

# Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2024/25

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Simon Hardiman, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Joanne Coadey, Head of Finance, on 01743 260 215.

### 1 Executive Summary

This report summarises the progress made during the year against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2024/25.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the progress made during the year on the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.

### 3 Background

In accordance with authority delegated to it by the Fire Authority, the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee will consider the draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 which is likely at its December meeting.

The Statement of Accounts contains, as an appendix, a statement as to how effective the Authority's various systems of internal control have been in governing the risks, to which the Authority is exposed. This is known as the Annual Governance Statement or the AGS. Areas of the system of internal control that had been identified as requiring improvement were listed in the AGS and an action plan was developed to ensure that these improvements are progressed during the coming year (the AGS Improvement Plan 2025/26). This Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress, which the Service makes against the Plan.

## **4 Monitoring Progress against the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2025/26**

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2024/25 is attached as an appendix to this report; progress against each of the planned activities is also included in the appendix.

As is the case with most plans, the activities included within it are often subject to change. This can be as a result of changes in the external environment that guides the work, as well as the internal environment that dictates whether the Service has the capacity to achieve its stated objectives. To ensure there is control over any slippage, the officers responsible for delivering this work must obtain approval from the Service Management Team (SMT) or Service Programme Board (SPB), if they require any variations to the current Plan. Such variations will also be reported to this committee.

## **5 Conclusions**

The Committee is asked to note the progress made on the 2024/25 AGS Improvement Plan.

## **6 Financial Implications**

Any significant budgetary implications, brought about by the improvements proposed in the Improvement Plan, have already been considered, either as part of the Fire Authority's budget planning process or within each Department's business planning process.

## **7 Legal Comment**

The AGS is a legal requirement under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom and must be included in the Fire Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

## **9 Appendix**

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2024/25.

## **10 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2024/25

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date
<b>People/ On-Call Sustainability</b>	1	Implement the actions identified in the On-Call Sustainability Review through the delivery of the On Call Sustainability Project.	Marc Millward	New Ways of Working Board (NWOW)	On-call sustainability project has been closed with any outstanding recommendations moving into BAU for Area Command. These have been incorporated into the 2025/26 Departmental Plan.  Post Implementation Review for the Alerters Project has been completed. 4 recommendations were made regarding purchasing addition devices, upgrading existing devices and responsibility for maintenance/servicing. These were all agreed by Service Programme Board.
<b>People</b>	2	Implementation of fitness support facilities via the refurbishment programme. Feasibility Study (station fitness provision) to be reviewed following the introduction of stand-alone facility at Baschurch.	Marc Millward Chris White	New Ways of Working Board (NWOW)	All stations have a full suite of fitness equipment.  Introduction of the remaining 'fitness pods' at some of the on-call stations has been delayed due to staff movements within the Resources/Estates department. Work is due to restart in early 2026.
<b>Process</b>	3	Through the Service Programme Board continue to replace	Chris Haigh	Systems Governance Group (SGG)	Automation of processes is one of the Service Goals for the 2025-2028 planning period, aligned to the expectations of our CRMP. The development of the

		paper-based processes with streamlined electronic workflows.			<p>Digital and Data strategy in April 2025 will support this as a priority for all areas of the Service.</p> <p>The achievement of this improvement item will not only require the review of processes, but will also require investment in both skills development and systems to support more efficient and effective ways of working.</p> <p>As part of the structure review it is proposed that there is investment in the level of skills across the Service and in our ICT team, as well as investment in the systems to support it</p>
<b>Systems/ Infrastructure</b>	4	<p>Continual improvement of network security to a standard for adopting the implementation of the Emergency Service Network that guards against cyber threats and minimises disruption to daily operations.</p> <p>Enhance the workflows in Fire Service Rota (FSR) to incorporate as many pay elements as possible so that manual processes are removed.</p>	Chris Haigh	Service Management Team (SMT)	<p>A managed detection and response (MDR) approach to cyber incidents has been fully evaluated over the past few months following the proof of concept of a Security Operations Centre (SOC) to enhance protection against cyber risks and threats.</p> <p>We have now implemented an MDR solution that gives us access to a 24/27 Security Operations Centre (SOC).</p>

<b>Building Facilities</b>	5	Introduce improvements to station access and security at all SFRS sites.	Andrew Stirling  Chris Haigh	Systems Governance Board	Quotations have been obtained to complete window and door security works across the estate. Specifications are being reviewed following further break-ins, and the works will be co-ordinated with the access control project. There is continuing engagement with contractors with a view to complete project within the remainder of the financial year.
		Review training facilities across the estate and consider feasibility study outcomes.	Mark Price	Service Programme Board	A review of the previous training needs assessments is being conducted to establish future training needs in line with the new CRMP. Once this is completed, a full review of previous plans and future scoping will be undertaken through a Project Initiation Document.
<b>Appliances/ Equipment</b>	6	Deliver the fleet and equipment strategy to include the introduction of new pumping and specialist appliances.	Scott Hurford / Martin Barclay	Operations Board	<p>A comprehensive resource review has been completed, covering wildfire, flood, and lithium battery response, with recommendations to improve appliance use.</p> <p>Proposals include reducing specialist aerial appliances from two to one, with an accompanying specialist resource ensuring capability for safe, two-story height-access operations. Additionally, a reduction in pumping units from three to two and increased investment in water carriers are recommended. Formal consultation with staff and the public has concluded, with final recommendations approved by SMT ensuring alignment with strategic aims.</p>
<b>Collaboration</b>	7	Oversee the replacement of the new Command and Control (C&C) system.	Sam Burton Mark Price	C&C Project Board	Revised Go Live Date: The estimated go live has moved from March 2026 (previously reported) to August 2026.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This delay is due to the required DNSP replacement.</li> <li>• Motorola paused all new connections while reviewing their infrastructure and resilience, which caused the slippage. The pause has now been lifted, and Shropshire's transition is scheduled for 25/09/25.</li> <li>• This milestone is critical as the DNSP replacement is a key piece of project infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>Resourcing: ICT resourcing for the project remains limited. The new Digital and Data Manager is reviewing availability and working with the C&amp;C project team to support delivery.</p> <p>MDT Project: This has now commenced and will go live in line with the C&amp;C project. The two projects will be closely aligned for delivery.</p> <p>Contracts: Motorola is reviewing contract change notices to update integrations with FaRDaP (IRS data) and Modas MDTs. Draft wording is in place, but the final scope is still being assessed.</p> <p>Collaboration: Work continues with partner services to review future ways of working, with draft Memorandums of Understanding being developed.</p>
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<b>Operations</b>	8	Undertake an operations resource and capability review to support the next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which will come into effect in 2025.	Scott Hurford	SMT	<p>The CRMP was launched and published on April 1<sup>st</sup> and has supported strategic planning for 2025- 2028 with the below priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Innovative use of technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meeting the challenges of a changing community</li> </ul> </li> <li>•Climate environmental impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adapting to the effects of climate change</li> <li>○ Meeting the challenges of climate change and expansion in Shrewsbury</li> </ul> </li> <li>•Operational Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Competence</li> <li>○ Meeting the challenges of New Energy Systems</li> <li>○ Fire Service Attendance Standard</li> <li>○ Strategic Aerial Appliance Capability</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The four proposed CRMP key priorities for initiation in the first year are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the CRMP Wildfire Review and resulting recommendations.</li> <li>2. Implement the CRMP Rescue from Height &amp; Confined Space Review and resulting recommendations</li> <li>3. Strategically deploy assets during flooding incidents, in particular Shrewsbury town centre.</li> <li>4. Develop and enhance the Service Attendance standard to effectively capture and report multiple performance elements</li> </ol>
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