

Medium Term Financial Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201.

1 Purpose of Report

To propose to Members of the Committee a structure for the latest development of the Fire Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Agree the proposed structure for the 2009/10 update of the Fire Authority's MTFP; and
- b) Agree to the inclusion within the MTFP of the outcomes of an analysis of the Audit Commission's recently published national report into 'improving fire service efficiency.'

3 Background

In 2006 the Fire Authority published its first MTFP, which covered a three-year period and confirmed the Fire Authority's continued commitment to providing a Fire and Rescue Service, which represents the best possible value for money for Shropshire's residents. The MTFP was thus established and embedded as an important part of the strategic planning process. It ensures that financial planning of the Authority links closely to its Service planning and thus to the delivery of the Fire Authority's five strategic aims.

In 2007 the MTFP (in conjunction with the associated Performance Plan) was updated to take account of local, regional and national developments. The Plan described what appeared to be a continuing and favourable (if gradual) shift of central government controlled resources towards more rural fire and rescue services, such as Shropshire. The Plan also, however, highlighted that the major problem facing the Fire Authority at that time was due to widespread uncertainty over future funding, brought about by Government's planned Comprehensive Spending Review due to be completed during 2007 (CSR07).

The results of CSR07 were made known during December 2007 when Government provided the Fire Authority with information on its grant settlement for the next three years. This was the first occasion on which such information had been made available for a period of longer than one year, and was extremely useful in enabling the Fire Authority to enhance even further its MTFP for 2008/09 to 2011/12.

4 MTFP 2009/10 to 2011/12

The Fire Authority's financial planning process is now well established. It is recommended that this year's update of the MTFP does not, therefore, involve major changes to the structure and layout of previous plans. As such, it is proposed that the Plan will once again consist of the following sections:

Foreword by Chair and Chief Fire Officer

Section 1	Introduction and Service Priorities
Section 2	National Context
Section 3	Overview of Revenue 2009 -12
Section 4	Value for Money Strategy
Section 5	Overview of Capital Investment Plan 2009 -12
Section 6	Treasury Strategy 2009 -12
Section 7	Budget Risk Assessment
Appendix A	Prudential Indicators
Appendix B	Glossary of Terms

Equality Impact Assessment of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority's
Medium Term financial Plan 2009/10 – 2011/12

5 Audit Commission National Research

At a meeting of the Fire Authority on 11 February 2009, Members were brought up-to-date with the findings of a national research project undertaken by the Audit Commission, which had culminated in their identification that *“the service overall could save up to £200 million”* and also in their publication of a document entitled ‘Rising to the challenge: improving fire service efficiency.’ Members noted the major findings of the report and tasked officers with carrying out an in-depth analysis of these findings as they apply to Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority and reporting back to the April 2009 meeting of the Fire Authority.

It is anticipated that the findings from this further analysis will be very beneficial in assisting the Fire Authority with its ongoing drive to force out efficiencies and thus provide improved value for money for the taxpayers of Shropshire. It is, therefore, recommended that the findings of the analysis, when approved by Members, should be included within the 2009/10 update of the MTFP, which will then be prepared for publication during June/July 2009 in the normal manner.

6 Financial Implications

The financial implications associated with this report will be fully detailed within the completed MTFP.

7 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service’s Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. Members are asked to note, however, that a full equality impact assessment will be conducted upon the MTFP, when completed

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority:

14 June 2006, Report 8 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2006/07 to 2008/09

13 June 2007, Report 14 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10

11 June 2008, Report 10 – Medium Term Financial Plan 2008/09 to 2011/12

11 February 2009, Report 11 – Audit Commission National Report – Rising to the Challenge: Improving Fire Service Efficiency

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	*
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	*
Comprehensive Performance Assessment	*	Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings	*	Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	*
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*