

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Chair's Report of Meeting held on

5 December 2024

The Fire Authority began the meeting by observing a minute's silence for Eric Carter, former Fire Authority Chair, who passed away on 2 December 2024. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and the Conservative Group Leader all paid tribute to Mr Carter and his work on behalf of the Fire Authority

The Authority also welcomed Councillor Stephen Handley, Labour, Telford & Wrekin Council to his first Fire Authority meeting.

Fire Authority Governance Review Proposal

Initial feedback and areas for improvement (AFIs) identified through His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have identified the need for a review of the Authority's current governance arrangements.

The Fire Authority has agreed a draft Governance Review Proposal which will identify potential areas for improvement in the structure, decision-making and operation of the Fire Authority.

The Review will comprise three stages:

1. Identifying where current ways of working need to continue, change or improve;
2. Considering alternative ways of working for the themes / areas identified in stage one; and
3. Formulating options for change for Fire Authority ratification.

Each of the stages will have a Member and Officer Workshop to facilitate discussion and exchange of views, with final approval of any proposals at an Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on 9 April 2025.

Meeting Schedule 2025

The Fire Authority has approved the 2025 schedule of Authority and Committee meetings.

2024/25 and Later Years Budget Summary

The Fire Authority received a report summarising the initial budget assumptions agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee at its November 2024 meeting as the first stage of the budget planning process.

The report set out changes in those budget assumptions which have arisen since that Committee meeting and the Fire Authority agreed that the updated planning

assumptions be used as the basis for budget consultation, allowing officers to work on a range of planning scenarios for later years of the planning period.

The Strategy and Resources Committee has been tasked with preparing a final budget package in January 2025, with the final decision on the 2025/26 budget being made by the Fire Authority at its February 2025 meeting.

Pension Schemes Delegations

A routine review of the discretionary powers of the Fire Authority under the Firefighters' Pension Schemes has been carried out. The review highlighted that amendments were required to the Service's delegations for the Firefighters Pension Schemes 1992, 2006 and 2015. The Fire Authority approved the proposed changes to these Schemes.

The annual review of the employer discretions Statement of Policy for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) has also been undertaken. This highlighted that numerous amendments were required to the Service's Statement of Policy to bring it in line with the discretions policy template produced by the LGPS. The Fire Authority approved the proposed changes to the Statement of Policy.

Service Update – December 2024

This report provided an update to Members on key areas of emerging work for the Service, with the report focusing on the HMICFRS Inspection Report and the Service's response to it.

A broad overview of the Inspection outcomes was presented to the Service in August 2024 after which a high-level action plan was developed to address the Areas for Improvement that are set out in the final Inspection Report. An action plan to address the issues identified as a Cause for Concern was submitted to HMICFRS on 29 October 2024.

A communications plan has been developed to ensure the Fire Authority is sighted on the implementation of the action plans with quarterly progress reports being brought to full Fire Authority and the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee.



David Minnery
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
December 2024

Background Papers

Agenda and Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 5 December 2024

The agendas and reports (apart from exempt or confidential items) for all Fire Authority and Committee meetings are on the Service's website:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk>

To access reports, go to the Fire Service's website and follow the steps below.

- Click on 'About Us' in the red bar at the top of the page
- Click on 'Fire and Rescue Authority'
- Click on 'Meetings' in the list on the right-hand side of the screen
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If you have any difficulty with the website, please contact Lynn Ince, Executive Support Supervisor, via lynn.ince@shropshirefire.gov.uk