



## Report

### Notes of the WMRMB Programme Board

Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at 10.30 am  
Shire Hall, Warwick

#### Present:

Cllr Len Bloomer	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Cllr Derek Davis	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Cllr Godfrey Davis	Hereford & Worcester Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Nigel Hartin	Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority
Cllr Peter Hogarth	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Richard Hobbs	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Barry Stockley	Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
William Brown	CFO Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
Alan Doig	CFO Staffordshire Fire And Rescue Service
Lucy Phillips	DCFO Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Paul Raymond	DCFO Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
Lynda Bateman	Treasurer
Peter Dartford	Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Mike Griffiths	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
Chris Jukes	Warwickshire County Council
Ray Kings	Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Sue Phelps	Clerk
Bob Russell	Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Alison Symmers	Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
Sian Stroud	Warwickshire County Council
Tina Thomas	Government Office West Midlands
Steve Worrall	Programme Manager
Georgina Wythes	Sandwell MBC

#### Visitors

Richard Hewitt )	Northgate Information Solutions
Andy Nicholls )	

#### Action by

#### 6/07 Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Cllrs Chattaway and Hinton;

Chief Fire Officers Hayden, Sheehan and Taylor;

Clare Carter, Louise Goodhead, Steve Haynes, Elizabeth

Marchinson, Paul Murphy and Christine Walker.

**7/07 Notes of previous meetings**

The notes of the ordinary meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2006, and the extraordinary meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2007, were received as a correct record of each meeting.

**8/07 Matters Arising**

None.

**9/07 Correspondence**

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from the regional representative of the Networking Women in the Fire Service [NWFS], requesting endorsement of the NWFS Award Scheme. The first awards would be presented in July 2007.

Chief Fire Officers indicated that they felt that this was a matter for individual brigades rather than the Regional Management Board.

**Resolved** that no action be taken with regard to regional endorsement of the NWFS Award Scheme.

The Clerk also reported receipt of notification from the Warwickshire County Council that Cllr David Shilton was no longer one of its representatives on the Regional Management Board, and that Councillor Jerry Roodhouse would replace him until further notice.

**10/07 WMRMB Thematic Project Boards – Progress Review**

Representatives of the various thematic project boards submitted progress reports. The presentations are available on the WMRMB web site at [www.wmrmb.co.uk/about-wmrmb](http://www.wmrmb.co.uk/about-wmrmb).

**[a] Response**

Cllr Stockley presented the report on behalf of the Response Thematic Project Board. Much of the Project Board's work was either completed or on target.

Richard Hewitt and Andy Nicholls of Northgate Information Solutions presented a project update on the Information Review of Integrated Risk Management Planning. The purpose of the review was to identify areas where there could be a common regional approach to risk management planning; to identify best practice from within and outside the region; and to document the training and skills of those needing to make use of risk management tools.

## Programme Board – 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2007

A wide range of consultation interviews had taken place; and existing IRMP approaches and processes across the five constituent authorities had been researched and compared. Where necessary, recommendations would challenge the existing IRMP processes and suggest areas for improvement. A report would shortly be available for formal presentation.

### **[b] Resilience**

Cllr Bloomer and Bob Russell presented the project update report on behalf of the Resilience Thematic Project Board and the End Project Report.

The Programme Board also considered a report recommending the continuation of the Resilience Project Board as the Resilience Forum.

The Programme Board noted the achievement of constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities in the work undertaken to implement New Dimension assets and Civil Contingencies across the region and the mutual benefits delivered; the scope of assets still to be delivered; the current work and issues that were still required to implement and embed these assets into mainstream FRS operational practices, procedures, mobilising and training; and a request to continue the four working groups through which the project has been co-ordinated to date.

**Resolved** that Project Board continues as a Resilience Forum with bi-monthly meetings initially for one year.

### **[c] Human Resources Management**

Alison Symmers presented the report on behalf of the Human Resources Management Thematic Project Board. A number of project objectives had been completed. National guidance was still awaited with regard to targets for recruitment of under-represented groups. Work was continuing on the costs and benefits of operating occupational health on a regional basis. Work was also in hand on a regional stakeholder consultative process.

### **[d] Procurement**

Mike Griffiths presented the report on behalf of the Procurement Thematic Project Board. The procurement work stream was on target and had delivered a number of cashable and non-cashable savings. Options to provide increased capacity for the project were currently being considered. Forthcoming activities for the project were outlined.

### **[e] Fire control**

Ray Kings presented the report on behalf of the region's Fire

## Programme Board – 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2007

Control Thematic Project Board. The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited [LACC] had been incorporated on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2007. Work had started on the construction of the Regional Fire Control Centre, and the infrastructure services contract had been awarded. The recruitment process had commenced for the Regional Control Centre Director. Whilst the LACC had been established, there was currently no formal mechanism in place for Company decisions to be made in support of regional project delivery for human resources and accommodation issues.

The Project Board felt that urgent action needed to be taken to establish the interrelationship between the project team, the LACC and constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities. Work was ongoing on the LACC Members' Agreement, and cost apportionment between the constituent authorities also needed to be settled.

Peter Dartford, the Project Director, reported on transition and the cut-over order for the West Midlands region, in the light of a request from DCLG that some constituent authorities may be asked to prepare for an earlier cutover.

The Chair thanked Senior Responsible Owners and Lead Officers for their presentations.

### **11/07 Regional Fire Control – Legal Update**

The Legal Adviser provided an update on legal work undertaken on the regional Fire Control project since January 2007, which included:

- Progressing incorporation of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited [the LACC] and preparation of the Members' Agreement;
- Preliminary discussions on cost apportionment
- Consideration of public liability and employers liability insurance.

The Legal Adviser also reported on the relationship between the LACC, the Regional Management Board and the FireControl Project Board. It was relatively common for local authorities to be involved in the joint management of external bodies such as companies and joint committees, and a pragmatic and proportionate approach to managing conflicts of interest could be applied which was consistent with both company law and local government legislation.

It was suggested that any conflict of interests could be managed through protocols clarifying the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the different regional advisory and decision-making forums. The more issues of principle that

## Programme Board – 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2007

could be agreed between the constituent fire authorities, the less likely it was that company directors would find themselves with a conflict of interest.

It was also necessary to agree principles within the region as to how the LACC would be serviced; for instance how and when issues would be referred from the Project Board, Regional Management Board or constituent Fire Authorities to the LACC for decision-making. The RCC Director, once appointed, would assist with the agenda setting and management of Board business. The company secretarial role was currently being carried out by Warwickshire County Council but was subject to review. Training of company directors was being arranged and funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government [DCLG]. The Regional Lawyers Group could develop a regional induction programme and protocols for managing conflicts of interest once the LACC was ready to meet.

The Legal Adviser outlined the legal work programme agreed between the national lawyers group and the DCLG which would link into the transition plan for the roll-out of the regional control centres. A facilities management contract was likely to be the first contractual commitment for the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited to make. Some decisions on cost sharing within the region would be required before the company could enter into legally binding contracts in relation to the project.

Members noted their desire to meet as a Board of Directors, even if in a shadow form, in the early stages. This would help give the project some future direction which was important with the local elections coming up. Officers agreed to liaise with members to find dates for a meeting of Chairs and Chief Fire Officers as soon as possible.

### **Resolved:**

- (1) that the Treasurers' Group be requested to clarify the work and timescale required to present a cost apportionment model to Fire and Rescue Authorities for approval, and to report back to the Regional Management Board thereon;
- (2) that the FireControl Project Board be requested to clarify with CLG the funding and process for securing insurances for the LACC, to include company directors' indemnity insurance as a priority before company directors start to meet; and

- (3) that arrangements be made for a meeting of Chairs of constituent authorities to be held as soon as possible to discuss LACC matters.

**12/07 FRS Lead Officer Post**

Further to Minute No 5/07 of the Regional Management Board, a report was submitted on the funding arrangements in respect of the proposal to establish a post of part-time Fire and Rescue Lead Officer within the Government Office West Midlands [GOWM] to replace the Business Change Manager Post discontinued by the CLG. The Treasurers' Group recommended that the post be funded for two and a half days per week for a period of 12 months, to enable a full evaluation to be undertaken to determine the full benefits to be realised from the appointment. The cost could be funded from the WMRMB Programme Office budget for 2007/08, with a contribution of £2,000 from the West Midlands Centre of Excellence, and GOWM providing office accommodation. It was further recommended that the former Business Change Manager be appointed as Lead Officer for the duration of the evaluation period, with the post being advertised if it continued into 2008/09.

**Resolved** that the recommendations be approved.

**13/07 Capacity Building Fund**

The Board was informed that the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership [RIEP] had ring-fenced £140,000 from the Regional Capacity Building Fund for allocation to the constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities through a bid process. Proposals were submitted for the implementation of a co-ordinated process to support the submission of bids for resources from the Capacity Building Fund.

**Resolved:**

- (1) that an officer working group drawn from the Performance Project Board be established to recommend a prioritised package of initiatives for consideration by the Chief Fire Officers of the five constituent authorities, lead by the Performance Board Lead Officer and facilitated by the Business Change Manager;
- (2) that a meeting of the Chief Fire Officers' Group be convened to agree a package of bids for submission to the RIEP; and
- (3) that an executive summary of the bids be

## Programme Board – 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2007

submitted to the July meeting of the Regional Management Board.

### **14/07 Finance Review**

The Board noted a report on spend to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2007 against the approved budget allocation for 2006/07, and actual time spent on individual projects for the same period.

### **15/07 WMRMB Programme Budget 2007/08**

The Board considered a report setting out background information on the costs associated with the development, implementation and management of the WMRMB Modernisation Programme for 2007/08, and proposals for the funding thereof.

#### **Resolved:**

- (1) that the Programme Office budget for 2007/08, as now submitted, be approved;
- (2) that each constituent fire authority be recommended to contribute £35,000 to meet the cost of the approved budget.

### **16/07 WMRMB Programme Risk Review and Risk Management**

The Board noted the Programme Risk Log.

### **17/07 FRS National Framework 2008 – CLG Forum Feedback**

The Board considered a draft response prepared on behalf of the Regional Management Board to a CLG consultation on the strengths and weaknesses of the current FRS National Framework, and for suggestions to improve the next framework document.

**Resolved** that the draft response be approved for submission to the CLG.

### **18/07 Items for WMRMB: 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2007**

It was noted that the date of the next Regional Management Board meeting would be inconvenient for members involved with local elections.

**Resolved** that the meeting be deferred to a date to be announced in May 2007.

### **19/07 Date of next Programme Board meeting**

**Programme Board – 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2007**

Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 at 10.30 am (Host: Hereford and Worcester)

Meeting ended at 12.30 pm

*Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes  
Democratic Services Unit  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
0121-569 3791*