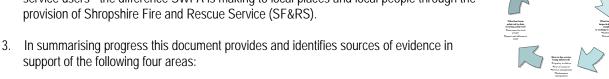
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority 18 October 2006 Document tabled at Agenda Item 18 Fire and Rescue Service Performance Framework 2006/07 - Overview

Introduction

- 1. Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority (SWFA) have prepared this self-assessment as the starting point for the *direction of travel* and use of resources assessments, forming an integral element of the Audit Commission's Performance Framework. This document is intended to be used as a quide to the fieldwork aspect of the assessment to ensure it is proportionate and focused.
- 2. The self-assessment avoids lengthy description or unsupported statements and focuses on key information. It has been structured in accordance with Commission's guidance and utilises the Local Services Inspectorate Forum model shown right. As such, the self-assessment is analytical, evaluating and demonstrates what has changed in terms of outcomes for the community and service users - the difference SWFA is making to local places and local people through the provision of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS).



What had SWFA sought/is seeking to achieve?

SWFA has sought to build and capitalise upon its strengths and take all necessary measures to address areas for improvement and eliminate weaknesses. The Authority's plans and ambitions, that address community needs, are set out within the annual Performance Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan.

How is SF&RS being delivered along with value for money?

The Service is being delivered efficiently and effectively to the community and represents value for money as illustrated through the annual efficiency statement. The Authority is performing within the upper quartile of over 70 percent of key performance indicators and customer satisfaction is excellent.

What has been achieved to date/is being achieved?

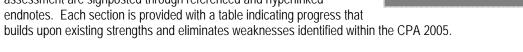
The Authority is able to demonstrate unequivocal improvements in the management and delivery of what has all ready been identified through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process as being a 'Good' performing organisation.

Evidenced within this document are a myriad of initiatives that have been introduced that have made significant contributions to the community's safety.

What plans does SWFA have for the future?

The Authority has aspirations to secure high-performing scores during the Performance Framework assessment process. In rising to the challenge, the Authority has set out within its Performance Plan the organisation's shared priorities and direction of travel statements, statements that illustrate a journey of continuous improvement over an eight year period. A journey dedicated to putting Shropshire's safety first.

4. Supporting evidence in respect of statements supplied within this selfassessment are signposted through referenced and hyperlinked endnotes. Each section is provided with a table indicating progress that builds upon existing strengths and eliminates weaknesses identified within the CPA 2005.



5. Comments and gueries regarding this document should be directed to the Brigade's Programme Office (01743 260208).



What had SWFA sought/is seeking to achieve?

- 6. The ambitions and priorities of SWFA are agreed and set out within the annual performance plans.¹ They are then implemented through a range of business and strategic plans, not least of which is the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).² The overarching aim of the Authority remains the reduction of death and injury resulting from fire.
- 7. SWFA's ability to deliver its ambitions and priorities was assessed during the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment³ (CPA). The summary findings, in respective of the Authority's strengths and weaknesses are set out in table 1 below. A summary update is provided within the table indicating progress in developing and building upon strengths and eliminating weaknesses. Progress is also reported⁴ on a regular basis to SWFA.

What has the inspected body sought/ is seeking to achieve?

• Ambitions
• Priorities

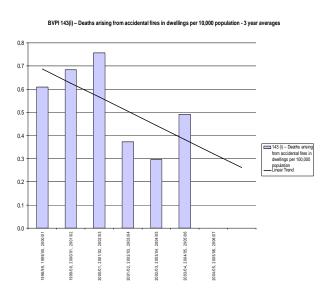
CPA 2005 Strengths	Update
Communication of the vision extremely successful	
Good internal relationships, consultation and	These areas have been further enhanced through improvements to both
communication (two way)	the Brigade ⁵ and WMRMB ⁶ websites.
Language is clear an intelligible	
Some effective mechanisms to engage community	The IRMP process ⁷ has now been fully embedded and improved with
– people panel	experience. A new corporate objective relating to RTC reduction ⁸ has
Sound strategies to deliver clear improvements in	been developed as a result of IRMP consultation feedback during
prevention and response	2005/06.9 10
Addressing the wider social agenda	2003/00.
Working constructively with other agencies to	SWFA have formed strong alliances and partnerships ¹¹ with other
deliver its vision	agencies to deliver community improvements. 12 13 14 15 Partnerships are
	now conducted through a formal process. ¹⁶
Responds well to new responsibilities e.g. key	SWFA was instrumental in the development and implementation of
player in RMB	WMRMB. ¹⁷

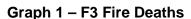
CPA 2005 Weaknesses	Update
Communication with hard to reach groups in the community	Monitored now through the Community Safety Team Business Plans ¹⁸ and related documents. The CS Business Plans ¹⁹ include specific proposals, including working with partners, ²⁰ to enhance our services to the hard to reach groups. ²¹
Review and evaluation of partnership arrangements	A thorough review of partnerships has taken place, resulting in the production of a formal framework. ²² All partnerships are risk assessed ²³ and the Partnership Review group meets regularly to review and update the register. ²⁴
CFS action plan yet to be adopted – being developed	The Safer Communities Core Strategy ²⁵ was developed and consulted upon internally. The strategy now sits within the Strategic Planning process and is monitored through the Community Safety Team Business Plan ²⁶ and related documents.
Retained appetite for CFS still to be fully exploited but clear plans in place	A Best Value review of the Retained service is now in the Implementation stage. ²⁷ Retained fire-fighters have now carried out almost 20,000 home fire safety visits and fitted over 6,000 smoke detectors. ²⁸ The Retained Service was identified as a Shared Priority ²⁹ , incorporated into each directorate Business Plan and monitored accordingly. ³⁰

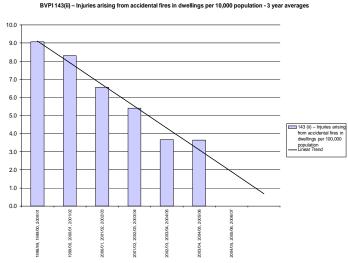
Table 1 Summary of Improvement against CPA findings

Are services improving in areas SWFA has identified as priorities and areas the public say are important to their communities?

- 8. Priorities are identified through a suite of consultation processes, including the IRMP process,³¹ the budget setting,³² after the incident, community liaison panel³³ and complaints³⁴ processes. These consultation mechanisms enable the Authority to set priorities to the local communities. IRM Plans are prepared and implemented following extensive consultation, with performance against outcomes reported to SWFA.³⁵ Scrutiny panels now fully embedded and used to inform IRMP³⁶ and budget setting processes.³⁷
- 9. The overarching aim of the Authority remains the reduction of death and injury resulting from fire. The Service has delivered a downward trend in fire deaths and injuries as illustrated in graphs 1 and 2 below.
- 10. Local targets³⁸ are formulated by the Authority's Strategy and Resources Committee³⁹ to align priorities to community needs.
- 11. Continuous improvement is evidenced through SWFA's performance against the seven key performance indicators⁴⁰ identified by the Audit Commission and national BVPIs.⁴¹ SWFA performs within the upper quartile in over 70 percent of these indicators.⁴²
- 12. SWFA has been able to amend its priorities in response to the National Framework⁴³ and to the needs of the public. The RTC reduction strategy is a good example of this flexibility.⁴⁴
- 13. Performance against local targets including progress against IRMP annual action plans⁴⁵ are reported to SWFA⁴⁶ and scrutinised through the Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee⁴⁷ resulting in the production of action plans where applicable.⁴⁸
- 14. Measurable impact from prevention activities and community safety projects⁴⁹ has been achieved and are evidenced though recorded outcomes⁵⁰ as indicated within 2005/06 outturn performance.⁵¹ All performance is reported to SWFA⁵² and scrutinised through the Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee.⁵³ Members played a major part in leading the Best Value Review⁵⁴ of the Retained Service which led to an investment of over £800,000 in this most important area of the Service. Members continue to lead the implementation phase of the review and impact reports are provided quarterly to the full Fire Authority.⁵⁵
- 15. A track record of improvement, including in user satisfaction results can be evidenced through the Quality of Service Survey After the incident 2005/06.^{56 57} In addition, the Authority receives many letters of compliments⁵⁸ and continuously seeks the community's views regarding the manner in which the Service is delivered.^{59 60}
- 16. SWFA are actively engaged⁶¹ in the delivery of outcomes based on the requirements of the National Framework⁶² for Fire and Rescue Services. The Authority has been instrumental in the development and implementation of West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB).⁶³ Reports on progress are submitted on a guarterly basis to WMRMB.⁶⁴







Graph 2 - F4 Injuries from Fire

How is SF&RS being delivered along with value for money?

- 17. The Service that SWFA provides to the community, and its capacity to deliver within the available resources, are guided through the Authority's agreed ambitions and priorities and set out within the annual performance plan.⁶⁵
- 18. As identified by the Audit Commission, SWFA was cited as an exemplifier that provides strong overall performance despite overall having a comparatively low budget and cost per head of population.⁶⁶ (p28)
- 19. The summary CPA⁶⁷ findings, in respective of the Authority's ability to deliver value for money are out in table 2 below. Progress is also reported⁶⁸ on a regular basis to SWFA.



CPA 2005 Strengths	Update
Effective corporate governance arrangements	These arrangements continue to develop with regular reporting to Fire Authority Members ^{69 70 71 72}
Relaxed management style that is open and inclusive and supports delivery of strategic objectives	This approach continues to grow and is fully demonstrated by examples of wide spread involvement on the website. ^{73 74}
Good framework of corporate accountability and devolved decision making	We have built on CPA achievements and developed business units 75,76
Proactive support services, which seek to develop innovative ways of working	All support services involved in Policy decisions and ISO 9001 achieved by Technical Services. This approach continues to grow and is fully embedded. ⁷⁷
Member engagement in budget setting and future financial strategy decisions	Members continue to receive training and are fully involved in financial aspects. This approach continues to grow and is fully embedded. ⁷⁸
Efficiency savings factored into medium term financial planning	Efficiency savings are now factored into medium and long term financial planning. ⁷⁹
Outsourcing of internal services	This approach continues and is fully embedded, with updates taken to the Fire Authority.80
Partnership working with CFS focus	This approach continues to grow and is fully embedded. ^{81 82}
Non-uniformed staff appointed for specific functions e.g. personnel	Further posts converted to non-uniformed This approach continues to grow and is fully embedded. ⁸³
NVQ structures in place for trainees. Assessors and verifiers in place on all wholetime stations and retained	Supervisory management NVQ attained by retained ⁸⁴ wholetime NVQ further developed This approach continues to grow and is fully embedded within departmental business plans. ⁸⁵
Diversity a priority and practices in place	This approach continues to grow with wider involvement with partner agencies. ^{86 87 88 89}
Policy Group monitor projects through project sponsors	The Programme Office co-ordinate the management of projects on behalf of Policy Group. ⁹⁰
Aims and objectives cascade to station level through area plans, which are monitored	This approach continues to grow and is fully embedded. Station plans adopted and monitored for all stations. ⁹¹
Monitoring of PIs is good	Detailed analysis of PIs carried out by PG & A&PMC.92
Resources linked to corporate priorities	Departmental Business Plans in place strengthening the link of resources to priorities. ⁹³

CPA 2005 Weaknesses	Update
Formalised monitoring of code of governance issues	Formalised monitoring is now fully embedded and managed through the Member Handbook, 94 Statement of Internal Control, 95 Code of Corporate Governance, 96 Prudential Guidelines, 97 Code of Conduct 98 and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy. 99
Some key strategies are in the process of being written or in draft (fraud and corruption policy and IT strategy)	The Fraud and Corruption policy has been produced and embedded. The revised IT strategy has been drawn up, consulted upon and issued. The revised IT strategy has been drawn up, consulted upon and issued.
No strategic approach to income generation	There is an existing policy on income generation which has been reviewed and confirmed as policy. 102 103 104

Reserve levels not based on a recent or systematic risk assessment	The Policy on general reserves and provisions constantly /monitored. ¹⁰⁵ ¹⁰⁶
No medium term financial strategy in place to formalise financial planning	Medium Term Financial Plan developed in accordance with best practice recommendation from the Audit Commission. ¹⁰⁷
HR strategy still to be developed	People Strategy now developed and adopted. 108 109 110
PDAR not consistently applied across the organisation	The PDAR process is now applied across all departments and has been modified to improve suitability for Retained personnel. Progress on implementation is monitored by the HR department and Policy Group.
Shift patterns and working arrangements still to be reviewed	This area formed a key element of the 2006/07 IRMP ¹¹¹ ¹¹² and the 2007/08 consultation exercise. ¹¹³
Risk management still developing	Risk management has now been developed and is embedded. 114 115 116
Monitoring of support service objectives is not formalised	The monitoring of all departmental objectives (including those of support services) is carried out by department heads through detailed departmental plans ¹¹⁷ clearly linked to the Performance Plan. ¹¹⁸

Table 2 Summary of Improvement against CPA findings

Is value for money improving as well as quality of services?

- 20. The quality of service has been maintained throughout as evidenced by public consultation and improved, for example, the Retained Review project. This is being delivered in the context of year on year achievement of annual efficiency targets. Description 122 123 124 125
- 21. SWFA is delivering and planning for value for money through the Medium Term Financial Plan, 126 achieving annual efficiency statements, performance planning and monitoring, IRMP and consideration of notable practice in other services 127 128 129 130 131 132
- 22. As identified by the Audit Commission, SWFA was cited as an exemplifier that provides strong overall performance despite overall having a comparatively low budget and cost per head of population.¹³³ (p28) SWFA achieves and provides good value for money.¹³⁴

How well is the improvement planning being implemented: are key objectives and milestones being achieved?

- 23. Improvement Planning has been fully implemented and demonstrated in the areas below.
- 24. Leadership and strategic direction is brought to the Service through Member engagement afforded through involvement with Authority, project and consultation committees/teams.¹³⁵ ¹³⁶ ¹³⁷
- 25. Implementation of the National Framework¹³⁸ for Fire and Rescue Authorities is embedded within the Authority's Performance Plan¹³⁹ and associated Business Plans.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, the Authority actively engages in the WMRMB¹⁴¹ where the Framework's objectives are managed through the region's Programme Plan 2006-08.¹⁴²
- 26. All performance is reported to SWFA¹⁴³ and scrutinised through the Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee¹⁴⁴ (A&PMC). Reports on progress against regional initiatives are submitted on a quarterly basis to WMRMB.¹⁴⁵ The CFO meets regularly with the Region's Business Change Manager (*previously Jean Cole, now Tina Thomas*).
- 27. Members played a major part in leading the Best Value Review of the Retained Service¹⁴⁶ which led to an investment of over £800,000 in this most important area of the Service. Members continue to lead the implementation phase of the Best Value Review and impact reports are provided quarterly to the full Fire Authority.¹⁴⁷

Does SWFA have the capacity to deliver its plans?

- 28. The Authority, through a systematic and prioritised planning process, has focused capacity to deliver its plans, having due regard to:
- Financial capacity 148 149 150 151 152
- Organisational development 153 154 155 156 157
- ➤ Workforce planning 158 159 160

- ➤ Member development ¹⁶¹ ¹⁶²
- Diversity and equality 163 164 165

The key to this is linking service objectives and resources through departmental Business plans.



Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service



29. As identified and cited by the Audit Commission, SWFA employing one of the smallest workforces nationally, are making the most of their enthusiastic and motivated staff. Furthermore, the Audit Commission noted that the Authority is able to recognise its capacity weaknesses and build on its strengths, prioritising and bringing extra capacity through partnership working. 166 (p34)

Is SWFA working with partners and Regional Management Board to improve its capacity to deliver its own priorities and outcomes and contribute to overall improvements across the area?



- 30. The quality of partnership working including governance arrangements¹⁶⁷ and cost effectiveness within WMRMB is recognised as best practice. 168 All fire and rescue authorities forming WMRMB received a 'Good' CPA score, the best scoring region in England. All authorities within the region have witnessed improved capacity through collaborative working. 169
- 31. The quality and impact of contributions to WMRMB by SWFA is exemplary. The region's governance, structure and programme arrangements have been developed by S&WFA staff¹⁷⁰ with the region's first Chair being the previous Chair of SWFA (Cllr Keith Austin). SWFA's current Chair is a member of the region's Programme Board¹⁷¹ and the vice-

Chair acts as Senior Responsible Owner to the region's HRM project board.¹⁷²

- 32. SWFA officers are involved in all seven WMRMB thematic project boards¹⁷³ and act as lead to the region's Performance Project. 174
- 33. The degree of influence on WMRMB is substantial as the region's Programme Manager¹⁷⁵ is a SWFA sponsored officer.
- 34. In addition to collaboration achieved through WMRMB, SWFA is involved in LAA and works across all sectors¹⁷⁶ ¹⁷⁷ to deliver outcomes for children and young people¹⁷⁸ and the most vulnerable, 179 disadvantaged or potentially excluded groups. 180



Are there any significant weaknesses in arrangements for securing continuous improvement or failures in corporate governance that would prevent improvement levels being sustained?

- 35. SWFA has developed and instilled a culture of continuous improvement throughout both the Authority and Service. A new committee¹⁸¹ for Performance Management has been introduced following the 2005 CPA.¹⁸² As a consequence, initiatives and strategies 183 are monitored and reviewed 184 on a regular basis to secure improvements to reduce the risk of failure, this is particularly so within the following areas:
 - Performance management¹⁸⁵
 - Business risk management 186 187 188
 - ➤ Project management¹⁸⁹

- Governance arrangements 190 191 192 193 194 195
- Member engagement¹⁹⁶ ¹⁹⁷ ¹⁹⁸

Does SWFA currently achieve good value for money?

- 36. As identified by the Audit Commission, SWFA was cited as an exemplifier that provides strong overall performance despite overall having a comparatively low budget and cost per head of population. 199 (p28) SWFA achieves and provides good value for money.200
- 37. The Audit Commission state that local circumstances do not dictate how well a fire and rescue authority performs.²⁰¹ (p³⁰⁾ How an individual authority responds to those circumstances is the critical factor in delivering stronger local fire and rescue services. Serving a larger population is no guarantee of better performance and the Commission have cited SWFA as good example of strong overall performance, despite serving the second smallest mainland population.
- 38. Costs to taxpayers do not compare well with others fire authorities²⁰² due to inequalities in the current settlement arrangements, however this has been addressed with changes to the grant formula although the improvement is slower than we would hope due to the operation of flooring mechanisms protecting other authorities. Cost per head of population compares much more favourably particularly when the very rural nature of the County and low population are considered. 203 204 205 206
- 39. Costs are commensurate with service delivery, performance and outcomes achieved and reflect policy decisions set out with the Authority's Performance Plan²⁰⁷ and budget strategies.²⁰⁸ ²⁰⁹ ²¹⁰ ²¹¹ ²¹²
- 40. Efficient and effective use of resources in the implementation of the IRMP and action plan, including using more efficient working practices where appropriate, is key to SWFA plans. 213 214 215

What has been achieved to date/is being achieved?

- 41. The Authority is able to demonstrate unequivocal improvements in the management and delivery of what has all ready been identified through the CPA process²¹⁶ as being a 'Good' performing organisation. Evidenced below are a myriad of initiatives that have been introduced that have made significant contributions to the community's safety.
- 42. Critical to the delivery of performance is the Authority's ability to monitor and manage the delivery of services against the Authority's aims and objectives.²¹⁷ The SWFA Performance Plan (pp13-14) ²¹⁸ sets out the strategic planning and monitoring process.
- 43. The A&PMC receive on a quarterly basis performance monitoring reports.²¹⁹
- 44. Table 3 below summarises what has been achieved in addressing the weaknesses identified through CPA.



made



CPA 2005 Strengths	Update
Good performance in relation to	All of these have been recognised as important measures ²²⁰ of outcome by the Audit
malicious calls, AFAs, deaths and	Commission; and SWFA are identified as performing above the upper threshold in all
injuries	cases. Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by the A&PMC. ²²¹
	The number of XL Cabs has been increased from 5 to 11 in 2006/07 through the
Implementation of XL cab	implementation phase of the Retained Best Value Review. ²²² Longer term financial
p.ss.nanon of 712 oab	planning ²²³ takes account of the Fire Authority's decision to introduce XL Cabs on all Retained Stations. ²²⁴
	CFS being carried out against the matrix i.e. home fire safety visits, concentrating on
Community safety priority matrix	those homes identified as well above average risk of fire, particularly in hard to reach
	groups. 225 The Authority has made further financial provision to support this essential
	activity. 226
1 1 (50 1)	Through the IRMP process the use of wholetime fire-fighters to undertake CFS work
Level of FS skills in operational	has increased, together the availability of additional funding ²²⁷ for retained personnel to
managers and utilisation of wholetime	undertake home fire safety risk surveys. ²²⁸ All wholetime personnel are being trained
fire-fighters to support CFS work	to undertake fire safety audits to support the introduction of the RRO. ²²⁹ ²³⁰
Long term decreasing trend in AFAs	Performance continues to improve. Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by
	the A&PMC. ²³¹ The Authority has agreed to the introduction of the CFOA RMFA
	policy. ²³²
Continuous reduction in recorded injuries	Top quartile performance maintained. Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by
in accidental dwelling fires	the A&PMC. ²³³
Work with ORS and citizen panels to	Scrutiny panels now fully embedded and used to inform IRMP ²³⁴ and budget setting
better understand needs of service users	processes. ²³⁵

CPA 2005 Weaknesses	Update
Local Standards of fire cover not developed	Standards established for life risk fires ²³⁶ and road traffic collisions through 2005/06 IRMP process ²³⁷ including through extensive consultation. These standards are set within the SWFA Performance Plan 2006-08. ²³⁸ Performance measured and reported against old and new standards. Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by the A&PMC. ²³⁹ The Authority has made available through the Brigade's website a response standards tool for public awareness. ²⁴⁰
Appetite for Home Risk Assessment work to be undertaken by retained, but currently at pilot stage in a limited area	A Best Value review of the Retained service is now in the implementation stage. ²⁴¹ Retained fire-fighters have now carried out almost 20,000 home fire safety visits and fitted over 6,000 smoke detectors. ²⁴² Budget provision of £175,000 for 2006/07 has been made available. ²⁴³ The retained service has been supported through the appointment of Retained Support Officers. ²⁴⁴ A range of other initiatives are included within the Community Safety Prevention Business Plan. ²⁴⁵
IRMP action plan 2005/06 mainly work in progress – unlikely to deliver publicly	IRMP Action Plan 2006/07 ²⁴⁶ delivered noticeable change. ²⁴⁷ ²⁴⁸ Widespread support amongst the public ²⁴⁹ and staff for the reduction of aerial cover (8 wholetime fire-fighter
noticeable change within reporting period	posts removed) and the reallocation of available funding ²⁵⁰ to the Retained Service.

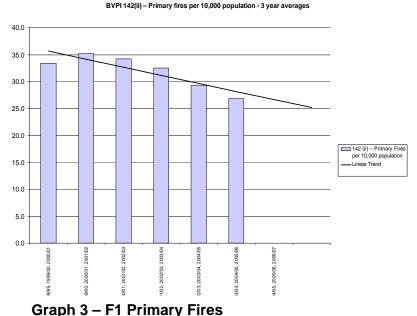


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	Progress against the IRMP Action Plan 2005/06 is reported to the Authority ²⁵¹ and
	influences future financial planning. ²⁵²
	A thorough review of partnerships has taken place, resulting in the production of a
Lack of management of partnerships	formal framework. 253 All partnerships are risk assessed 254 and the Partnership Review
	group meets regularly to review and update the register. ²⁵⁵ SWFA continues to forge
	partnerships, ²⁵⁶ ²⁵⁷ ²⁵⁸ ²⁵⁹ ²⁶⁰ but in a more constructive manner. ²⁶¹

Table 3 Summary of Improvement against CPA findings

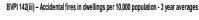
Are services improving in areas SWFA has identified as priorities and areas the public say are important to their communities?

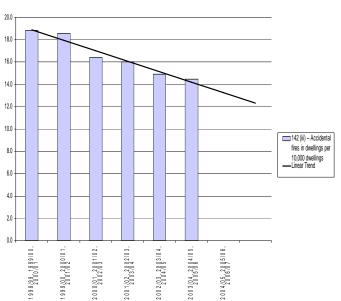
- 45. Priorities are identified through a suite of consultation processes, including the IRMP process, ²⁶² the budget setting, ²⁶³ after the incident, community liaison panel ²⁶⁴ and complaints ²⁶⁵ processes. Priorities are recorded within the SWFA Performance Plan ²⁶⁶ and IRMP Action Plan. ²⁶⁷
- 46. SWFA are active members of Shropshire County Council²⁶⁸ and Telford and Wrekin Borough Council²⁶⁹ to address local community priorities through Local Area Agreements.
- 47. Services are improving in areas identified through the IRMP process²⁷⁰ as being priorities to the local communities. IRM Plans are proported and implemented following
 - are prepared and implemented following extensive consultation, with performance against outcomes reported to SWFA.²⁷¹ The Authority's Performance Plan 2006-08 includes eight-year direction of travel statements,²⁷² to which progress is reported to the A&PMC.²⁷³
- 48. Continuous improvement is evidenced through SWFA's performance against the seven key performance indicators²⁷⁴ identified by the Audit Commission and national BVPIs.²⁷⁵ SWFA performs within the upper quartile of five of the seven indicators.²⁷⁶ Within <u>all</u> seven indicators SWFA is able to evidence a downward trend in incidents (see graphs 1 and 2 (page 3), graph 3 opposite and graphs 4-7 below (page 9).
- 49. Whilst the Authority is proud of its achievements in having secured upper quartile results in excess of 70 percent of key BVPIs, the Authority is not complacent and is continuously monitoring performance²⁷⁷ and seeking out new and innovative ways of working both existing core business areas, together with other areas that offer greater scope for impact upon community's safety.²⁷⁸ ²⁷⁹ ²⁸⁰



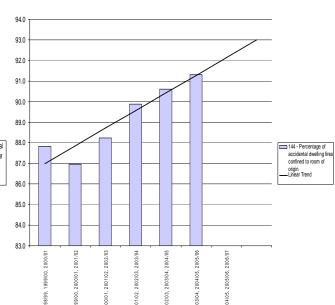
Performance against local targets including progress against IRMP annual action plans

- 50. Measurable impact from prevention activities and community safety projects²⁸¹ has been achieved and is evident though recorded outcomes²⁸² as indicated within graphs 1 to 7 and the 2005/06 outturn performance.²⁸³ All performance is reported to SWFA²⁸⁴ and scrutinised through the A&PMC.²⁸⁵ A track record of improvement, including in user satisfaction results can be evidenced through the Quality of Service Survey After the incident 2005/06.²⁸⁶ In addition, the Authority receives many letters of compliments²⁸⁷ and continuously seeks the community's views regarding the manner in which the Service is delivered.²⁸⁸ ²⁸⁹
- 51. SWFA are actively engaged²⁹⁰ in the delivery of outcomes based on the requirements of the National Framework²⁹¹ for Fire and Rescue Services. The Authority has been instrumental in the development and implementation of West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB).²⁹² Reports on progress are submitted on a quarterly basis to WMRMB.²⁹³





Graph 4 – F2 Accidental Dwelling Fires



BVPI 144 – Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin - 3 year averages

Graph 5 – F5 Fires contained to room of origin

BVP1149 - False alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment per 1,000 non-domestic properties - 3 year averages

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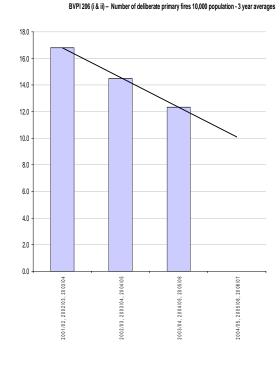
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Graph 6 – F6 False Alarms caused by AFD



Graph 7 – F7 Deliberate Primary Fires

What contribution is SWFA making towards wider community outcomes?

- 52. SWFA contributions to the LSP and CDRP and specific initiatives to tackle local priorities such as community safety, anti social behaviour and health are documented with the Service's Safer Communities Core Strategy.²⁹⁴ This strategy supports local community initiatives.²⁹⁵ ²⁹⁶ ²⁹⁷
- 53. SWFA are active members of Shropshire County Council²⁹⁸ and Telford and Wrekin Borough Council²⁹⁹ to address local community priorities through Local Area Agreements.
- 54. SWFA works across all sectors³⁰⁰ ³⁰¹ ³⁰² ³⁰³ to deliver outcomes for children and young people³⁰⁴ and the most vulnerable³⁰⁵ disadvantaged or potentially excluded groups.³⁰⁶ This has included in engagement in community activities³⁰⁷ ³⁰⁸ beyond that of the traditional core 'fire safety' objectives of the Authority.

To what degree is SWFA improving both access and the quality of service for all its citizens focusing on those who have been 'hard to reach' or previously excluded?

- 55. Working in partnership with other key community groups, ³⁰⁹ ³¹⁰ ³¹¹ SWFA has been able to develop a knowledge and understanding of local communities and how they are changing.
- 56. Community safety work is targeted to protect the most vulnerable³¹² and reach those at highest risk. This is achieved through the Service's Safer Communities Core Strategy³¹³ and focusing the deployment of resources to those areas of greatest need.³¹⁴
- 57. Access to information and services is improving for the most disadvantaged, isolated and potentially excluded groups³¹⁵ ³¹⁶ is improving though rigorous community strategies,³¹⁷ engagement with the most vulnerable.³¹⁸ ³¹⁹

How well is the improvement planning being implemented: are key objectives and milestones being achieved?

- 58. The Authority's Performance Plan 2006-08 includes eight-year direction of travel statements,³²⁰ to which progress is reported to the A&PMC.³²¹
- 59. The key objectives and milestones are defined within departmental business plans, ³²² which are monitored on a regular basis by the Brigade's Policy Group.
- 60. Leadership and strategic direction is brought to the Service through Member engagement afforded through involvement with Authority, project and consultation committees/teams.³²³ ³²⁴ ³²⁵
- 61. Implementation of the National Framework³²⁶ for Fire and Rescue Authorities is embedded within the Authority's Performance Plan³²⁷ and associated Business Plans.³²⁸ Moreover, the Authority actively engages in the WMRMB³²⁹ where the Framework's objectives are managed through the region's Programme Plan 2006-08.³³⁰
- 62. All performance is reported to SWFA³³¹ and scrutinised through the Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee.³³² Reports on progress against regional initiatives are submitted on a quarterly basis to WMRMB.³³³
- 63. SWFA are advocates of Government's project and programme management methodologies³³⁴ and corporate members of the Best Practice User Group, the Authority has a strong track record of managing projects in accordance with de facto standards.
- 64. The Authority's business planning process is set out within the SWFA Performance Plan 2006-08.335 (pp13-14)

Are there any significant weaknesses in arrangements for securing continuous improvement or failures in corporate governance that would prevent improvement levels being sustained?

- 65. SWFA has developed and instilled a culture of continuous improvement throughout both the Authority and Service. As a consequence, initiatives are strategies³³⁶ are monitored and reviewed³³⁷ on a regular basis to secure improvements to reduce the risk of failure, this is particularly so within the following areas:
- Performance management³³⁸
- Business risk management 339 340 341
- ➤ Project management³⁴²

- ► Governance arrangements³⁴³ ³⁴⁴ ³⁴⁵ ³⁴⁶ ³⁴⁷ ³⁴⁸
- ➤ Member engagement³⁴⁹ ³⁵⁰ ³⁵¹

Does SWFA currently achieve good value for money?

- 66. As identified by the Audit Commission, SWFA was cited as an exemplifier that provides strong overall performance despite overall having a comparatively low budget and cost per head of population.³⁵² (p28) SWFA achieves and provides good value for money.³⁵³
- 67. Costs do not compare well with others fire authorities³⁵⁴ due to inequalities in the current settlement arrangements.
- 68. Costs are commensurate with service delivery, performance and outcomes achieved.
- 69. Costs reflect policy decisions set out with the Authority's Performance Plan³⁵⁵ and budget strategies.³⁵⁶ ³⁵⁷ ³⁵⁸ ³⁵⁹ ³⁶⁰
- 70. Efficient and effective use of resources in the implementation of the IRMP and action plan, including using more efficient working practices where appropriate, is key to SWFA plans.³⁶¹ ³⁶² ³⁶³

What plans does SWFA have for the future?

- 71. The Authority has aspirations to secure high-performing scores during the Performance Framework assessment process. In rising to the challenge, the Authority has set out within its Performance Plan³⁶⁴ the organisation's shared priorities and direction of travel statements, statements that illustrate a journey of continuous improvement over an eight year period. A journey dedicated to *putting Shropshire's safety first*.
- 72. Evidenced within this section are a myriad of initiatives³⁶⁵ ³⁶⁶ that have been introduced that have, and are, making significant contributions to the community's safety.
- 73. Table 4 below summarises actions taken to address shortfalls identified through the CPA process in addressing future planning initiatives.





CPA 2005 Strengths	Update
Comprehensive framework of future plans to deliver the vision	The links between financial and service plans have been substantially enhanced, particularly through the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan ³⁶⁷ and departmental business plans ³⁶⁸ identifying and including shared priorities.
Plans based on research and adequate knowledge of community – some effective engagement e.g. peoples panel	Through the continuing use of FSEC, ³⁶⁹ the introduction of a specialist GIS team ³⁷⁰ and the further enhancement of the consultation process, SWFA continues to improve its knowledge of the risks facing its communities e.g. introduction of RTC strategy ³⁷¹ ³⁷² within CFS plan. ³⁷³ ³⁷⁴
Plans regularly updated and address new developments and weaknesses	Strategic and financial planning processes continue to identify strengths and weaknesses and ensure that appropriate control measures are put in place for example the Retained Review. 375
Track record in relation to challenge – responds positively	SWFA continues to respond positively to challenge as evidenced by its willingness to reduce wholetime fire-fighter posts, to introduce new shift patterns and to take on new responsibilities such as RTC reduction. (IRMP, ³⁷⁶ Review ³⁷⁷ and RTC initiatives ³⁷⁸)
Culture of the organisation has led to innovation	A number of case studies have been drawn up to demonstrate (and share) the long term track record of SWFA with regard to innovation. ³⁷⁹

CPA 2005 Weaknesses	Update
No longer-term planning mechanisms yet	Long term planning is evidenced through the IRMP process (e.g. Shrewsbury
in place	fire cover) ³⁸⁰ linked financially to the Medium Term Financial Plan that includes
·	an eight year capital programme. ³⁸¹
Key plans yet to be formally mapped with	The Performance Plan 2006/08382 and Business Plans383 reflect the
national framework and IRMP – work in	requirements of the National Framework 2006/08384 and takes account of
progress	developments through the IRMP ³⁸⁵ and Best Value processes. ³⁸⁶

Table 4 Summary of Improvement against CPA findings

Does SWFA have robust plans for improving? (Aligned with other plans, SMART, detailed, resourced, agreed and widely communicated?)

- 74. The Authority has a robust and structured strategic planning process that forms the basis of the Annual Performance.³⁸⁷
- 75. Key plans are SMART; integrated with each other; cover the medium to long term; and, support the vision and aims of SWFA. 388 389 390 391 392 393
- 76. Plans are clearly communicated internally to staff and Authority members and externally to the public and to partners through consultation exercises, but probably most effectively, the Service's website.³⁹⁴



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Does SWFA have the capacity to deliver its plans?

- 77. The Authority, through a systematic and prioritised planning process, has focused capacity to deliver its plans, having due regard to:
- Financial capacity 395 396 397 398 399
- Organisational development 400 401 402 403 404
- ➤ Workforce planning 405 406 407

- ➤ Member development 408 409
- ➤ Diversity and equality 410 411 412

The key to this is linking service objectives and resources through departmental Business plans.⁴¹³

78. In striving to improve capacity further, the Authority has engaged in several innovative partnerships that will support the Service in delivering its future plans. 414 415 416 417 418The unique partnership with Europe's largest private Fire Service – Falck, Denmark is one such example (photo – left CFO Henrik Hansen and CFO Taylor). 419



Is SWFA working with partners and Regional Management Board to improve its capacity to deliver its own priorities and outcomes and contribute to overall improvements across the area?

- 79. The quality of partnership working including governance arrangements⁴²⁰ and cost effectiveness within WMRMB is recognised as *best practice*.⁴²¹ All fire and rescue authorities forming WMRMB received a 'Good' CPA score, the best scoring region in England. All authorities within the region have witnessed improved capacity through collaborative working.⁴²²
- 80. The quality and impact of contributions to WMRMB by SWFA is exemplary. The region's governance, structure and programme arrangements have been developed by S&WFA staff⁴²³ with the region's first Chair being the previous Chair of SWFA (Cllr Keith Austin). SWFA's current Chair is a member of the region's Programme Board⁴²⁴ and the vice-Chair acts as Senior Responsible Owner to the region's HRM project board.⁴²⁵
- 81. SWFA officers are involved in all seven WMRMB thematic project boards⁴²⁶ and act as lead to the region's Performance Project.⁴²⁷
- 82. Degree of influence on WMRMB is substantial as the region's Programme Manager⁴²⁸ is a SWFA sponsored officer.
- 83. In addition to collaboration achieved through WMRMB, SWFA is involved in the LAA and works across all sectors⁴²⁹ ⁴³⁰ to deliver outcomes for children and young people⁴³¹ and the most vulnerable, ⁴³² disadvantaged or potentially excluded groups. ⁴³³
- 84. And in conclusion, organisations can only be as good as their staff, and those democratically elected by the public to lead them. SWFA prides itself on its Member engagement in Service matters, but moreover, applauds the excellent relationship that exists between management and staff representative bodies alike, in securing a culture of excellence in a dignified workplace.















Appendices: Annual and Backward looking Efficiency Statements covering 2005/06.

- ➤ The Backward looking Efficiency Statement covering 2005/06 can be accessed at: <u>www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/Docs/CFA/Meetings/Strategy-Resources/2006-03-13/08%20-</u>%20Annual%20Efficiency%20Statement.pdf
- > Further information on Quality cross checks was requested and forwarded by the treasurer on 13 July 2006.
- ➤ The Annual Efficiency Statement of WMRMB is published within the region's Annual Report 2005/06, that can be accessed at: www.wmrmb.co.uk/docs/2005-06-WMRMB-Annual-Report-FINAL-V1.2.pdf

Reference Sources:



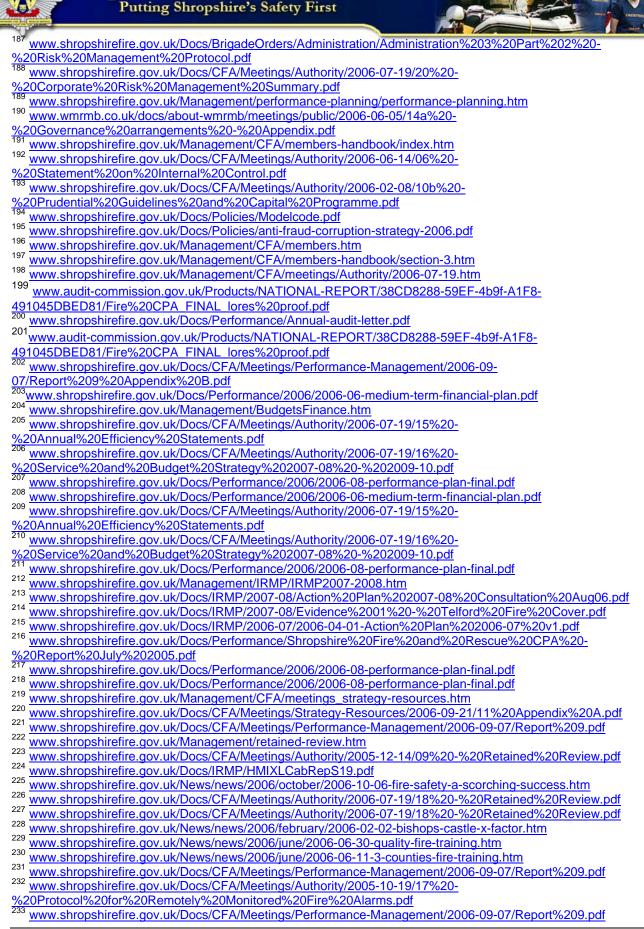
- > Reference sources indicated in blue are hyperlinked (right click on link and select 'open hyperlink').
- Reference sources indicated in red are not hyperlinked, but are contained within the attached Self-Assessment Evidence Folder.
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