

Code of Corporate Governance 2011/12

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager, on 01743 260210.

1 Purpose of Report

This report puts forward a draft Code of Corporate Governance 2011/12 for consideration and formal adoption by the Fire Authority.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Make comment on the draft Code of Corporate Governance 2011/12, attached as an appendix to this report; and
- b) Formal adopt the Code 2011/12.

3 Background

In April 2005 the Fire Authority first adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, based on guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE). CIPFA and SOLACE subsequently reviewed their guidance and published a document entitled “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Framework”, which introduced some significant changes.

In 2009, when reviewing the Fire Authority’s Code of Corporate Governance 2009/10, your officers rewrote the Code to take into account the format set out in the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework document.

4 Annual Review

In accordance with best practice and the Code itself officers review the Fire Authority’s Code of Corporate Governance annually to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date.

The Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee considered the draft Code 2011/12 at its meeting on 8 September and any changes agreed by Members at that meeting have been incorporated.

The draft, showing the changes proposed, is attached as an appendix to this report. Deletions are shown struck through and additions in bold italics.

5 Internal Audit Review

Internal Audit has completed its independent annual audit of the Fire Authority's draft Code of Corporate Governance 2011/12 and the findings were taken to the 8 September meeting of the Audit and Performance Management Committee. In summary Internal Audit has given the following assurance opinion:

"Good

There is a sound system of control in place which is designed to address relevant risks, with controls being consistently applied."

For Members' information there are four levels of assurance: Good, Reasonable, Limited and Unsatisfactory.

Two recommendations have emanated from the audit;

- "Before the Code is presented to Members for approval, references to previous strategic aims on the web site should be updated."
Best practice
- "The practice of ensuring that all members sign a Declaration of Interests form at least once a year should be reinstated."
Requires attention

For Members' information there are four categories of recommendation: Fundamental, Significant, Requires Attention and Best Practice.

The Web Services Officer has been asked to address the first recommendation and the second recommendation has been dealt with in that Register of Interests forms have already been sent to all Members for completion.

6 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

Although the Fire Authority is not legally required to have in place a Code of Corporate Governance, it is considered best practice to do so.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

The Code is a set of statements of fact, set out in response to the CIPFA/SOLACE framework and as such it does not have a differential impact upon specific groups. An initial Equality Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendix

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Draft Code of Corporate Governance 2011/12

10 Background Papers

CIPFA /SOLACE Guidance Note – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government - Framework