put to the Fire Authority in 2016/17.

We also set out a number of activities aimed at supporting the transformation of the way we work. A description of those and the progress made is set out below.

Activity	Progress to March 2016
ICT ICT Wide Area Network (WAN) (Upgrade, decommissioning and commercial project) Microsoft Lync (System Installation and set-up) Virtualisation of the Command & Control System Mobile Data Terminals (Software and Hardware upgrade) Network Improvements Roll out of SharePoint (Phase 2)	<i>WAN installed at 17 sites and upgrade installed at 15 sites by March 2016</i> <i>Deferred to 2016/17</i> <i>Virtualisation completed May 2015 and Windows 7 upgrade completed May 2015</i> <i>Continual improvements throughout 2015/16 including audio visual capability at all stations.</i> <i>Activities continued throughout 2015/16</i>

<p>HR & Training</p> <p>Development of HR and Training information systems</p> <p>Review and negotiation of HR technical support contracts</p> <p>Introduction of Learning Pool (e-learning)</p> <p>Automation of payment processes</p>	<p><i>Continued ongoing development throughout 2015/16</i></p> <p><i>Payroll, Pensions and HR information system contracts renewed until March 2017</i></p> <p><i>Launched February 2016</i></p> <p><i>Electronic travel and subsistence completed for all staff and elected members March 2016</i></p>
<p>Integrated Risk Management Plan</p> <p>Review the use of front line appliances and special appliances.</p> <p>Review of the Training Strategy</p>	<p><i>Review of reserve Rescue Tender carried out. Front line appliances review deferred to 2016/17</i></p> <p><i>Review undertaken during 2015/16</i></p>
<p>Use of Assets</p> <p>Station Refurbishment (Whole-time and Retained)</p> <p>Specialist vehicle specification and replacement</p> <p>Improving security on Fire Stations</p> <p>Training Facility Improvements</p>	<p><i>Works completed at Wellington, Hodnet, Baschurch and Albrighton by March 2016</i></p> <p><i>Light Pumping Unit delivered and operational December 2015</i></p> <p><i>Deferred to 2016/17</i></p> <p><i>Drill towers erected at Church Stretton, Clun, Whitchurch and Much Wenlock by March 2016</i></p>

Over the last two years we have been pleased to support Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to manage the financial pressures that they face by taking a number of their staff on secondment. We have recently completed the transfer of three of those to our employment.

The refurbishment of Wellington Fire Station was completed in 2015/16. This is the second of our three full-time fire stations to be modernised and defining our plans for Telford Fire Station form part of the work for the coming year.

Business continuity is critical to us and all reasonably foreseeable and actual risks are the subject of regular review. In 2015/16 we tested our new communication line to Hereford and Worcester and we have supplementary back-up arrangements in place if needed. Our identified risks are recorded and monitored through the Corporate Risk Register.

To fulfil our vision and purpose the Authority has four key aims. Each aim has targets against which success is measured. Progress is monitored internally every month and reported to the Fire Authority's quarterly Audit and Performance Management Committee. The aims and measures for 2015/16 are set out below.

- Aim 1 To be there when you need us in an emergency with a professional and well equipped team**
- Service Target 1 The first fire engine will arrive at an emergency incident with at least 4 firefighters within 15 minutes on 89% of occasions
- Aim 2 To reduce the number of fires in our community**
- Service Target 2 Accidental fires will be maintained to not more than 548 fires during 2015/16
- Service Target 3 Accidental dwelling fires to be reduced to not more than 236 during 2015/16
- Service Target 4 Deliberate fires will be reduced to not more than 693 fires during 2015/16
- Aim 3 To reduce the number of fire related deaths and serious injuries**
- Service Target 5 Fire related deaths and serious injuries in the community will be reduced to not more than 20 during 2015/16
- Service Target 6 Injuries sustained to staff through firefighting will be reduced to not more than 27 injuries during 2015/16
- Aim 4 To deliver an effective fire and rescue service at a cost that is acceptable to our community**
- Service Target 7 To obtain an unqualified Value for Money (VFM) conclusion from External Audit.

In 2015/16 we achieved 5 out of 6 targets set by the Fire Authority. The measures are reviewed annually by the Fire Authority and adjusted to promote continuous improvement.

Community Work and Achievements

As one of several local organisations responsible for community safety within Shropshire, we are involved in delivering a variety of initiatives with these partners. Over the last year we have worked with many groups including the Association of Driving Instructors, Telford and Wrekin Council and the Smokey Paws charity. Our partnerships continue with British Red Cross, local mental health teams, Shropshire and Staffordshire Blood Bikes, housing providers, carers' groups and the Women's Institute.



Shropshire
Fire and Rescue Service



March
SFRS is supporting the 'Smokey Paws' campaign to ensure every fire appliance in the UK carries a pet oxygen mask to revive an animal suffering from smoke inhalation after a building fire

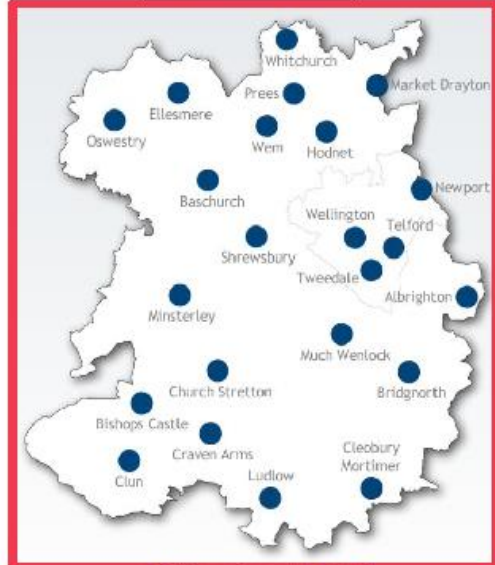
April 2015
BBC Breakfast visited the animal rescue team based at Wellington Fire Station where demands are growing from farmers and horseriders whose animals get into difficulty.



May
The number of women firefighters joining Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is "slowly growing" with successful taster sessions being held across the county.



February
Shropshire Fire and Rescue is always looking for new ways to work collaboratively with the other "blue light" services. Newport fire station is being used by local Police Officers and PCSOs



June
Shropshire firefighters carried out an exercise to practice their firefighting skills attending a rural farmhouse "fire".



January 2016
SFRS supports national 'Register my Appliance day' to encourage consumers to register new and old electrical appliances with manufacturers and receive product safety warnings

July
It was a first day at the office with a difference for high flying apprentices at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service who were welcomed with a lunchtime ride aboard an aerial ladder



December
A Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service boat crew was sent out from Shrewsbury to rescue Cumbrian residents stranded in their homes from Storm Desmond.

August
SFRS supports the 'Honest Truth Campaign' - a joint campaign aimed at cutting the number of road collisions involving young people.



November
Employees who have made an "outstanding" contribution to Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service were recognised at the Celebration of Success event



October
SFRS backs a campaign to raise awareness of hate crime and make it easier for people to recognize and report incidents. A hate crime reporting centre has been set up at the fire service's Shrewsbury HQ

September
SFRS are providing a series of Business Education Seminars aimed at increasing awareness of the legislation that came into force in October 2006 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.



In the course of 2015/16 we provided a number of business education seminars, educating 144 people from 133 local businesses.

We were involved in educating 4,500 children through the 'Crucial Crew' programme and nearly 7,000 children through other interactive programmes, including the 'Be Cool Be Safe' quiz.

Our staff have trained 35 carers and staff from other agencies to provide first-line safety advice in the home, including our own Brigade Chaplain.

We regularly hold open days across our stations to celebrate and share what we do and to help us to attract more staff to the Retained Duty System.

Financial Performance

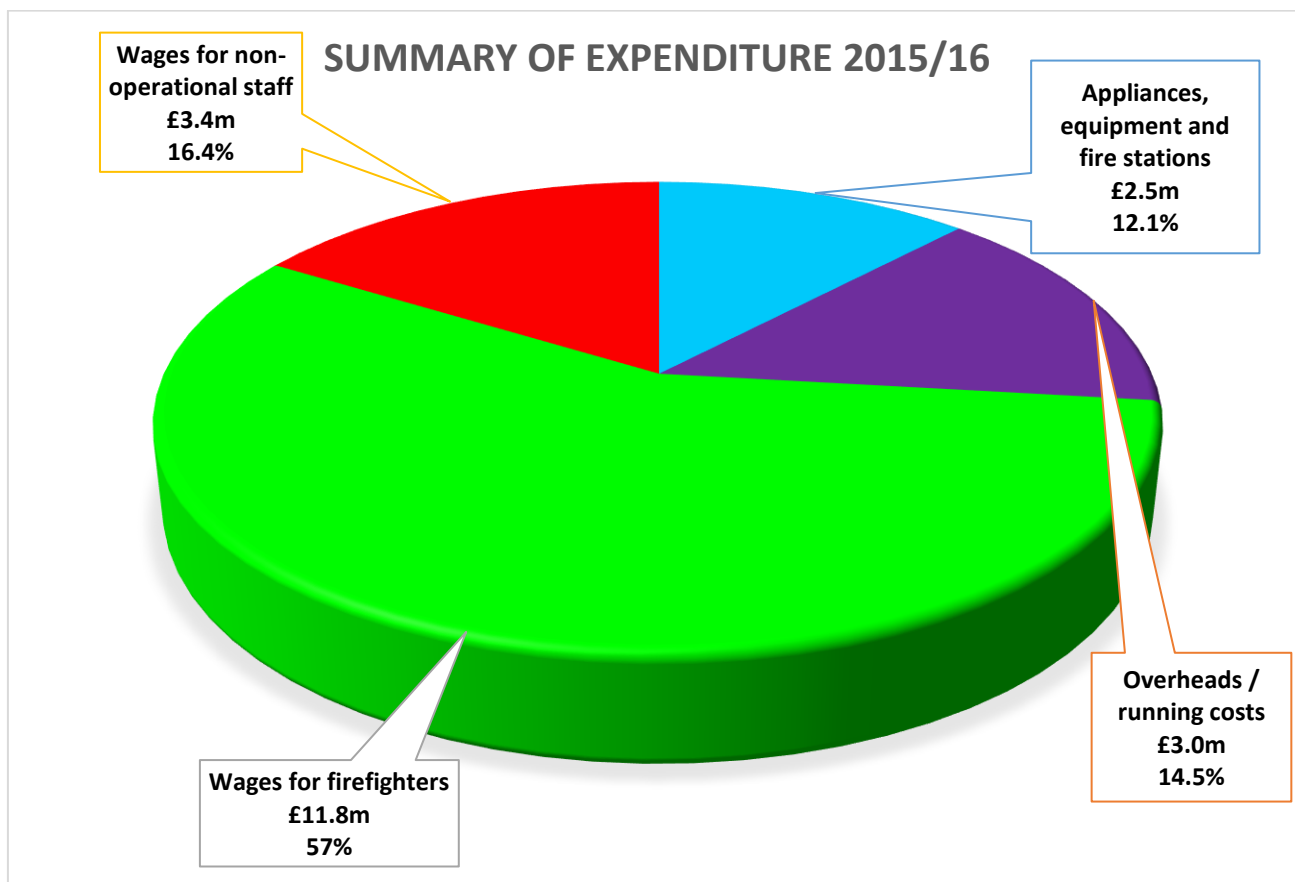
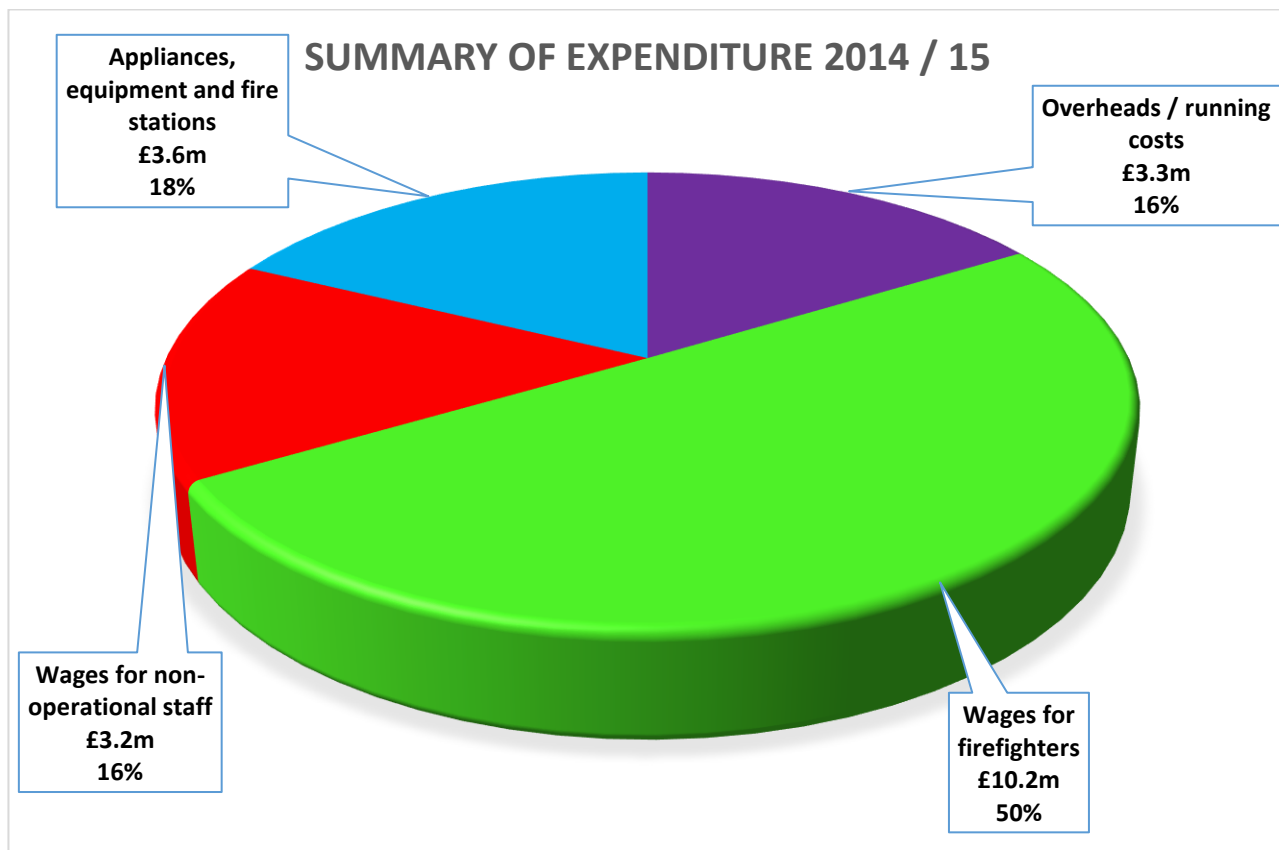
In February 2015, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority approved a revenue budget of £21.441m for 2015/16. This budget quantified the Service's strategic and operational plans, and the further sub-division into business areas also enabled individual business plans to be quantified, and achievements monitored.

For Band 'D' council tax properties, the annual contribution towards Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service was £92.22.

The revenue budget for 2015/16 was funded as follows:

Council tax income	£14.078m
Non domestic rates from authorities	£1.489m
Business rates top up grant	£2.143m
Revenue Support Grant	£3.731m
	£21.441m

The Service spent the money in the following key areas:



A principal objective of the Fire Authority is to provide value for money and ensure that it acts responsibly in how it spends public funding. A range of audits by external auditors takes place on a regular basis allowing independent scrutiny of our financial and corporate governance. We regularly seek the views of those who have contact with the Service (through inspections, incidents or visitors etc.), regarding their perception of our performance in respect of value for money.

The Fire Authority is transparent in its financial affairs, publishing an Annual Governance Statement, Annual Audit Letter and Statement of Accounts. The future financial plans and commitments (2012 to 2017) of the Fire Authority are set out within our Medium Term Financial Plan. All of these documents are available on our website and have now been updated to reflect our planning for 2015 to 2020.

Our Future Plans 2015/16 and Beyond

We recognise that balancing funding and service demands will continue to need considerable attention in the coming years. In 2015/16 responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Service transferred to the Home Office and we await further details of any resulting impact on future funding settlements.

In the meantime, we will begin work on the second year of our 5-year Service Plan with the implementation of shift system changes, resulting in cost savings; continued efficiencies in working methods generated through increased deployment of technology; and preparation of plans for the redevelopment of Telford Central to be a resource for us and our partners for years to come.

Have your say

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is paid for in part through local council tax.

You can have your say and influence how the Service is managed and delivered. The meetings of the Fire Authority and its committees are open for the public to attend. Reports and minutes arising from these meetings are published on our website and we always welcome feedback.

You can also give us your comments through:

Our website: www.shropshirefire.gov.uk



<http://facebook.com/shropshire>



<http://twitter.com/shropshire>

By phone: 01743 260200

In person: at our Headquarters in St Michael's Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2HJ