

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
Audit and Standards Committee  
Held in the Abdon Burf, Telford Central Fire Station  
On Tuesday, 16 December 2025 at 10.00 am**

**Present:**

Councillors Handley (Chair), Husemann and Walmsley

**Officers**

Simon Hardiman	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Karen Gowreesunker	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Corporate Services)	ACFO
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Scott Hurford	Head of Transformation & Collaboration	HoTC
Jo Pritchard	Executive Support Officer	ESO
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Team Supervisor	ESTS
Marc Millward	ACFO	ACFO

**External Bodies**

Chris Green	Head of Internal Audit	CG
Elliot Baker	Audit Manager – Grant Thornton	EB
Richard Anderson	Engagement Lead - Grant Thornton	RA

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Bentley, Hannington, Kerr and Radford

**2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None

**3 Public Questions**

None

**4 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee, held on 30 September 2025 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

**5 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee  
Work Plan 2026**

This report put forward a 2026 Work Plan for the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee for consideration and approval by Members. The

report also reviewed implementation of the activities listed in last year's Work Plan.

It was confirmed the fire service was unable to provide dates for 2026.

Apologies were provided to the committee, and it was confirmed a meeting will be held in January 2026 to discuss all dates for the forthcoming year.

## **6 Statement of Accounts 2024/25**

This report presented the completed Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 to the Committee for consideration and approval.

HoF discussed the enormity of the document but confirmed it is nearing completion. The service still has some work to do regarding the report but it will be completed in line with recommendations of good practice.

Jo did not go through the report during the meeting but did ask if anyone had any questions regarding it.

Members approved the state of play and confirmed they will defer this report to the next meeting in 2026.

Fire service will be choosing a meeting date in January to discuss the report and the work plan (above) and will provide information to the next A&S committee meeting.

**Resolved** that the agreement of the Statement of Accounts be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee

## **7 External Audit**

### **7a Audit Findings Report**

Representatives of the External Auditors will present the Audit Findings for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Gratitude was provided to HoF for all her hard work.

It was confirmed we are currently in a good position.

There was a headline that we have identified two adjustments.

Many adjustments have been made to the audit.  
Audit has been substantially completed.

Attention was drawn to page 7 with this report being presented to the next meeting.

Attention was drawn to page 9 and referenced the back stop date, which is brought forward each year.

EB drew attention to page 12. Councillor Husemann's asked for explanation on the term 'materiality'. Explanation was provided and all understood.

Attention was drawn to page 15. It was confirmed work in this area has concluded in the majority and that we do not believe any adjustments are required.

Attention was drawn to page 16. No instances were noted throughout the audit.

Attention was drawn to page 19. We detailed the audit throughout the key findings. There is no impact on usable reserves.

Attention was drawn to page 20. IS19 assurances have identified a statement which highlights the assets may have been understated.

Attention was drawn to page 34. Unable to conclude the audit certificate.

Attention was drawn to pages 36-39 as follows:

Reference page 38 regarding emergency and response vehicles. It was confirmed this shouldn't have featured on the report.

Reference page 39. This was not material to the financial statement.

Reference page 40. One recommendation is low risk, and one recommendation is medium risk. Management have provided a response to the latter.

Reference page 49. It was deemed appropriate that there are no new matters.

Reference page 50. This is due to be updated when the BFM work is completed.

Letter of representation has been shared with management prior to meeting.

Auditors thanked the committee and asked if there are any questions.

**Resolved** that the agreement of the Audit Findings Report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee

## **7b Auditors Annual Report on Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority 2024/25**

This item was deferred to next meeting in 2026.

## **8 Internal Audit Progress Report**

This report provided the Committee with a progress update on delivery of the annual internal audit plan, the results of which will be used to form the annual

opinion on the Service's framework of internal control, risk management and governance.

It was confirmed reasonable progress has been made.

Service is fully staffed.

Two reports have been finalised which has provided a reasonable level of reassurance.

There are just a few administrative matters which management have agreed to rectify.

The remaining audits are being completed between now and March 2026.

Productivity has been a big focus in the service.

The service is spending a lot more time on productivity.

There are some governance issues to complete.

The current situation now is that there are a number of outstanding actions which include Cyber, HR movers and leavers plus Admin matters relating to the Treasury.

Committee were asked to provide any questions.

**Resolved** that the Committee note the report:

## **9 Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 Improvement Plan**

This report, **attached marked 9**, summarises the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2025/26.

It was noted the areas which needed improving which are listed in the Annual Governance Statement. The committee were asked to review these.

Committee were asked to provide any questions.

**Resolved** that the Committee note the report:

## **10 Corporate Risk Management Summary**

This report updated Members on the status of risks on the Corporate Risk Register.

Attention was drawn to sections 5 and 6.

Within Appendix C there are 3 areas that are being improved with a high priority; staff engagement, digital data and cyber. This is because the risk is being realised within the organisation, with the mitigation being put in place.

All members will receive corporate risk training which will be implemented within the first 3 months of 2026.

Attention was drawn to appendix A, B and C.

Councillor Walmsley asked if we had more of a detailed program of what's being done about particular aspects in the report (referencing the table) moving back into 'the green'.

ACFO confirmed a strategy is being put into place in January 2026. Karen confirmed we are working with an external organisation called 'Purple Frog' to ensure there is a build back on our approach to reporting and analysis of data more effectively.

Other elements are around skills and capacity in the ICT team which are being address.

It was confirmed the service will be providing all staff AI training to keep them up to date with moving technologies.

ACFO believes Chris Haigh (Head of Digital and Data) should potentially come to the next A&S meeting to answer any questions the committee may have.

Councillor Walmsley would like to see more target dates for all the above actions.

CFO agreed it would be good to see the 'red' finally going 'green' but believed having some items in the red moving into green, would demonstrate improvements within the fire service.

**Resolved** that the Committee note the report:

## **11 Performance Monitoring**

### **11a HMICFRS Cause of Concern Progress Report**

This report detailed the Service's progress towards improvement identified by the HMICFRS Cause of Concern.

Report was split down into 5 elements.

Attention was drawn to page 4; one item is behind schedule regarding digital and data.

Workstream of the agreement of the strategy is behind schedule.

We are confident they will be in place for recruitment into the digital team.

**Resolved** that the Committee note the report:

### **11b HMICFRS Areas of Improvement Progress Report**

This report, attached marked 8c, details the Service's progress towards improvement identified by the HMICFRS Areas For Improvement.

HoTC asked if there is any feedback on the report.

There are gradings for eleven areas, all ranging from good to inadequate. HoTC asked committee members for any questions.

CFO confirmed, if anyone has any questions regarding the above, then please direct them via email to CFO.

**Resolved** that the Committee note the report:

### **11c HMICFRS Standards and Behaviour and Misconduct Progress**

This report presented the Service progress against the recommendations made to the sector in the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in the fire and rescue services report

A number of recommendations have been provided (15).

There are links provided to dates that they should be completed by.

Recommendation number 1 is in progress. HR are now observing best practices after visiting another fire service.

There has been a number of 1-2-1's with individuals. Feedback from sessions have been positive.

CFO highlighted recommendation number 1. It has been observed there has been many workshops well attended by staff with honest conversations being held on where employees want to get to.

It was confirmed we had a draft report ready. There was consideration on when to release the report but it has been decided it is to be released in the new year.

**Resolved** that the Committee note the report:

## **12 Pension Board Minutes**

ACFO (CS) confirmed that Pension Board meets every three months. There has been a change in members of employee representatives to Rob Cartwright and Simon Morris.

It was confirmed that in the last meeting the Board would review its terms of reference.

The Board has reviewed any pension breaches and disputes, and has reviewed its Risk Register. There is also a standard agenda at each meeting.

**Resolved** that the Committee receive and note the minutes of the Pension Board meeting held on 23 September 2025.

The meeting closed at 10.50am.

**Chair** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_