

Annual Review 2013/14

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact John Redmond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Fire Officer on 01743 260280.

1 Purpose of Report

This report presents the draft Annual Review (also known as the Annual Statement of Assurance) for 2013/14 for consideration and approval by the Fire Authority, prior to publication.

2 Recommendation

The Fire Authority is asked to consider and approve the draft Annual Review 2013/14.

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 the 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 2013/14

Attached at the appendix is the draft Annual Review for 2013/14. 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 2013/14

9 Background Reports

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

26 February 2014, Paper 16, Annual Service Plan 2014/15



Annual Review 2013/14

Foreword from the Chief Fire Officer, John Redmond, and the Chair of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, Stuart West

Our Annual Review, which is also known as the 'Annual Statement of Assurance', describes our progress in making Shropshire safer during the last year.

We are pleased to report on a busy and productive year and we continue to perform well against our objectives. This is in large part down to the efforts of our committed staff, who are always keen to make a difference in their local communities and are open to looking at new ways of doing things.

The Service continues to operate in a challenging financial environment and we want to make sure that we can deliver the best Service we can with the resources available. To do that we try to move quickly enough to adapt to changes beyond our control as they occur, something that, as an emergency Service, we have a lot of experience at doing.

Each year the Authority sets the Service Plan. This Annual Review allows us to share our progress against that Plan and, looking back over the last year, we have achieved a lot. Our Risk Planning and Service Transformation projects are taking shape and our teams have been involved in many community activities. One notable achievement comes from our work with the Red Cross to introduce a Fire and Emergency Support Service vehicle and this in itself has provided relief to members of the public at a traumatic time. Details of both the results of our work over the year and where further information can be found are given in this report.

As we look forward to the coming year we know that there is more to do. We will be consulting with the public and our staff on changes to our Service to meet the financial constraints and seeing our plans implemented. We need to make sure that our people have the skills to accept and use the new technology we are investing in to improve our Service. All of this is done with the continued aim of protection from and prevention of harm.



**Chief Fire Officer
John Redmond**



**Chair Councillor
Stuart West**



The communities we serve

We serve a community of approximately 473,900 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 / 1,346 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.

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 2013/14.

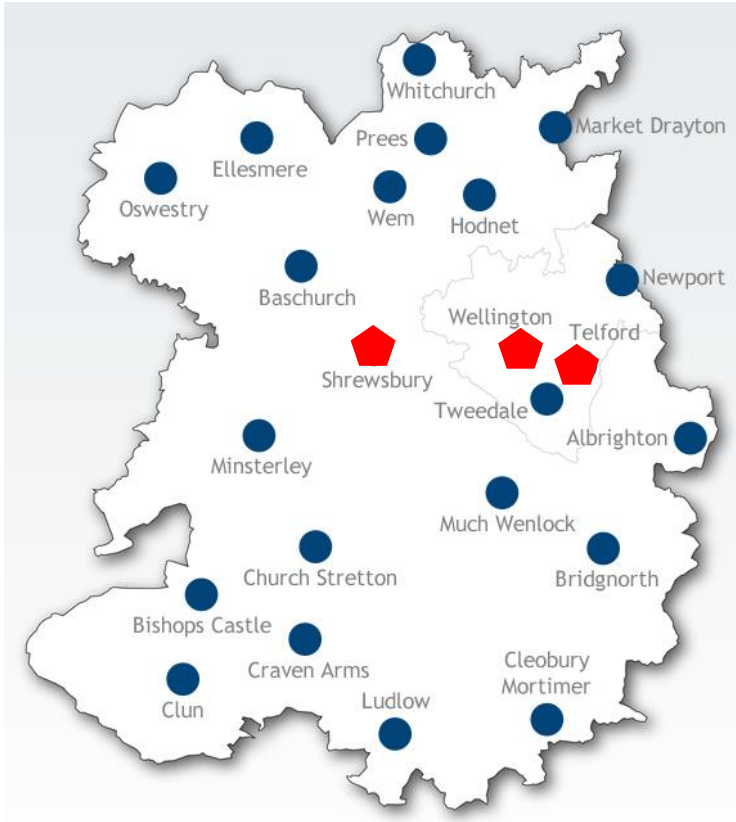
Overview of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

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 comprise 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



 Wholetime stations

 Retained stations

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.

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

The risks faced by the Service largely arise from providing a fire and rescue service in a predominately rural, sparsely-populated community however we also face the potential impact of adverse weather and international terrorism. A thorough analysis of our risks is provided in our Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015 – 2020, which is available on our website.

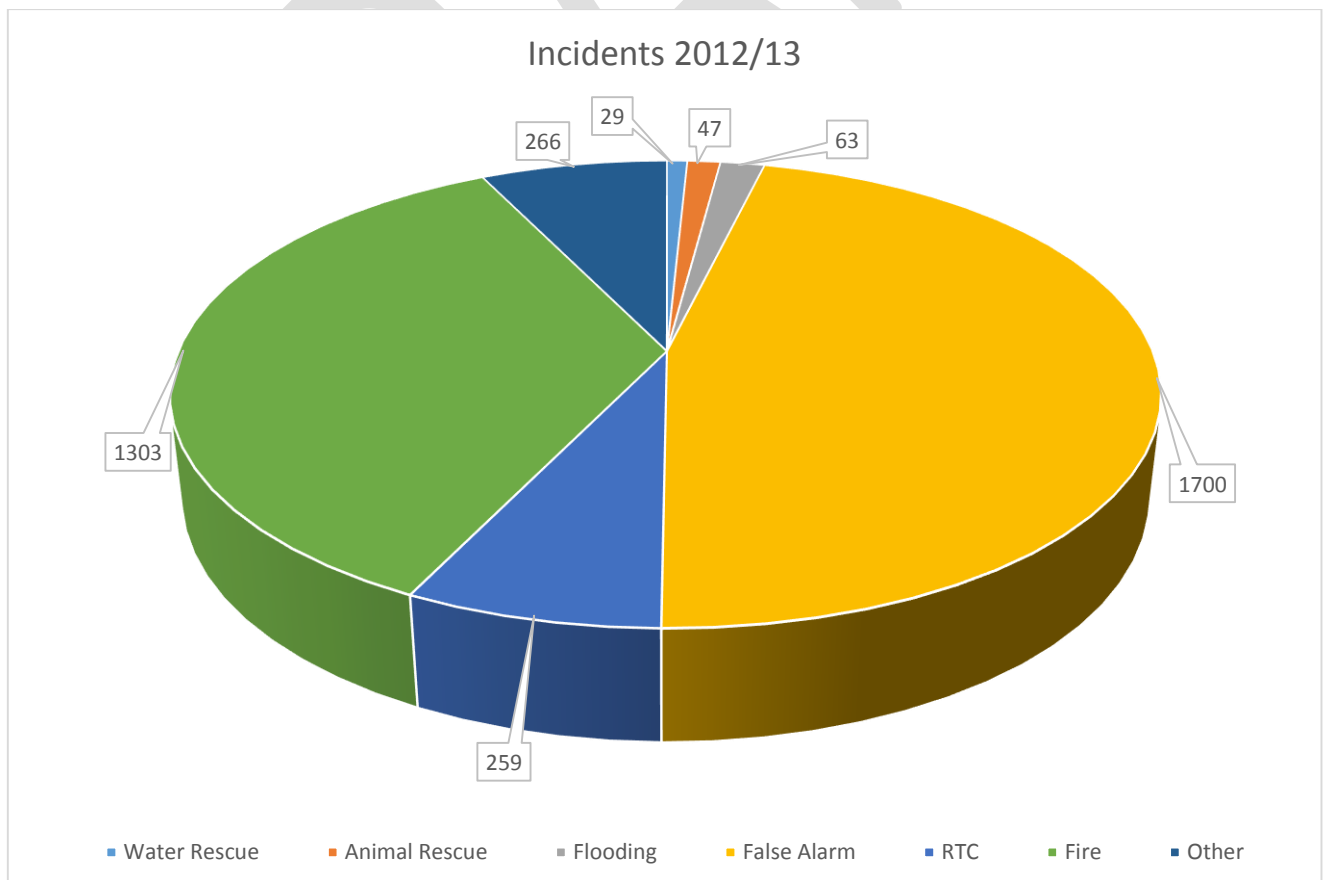
Our priority will always be the preservation of life, and the protection of property from fire and other emergencies. We also respond where needed to mitigate the impact of fire and other emergencies on the natural environment.

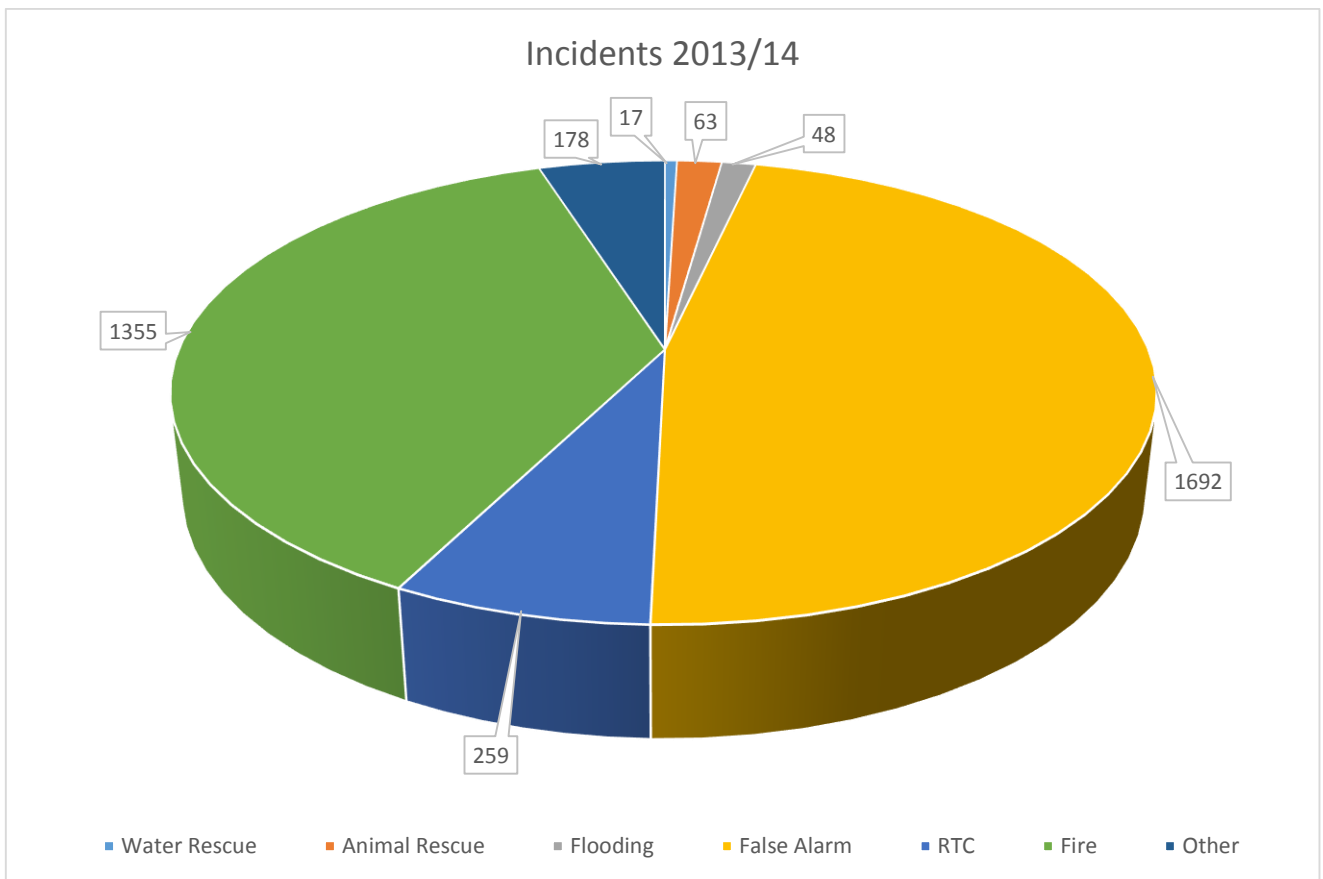
The communities within Shropshire present many challenges and risks. For example, we have an increasingly older population, which poses particular issues for the Fire Service, because older people are more vulnerable to fire. The County appears affluent but does have areas of social deprivation in both the rural areas and in 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 2013/14 the Service attended 3,612 incidents, compared to 3,667 during 2012/13, a breakdown of which is shown below:





The Service experienced 1 fire death in 2013/14. This compares with 3 in 2012/13.

At a strategic level, the alignment of resources to risk is set out within the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The financial requirements necessary to deliver the IRMP are set out within the Medium Term Corporate Plan.

We continue with our Service Transformation Programme, ensuring that we are making the best use of the technology and equipment available to us to deliver the Fire Authority's vision and IRMP. Reductions in budgetary expenditure to meet ongoing financial pressures are delivered through the Fire Authority's Public Value Programme.

Business continuity is critical to us and all reasonably foreseeable and actual risks are the subject of regular review. We have back-up arrangements in place, which we can use, if needed. Our identified risks are recorded and monitored through the Corporate Risk Register.

Integrated Risk Management and Strategic Planning

The Fire Authority's IRMP / 2020 Strategic Planning Process has continued to run throughout the last year. Having assessed and worked to mitigate all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our communities in 2012/13, we then worked hard in 2013/14, through structured discussions with staff, to look at changes to our Service to strike a balance between what we need to deliver and the reducing finances available.

We then agreed a number of options with a potentially high impact that should go forward to full impact assessment, led by the Fire Authority and a number of lower-impact options to be led internally. These processes have been comprehensive and have extended beyond the end of the period covered by this Annual Review. The decisions from these assessments are expected to be known in October 2014. Details of the Plan for the period 2015-2020 are available on our website.

Our Aims, Measures and Performance

To fulfil our vision and purpose the Authority has four key aims and each aim has ways in which we measure our success. Progress is monitored internally every month and reported quarterly to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee:

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

Measure 1 The first fire engine will arrive at an emergency incident with at least 4 firefighters within 15 minutes on 85% of occasions

Measure 2 The first fire engine will arrive with a minimum competent crew on 100% of occasions

Aim 2. To reduce the number of fires in our community

Measure 3 Accidental fires will be maintained to not more than 586 fires during

Measure 4 Fire crimes will be maintained to not more than 1058 fires during 2012/13

Aim 3. To reduce the number of fire related deaths and serious injuries

Measure 5 Fire related deaths and serious injuries in the community will be maintained to not more than 35 during 2012/13

Measure 6 Injuries sustained to staff through firefighting will be maintained to not more than 35 injuries during 2012/13

Aim 4. To deliver an effective fire and rescue service at a cost that is acceptable to our community

The measures relating to Value for Money to the community were withdrawn within the year for review and we will be reporting in a different way next year.

In 2013/14 we achieved 4 out of the 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

The Service is only one of several local organisations responsible for community safety within Shropshire and we are involved in the delivery a variety of initiatives involving these partners. Over the last year we have worked with many groups including the British Red Cross, local mental health teams, housing providers, carers' groups and the Women's Institute.



March
The Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff visited our Headquarters to see the equipment and facilities we use. They had the opportunity to experience the Aerial Ladder Platform.

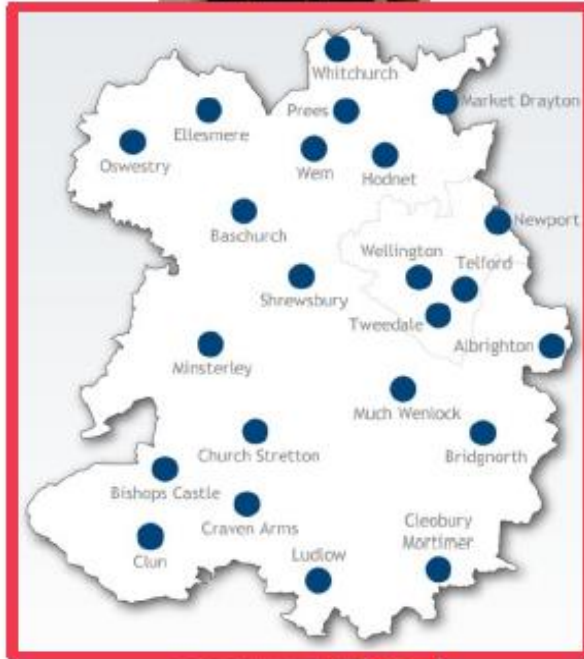
April 2013
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service approached Shropshire WI to establish a partnership which could utilise the excellent links the WI has especially in rural communities.



May
Shropshire firefighters joined churchgoers and a family support group in a united car cleaning effort which raised more than £600 for their three charities.



February
A 'taster' day was held at Craven Arms Fire Station where women were encouraged to consider the opportunity of becoming part-time paid firefighters.



June
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service supported Child Safety Week aiming to raise awareness of the number of accidents that seriously injure or kill children every year and the steps we can take to help prevent them.



January 2014
A campaign was launched to alert vulnerable householders about fire hazards from portable heaters

July
We officially launched our partnership with the British Red Cross to provide a Fire Emergency Support Service. The vehicle and Red Cross Volunteers attend incidents to offer emotional support to victims of emergencies.



December
We held our annual Festival of Carols at St. George's Church in Shrewsbury. The event was very well attended and we were proud to raise £650 for local charities.

August
We attended the Shrewsbury Flower Show as part of our involvement. When we were at the Show the crew were called to deal with a more unusual incident where a calf had become trapped.



November
As well as launching our chimney fire campaign November saw us celebrate the success of 22 new retained duty system firefighters who had joined us in 2013.



October
A women's taster day was held in Oswestry to demonstrate the role of a firefighter and allow interested people to try the tests and equipment.

September
Street pastors responsible for a dramatic fall in drownings in the River Severn in Shrewsbury received lifesaving tuition on river rescues from firefighters.



In July 2013 the Authority began a new venture as it set up a Local Authority Controlled Company to offer fire and risk management services. The Authority hopes to be able to generate income from this company, which can be used to support the future of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In the course of 2013/14 we provided a number of business education seminars to local businesses, educating 392 people from 309 local businesses.

We were involved in educating 4,500 children through the 'Crucial Crew' programme and nearly 8,000 children through other education activities, including the 'Be Cool Be Safe' quiz.

Our staff have also trained 172 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.

Service Transformation Programme

The Service has a scheme of work in progress, which aims to improve and innovate the way that we all work. This focusses on the systems and technology we use on a day-to-day basis and on new technologies available to us. This work has progressed well over the year and, although the programme will continue for a further two years, we are excited by the potential that it offers for the future. We will be measuring the benefits of this work and reporting it to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee.

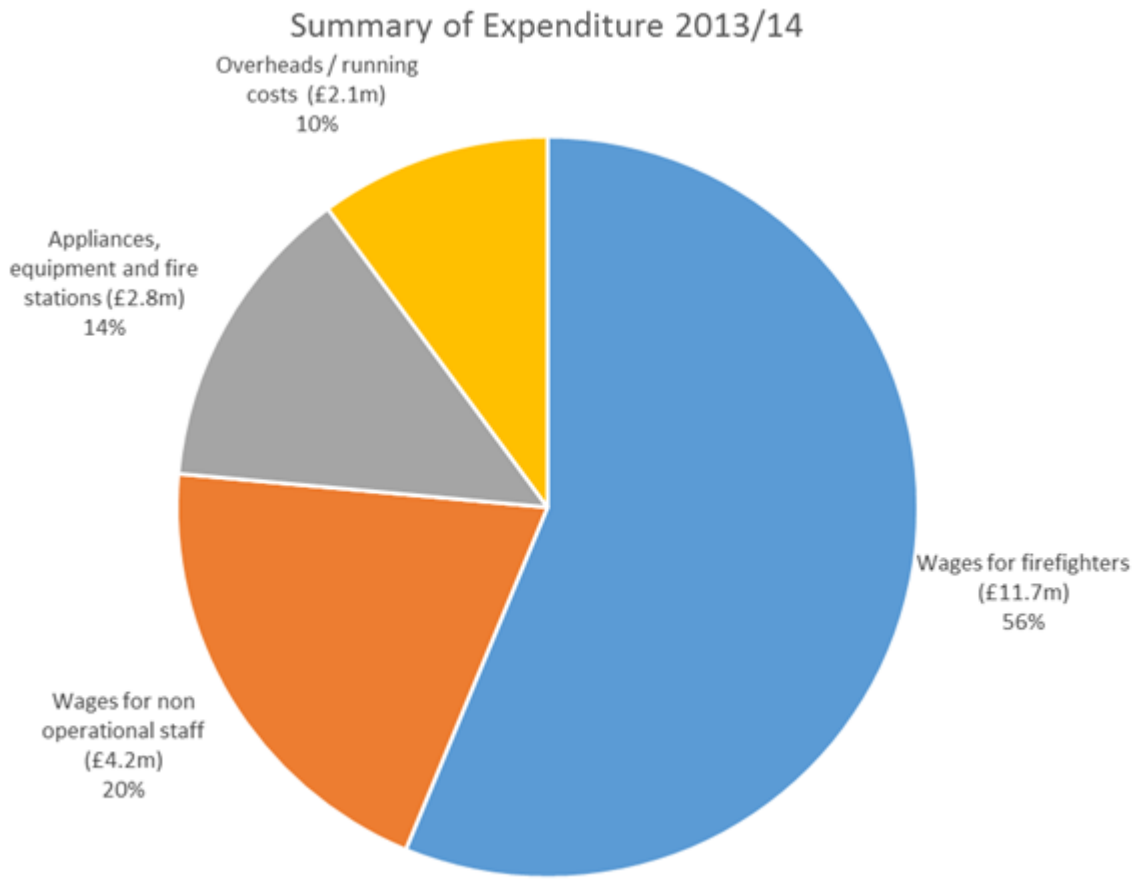
Financial Performance

In February 2013, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority approved a revenue budget of £21.26m for 2013/14. 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 £88.96.

The revenue budget for 2013/14 was funded as follows:

Council tax income	£12.7m
Non domestic rates from authorities	£1.4m
Business rates top up grant	£2.1m
Revenue Support Grant	£5.1m
	£21.3m

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.

Our Future Plans 2014/15 and Beyond

We will continue to deal with balancing funding and service demands as income from council tax receipts is likely to remain capped, frozen or reduced and is, therefore, not likely to keep pace with inflation. The effects of this tension will continue to be managed through our Integrated Risk Management Plan up to 2020.

The impact assessments, which have started in 2013/14, will be completed and next steps decided upon in 2014/15. When those decisions have been made our planning for implementation over the next five years will begin.

Our internal Service Transformation Programme will continue to roll out across the next two years and our staff in particular will see a positive impact on the way they work, especially in command and support roles.

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 relevant 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/shropsfire>



<http://twitter.com/shropsfire>

By phone: 01743 260200

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