

Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 Improvement Plan

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Executive Summary

This report summarises the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Improvement Plan, following approval of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2024/25.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the progress made on the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 - Improvement Plan.

3 Background

In accordance with authority delegated to it by the Fire Authority, the Audit & Standards Committee considered and approved the Statement of Accounts for Financial Year 2024/25 on 2 February 2026 meeting.

The Statement of Accounts contains, as an appendix, a statement as to how effective the Authority's various systems of internal control have been in governing the risks, to which the Authority is exposed. This is known as the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). Areas of the system of internal control that had been identified as requiring improvement were listed in the AGS and an action plan was developed to ensure that these improvements are progressed during the coming year (the AGS 2024/25 Improvement Plan). This Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress, which the Service makes against the Plan.

4 Monitoring Progress against the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 Improvement Plan

A copy of the AGS 2024/25 - Improvement Plan is attached as an appendix to this report; progress against each of the planned activities is also included in the appendix.

As is the case with most plans, the activities included within it are often subject to change. This can be as a result of changes in the external environment that guides the work, as well as the internal environment that dictates whether the Service has the capacity to achieve its stated objectives. To ensure there is control over any slippage, the officers responsible for delivering this work must obtain approval from the Service Management Team (SMT) or Service Programme Board (SPB), if they require any variations to the current Plan. Such variations will also be reported to this committee.

5 Conclusions

The Committee is asked to review the progress made on the AGS 2024/25 Improvement Plan.

6 Financial Implications

Any significant budgetary implications, brought about by the improvements proposed in the Improvement Plan, have already been considered, either as part of the Fire Authority's budget planning process or within each Department's business planning process.

7 Legal Comment

The AGS is a legal requirement under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom and must be included in the Fire Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendix

Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 - Improvement Plan

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 - Improvement Plan

Area of Review		Improvement Required	Lead Officers	Internal Board reported to	Progress to date
People	1	Complete a review of the efficiency of the Group Support Team	Marc Millward	Service Programme Board	A temporary Station Manager was appointed to lead the review on 01/07/2025. Recommendations are being presented to SMT as they are identified. Review is due to be concluded 30/06/26.
People	2	Employ specialist officers to develop, enhance and embed data and improve monitoring and reporting to key stakeholders	Chris Haigh	Digital Systems Governance Group	A Data Team Lead is being appointed.
Processes	3	Review current performance measures and implement a revised suite to measure, monitor and manage performance	Sam Burton / Scott Hurford	Performance and Risk Group	Research with neighbouring services and HMICFRS completed to identify common trends and benchmarking datasets. A draft suite of core, performance, and health indicators has been developed and is currently being integrated. These will be approved at Strategy & Resources Committee in July 2026.
Processes	4	Continue to replace paper-based processes with streamlined electronic workflows	Chris Haigh	Digital Systems Governance Group	We are providing opportunities for streamlined electronic workflows in places, including launching tablet devices to replace paper-based forms for Home Fire Safety visits.
Systems / IT Infrastructure	5	Review and enhance systems and cross team processes to improve reporting and monitoring	Chris Haigh	Digital Systems Governance Group	Digital Systems Governance Group (SGG) has evolved to reporting and monitoring on Digital and Data activities across the service. This aims to increase visibility of work, foster innovation, and provide assurance on alignment to strategy. Quarterly departmental reviews are now also in place to review service levels and improve communication.

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Systems / IT Infrastructure	6	Develop systems to identify efficiencies and productivity improvements	Chris Haigh Joanne Coadey	Digital Systems Governance Group	Power Platform usage and automation opportunities are being explored, with several PowerApps also launched in recent months. A business analyst has been appointed, with a view to identifying waste, efficiency savings and improving productivity.
Building Facilities	7	Deliver the Authority's property capital schemes and introduce improvements to station access and security at all Service sites	Andrew Stirling Chris Haigh	Service Management Team	The first year of the station access project has completed on schedule. The second phase of the project, with the next tranche of stations in scope, is being implemented from April 2026.
Building Facilities	8	Review training facilities across the estate and consider feasibility study outcomes	Andrew Stirling Mark Price	Service Programme Board	Following completion of the Training Facilities Review and Training Needs analysis, procurement is underway for design, cost consultancy and construction project management to progress the initial phase of the replacement of the Telford training facilities and updating the training infrastructure at Ludlow, Oswestry, Prees and Shrewsbury.
Appliances/ Equipment	9	Deliver the fleet and equipment strategy to include the introduction of new pumping and specialist appliances.	Mark Price Andrew Stirling	Service Programme Board	The Fleet and Equipment strategies are being updated to link to both the CRMP and the planned vehicle replacement programme. Specialist vehicles to be replaced are the Environment Unit, Aerial Ladder Platform, Rescue Tender and Boat Towing Vehicle.
Collaboration	10	Oversee the replacement of the new Command and Control (C&C) system.	Mark Price	C&C Project Board	Despite several delays by Motorola, which have been addressed by a coordinated approach from the IFCC group, the project is aiming to go live in July

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Operations	11	Improve management of protracted incidents through establishment of significant incident room at Telford	Mark Price	C&C Project Board	Equipment and facilities have been purchased, implementation and roll out is critically dependant on the C&C project implementation
Operations	12	Deliver against the recommendations made in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and report progress	Scott Hurford	SMT	<p>CRMP Key Priority 3 has been completed, it involved temporary relocating a fire appliance to the west of Shrewsbury during periods of extreme weather when lead to key roads becoming impassable.</p> <p>Alongside this, a new project management approach has been developed and will go live from 1 April 2026, strengthening delivery, transparency and performance oversight.</p>
Operations	13	Review current policies against Fire Standards	Mark Price	Performance and Risk Group	The Fire Standards app and part of the wider Organisational Assurance piece being developed by Transformation and Collaboration, will be the primary mechanisms of recording progress