



Minutes

Agenda Item 13

26th July, 2007, at 11.00 a.m.
Shire Hall, Market Square, Warwick

Present: **Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority**
Councillors Bean, Brigadier Jones and Udall;
Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Councillors Box, Holyoak and West;
Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Councillor Bloomer and D Davis;
Representing Warwickshire County Council
Councillor Chattaway, C Davis and Hobbs;
Representing West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Councillors Eustace, Hinton and Howard.

Advisors:

Chief Fire Officer Doig (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Hayden (Hereford and Worcester Fire and
Rescue Service);
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Ranger (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service).
Chief Fire Officer Taylor (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service);

David Haywood (representing the Clerk) and Georgina Wythes;
Chris Jukes (representing the Treasurer);
Sian Stroud (representing the Legal Adviser);
Steve Worrall (Programme Manager).

Ray Kings and Peter Dartford, Fire Control Project Board;
Stuart Smith, Response Project Board;
Louise McKenzie, Resources Project Board;
Heather Grossman.

Observers: Andrew Brodie, Department of Communities and Local Government;
Bob Deeks, West Midlands Fire Service.

Apologies: Councillor J Taylor;
Chief Fire Officer Brown;
Linda Bateman, Mike Griffiths, Stephen Haynes, Elizabeth Marginson, Sue
Phelps, Tina Thomas and Christine Walker.

13/07 **Election of Chair**

Resolved that Councillor Brigadier Jones be elected Chair of the Regional
Management Board for the period until the commencement of the annual
meeting of the Board in 2008.

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14/07 **Election of Vice Chair**

Resolved:-

- (1) that Councillors D Davis, Howard, Hobbs and West, as Chairs of their respective Fire Authorities, be elected Vice Chairs of the Regional Management Board for the period until the commencement of the annual meeting of the Board in 2008;
- (2) that in the absence or unavailability of the Chair, Councillor Howard be authorised to act as nominated deputy to the Chair.

15/07 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the Board in 2007/08.

Members thanked Councillor David Hinton for all his hard work as Chair since the inception of the Regional Management Board. He was congratulated on his major contribution to making the WMRMB one of the most successful Boards nationally.

Members also noted the retirement of a number of members of the Board. The Chair was asked to write to each of those members expressing the Board's thanks for their individual contributions to the work of the Board.

16/07 **Membership of the Regional Management Board 2007/08**

The Clerk reported on the membership of the Regional Management Board for 2007/08.

17/07 **Governance Arrangements 2007/08**

The Clerk reported that the Board at its meeting on 5th June, 2006 (Minute No 22/06) had approved a document setting out its governance arrangements. No substantive changes were proposed for 2007/08.

It was necessary to review the appointment of elected members as Senior Responsible Owners for thematic project boards in the light of changes in membership and office in the constituent Fire Authorities. A number of Project Boards had been decommissioned, having completed their work: that is, the Fire Safety, Performance and Resilience Project Boards.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the governance arrangements approved by the Board in Minute No 22/06 be confirmed;

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- (2) that the Programme Board be reconstituted for 2007/08 with the same membership and terms of reference as in 2006/07;
- (3) that elected members be appointed to serve as Senior Responsible Owners on thematic project boards as follows for 2007/08:

<u>Thematic Project Board</u>	<u>Member</u>
Procurement	Councillor Chattaway
Fire Control	Chair of the LACC*
Resources	Councillor Box
Response	Councillor Bloomer

- (4) that the Programme Manager be authorised to amend the Programme Plan 2006/08 and any other relevant documents to reflect the decisions set out in (1) to (3) above.

*when appointed. LACC = West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited.

(The meeting was adjourned between 11.20 and 11.32 am)

18/07

Schedule of Meetings 2007/08

The Board considered a proposed schedule of meetings of the Regional Management Board and the Programme Board for 2007/08.

Resolved that meetings be held as follows:

West Midlands Regional Management Board (11 am start)

25th October, 2007 (West Midlands)
24th January, 2008 (Shropshire)
24th April, 2008 (venue to be announced)
24th July, 2008 (venue to be announced)
23rd October, 2008 (venue to be announced)

Programme Board (10.30 am start)

28th September, 2007 (Staffordshire)
13th December, 2007 (West Midlands)
13th March, 2008 (venue to be announced)
19th June, 2008 (venue to be announced)
25th September, 2008 (venue to be announced)
12th December, 2008 (venue to be announced)

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19/07 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January, 2007, be confirmed as a correct record.

20/07 **Notes of the Programme Board**

The Board considered the notes of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 29th March, 2007.

Reference was made to the attendance of the Chair/Vice Chairs at meetings of Regional Management Board Chairs organised by the Local Government Association (LGA). It was confirmed that three members had attended a recent meeting at the LGA and outlined progress to date, including reference to the recent visit by Angela Smith MP.

The Programme Manager indicated that the LGA did not allow officer representation at these meetings but that it would be helpful for members if he could be present to support them.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the recommendations of the Programme Board as set out in the notes be approved;
- (2) that the LGA be requested to allow an officer to attend future meetings as an adviser to support WMRMB members.

21/07 **WMRMB Annual Report 2006/07**

The Board considered the draft Annual Report for 2006/07.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the draft report be approved, subject to the addition of the completed Efficiency Statement at Appendix C;
- (2) that the Annual Report be circulated to all constituent Fire Authorities for information;
- (3) that a summary document be circulated to all key stakeholders.

22/07 **WMRMB Finance Outturn 2006/07**

The Board noted a report on spend against the approved budget for 2006/07,

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together with a breakdown of time spent against individual projects for the same period. There had been an underspend of £199,000 over the year.

23/07 **WMRMB Budget 2007/08**

The Board considered a report setting out anticipated costs associated with the development, implementation and management of the WMRMB Modernisation Programme for 2007/08 and proposals for the funding of those costs. The total budget requirement had fallen so that it had been possible to reduce considerably the contribution requested from each constituent Fire Authority.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Programme Office budget for 2007/08 be approved:
- (2) that each constituent Fire Authority be recommended to contribute £35,000 to meet the cost of the proposed budget.

24/07 **FRS Lead Officer Progress Report**

The Board noted a progress report submitted by the Region's Fire Service Lead Officer on her activities for the period April to June 2007.

25/07 **Capacity Building Fund Bid 2007**

Further to Minute No 13/07 of the Programme Board, the Board considered a report submitted by the Region's Fire Service Lead Officer indicating that the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) had ring fenced £140,000 for capacity building for fire services in the West Midlands Region. Bids had been invited and had been vetted by a task group drawn from the Performance Thematic Project Board. The task group recommended that a single bid be submitted to the RIEP to support equality and diversity in the region.

Resolved that proposals for a single bid for capacity building funds to develop equality and diversity across the region be developed and submitted to the RIEP.

(Councillor Box declared a personal interest in this matter.)

26/07 **Progress Presentation – Response Thematic Project Board**

Stuart Smith, the Lead Officer for the Response Project Board, gave a presentation on the work of the project.

Much of the work of the project was complete. The review of current and future

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integrated risk management planning in the region was the subject of a consultant's report, which would be considered by Chief Fire Officers in September, 2007, before a report to the Programme Board. It was proposed to recommend to the Project Board in due course that the project be decommissioned.

A major benefit of the project had been the establishment of a regional collaboration forum to assess priorities for the region, and to consider the operational implications of the Regional Fire Control project. Reference was made to the importance of continued collaboration between constituent Authorities and the opportunities for efficiency savings and the sharing of best practice, and it was suggested that the Regional Management Board should be debating such issues. It was suggested that members would have an opportunity to open this debate when the consultant's report on integrated risk management planning came before the Board. Members were also reminded that there would be a considerable amount of work generated by the need to converge working practices, and further opportunities for collaboration, arising from the implementation of the Regional Fire Control Project.

27/07

Progress Presentation – Resources Thematic Project Board

Louise McKenzie, on behalf of the Lead Officer for the Resources Project Board, gave a presentation on the work of the project.

Much of the work of the Project Board was complete. Outstanding matters were work on targeting under-represented groups in recruitment and progression, where national guidance was awaited; and consideration of the costs and benefits of operating occupational health on a regional basis, which was ongoing. A regional exchange group had been established to continue collaboration on objectives that had been completed.

The Project Board was also leading on the review of regional consultative arrangements. A meeting had been held with representative bodies and the arrangements agreed by the Board on 28th July, 2006 (Minute No 30/06) had been refreshed. Draft consultative procedures would be circulated for comment by the representative bodies and a further report would be submitted in due course.

Concerns were expressed about the delays being experienced in implementing the arrangements for national recruitment. It was anticipated that the mandatory national scheme would be fully operational from September, 2007 but some pilot authorities had experienced problems with the system during the trial period.

28/07

Progress Presentation – Fire Control Thematic Project Board

Ray Kings, the Lead Officer for the Fire Control Project Board, gave a presentation on the work of the project.

The local authority controlled company (LACC) that would manage the West

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Midlands Regional Control Centre had been incorporated on 19th February, 2007. It had not been possible to recruit to the post of Director of the Centre and the post was to be re-advertised. The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) would meet the cost and it was hoped that the Director would be in post by the New Year. The construction of the Centre was well underway and was due for completion in September, 2007. The project team was working closely with CLG on the transition plan that would enable migration of control functions to the new Centre in due course. There were outstanding human resources and accommodation issues, together with work on out-of -scope activities, which needed to be addressed by the project board.

Mr Kings thanked Councillor Hinton the outgoing Senior Responsible Owner for all his support with moving the project forward. Councillor Hinton expressed the hope that the project would progress positively.

Reference was made to discussion at the recent RMB Chairs meeting with regard to the arrangements for the transfer of staff to the new Regional Control Centres. It was suggested that discussions should be taking place with regions where this work was more advanced to learn from their experience. Mr Kings indicated that CLG was organising an information sharing day for regional representatives and Directors of the LACC would be invited.

Concern was expressed about the delay in appointing the Regional Director and the implications for the Directors of the LACC and the Project Team in terms of availability of advice and support and the handover of appropriate functions.

29/07

Regional Fire Control – Legal Update

The Board received an update on the legal work undertaken in the last six months on the FireControl project and the establishment of the regional company.

The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Company Limited had been established in February 2007. It was proposed that the Board of Directors start to meet in shadow form as soon as possible.

Each region was to appoint a Regional Control Centre Director as its senior operational officer, to lead the day to day operation of the regional control when it went live and to help with implementation of regional control in the intervening period. It had not yet been possible to make an appointment to this post which was crucial to driving the company forward as a decision making body in its own right.

Work was ongoing on the members' agreement which would sit behind the Company's memorandum and articles and regulate the relationship with the constituent Fire Authorities and provide a clear decision making process. It was proposed to submit this agreement to Fire Authorities for approval in the Autumn.

It was anticipated that a report on the principles by which costs for regional control

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might be shared within the region would be ready for consideration by September 2007.

The Board was advised that there was a national legal working group and a regional legal working group, which both met regularly, discussing varied issues around staffing, governance, a national facilities management contract and lease arrangements for the regional control buildings.

30/07 Regional Control Centre – Development of a Cost Apportionment Model

Further to Minute No 11/07 of the Programme Board, the Board was advised that the Treasurers' Group had produced a discussion paper on cost apportionment for consideration by the Region's Chief Fire Officers. The outcome of this consideration was a recommendation that a suitable transparent and robust costing model be developed independently.

Warwickshire County Council operated a Master's Degree student placement programme with Warwick University. The University was able to resource and research the cost model development through this programme but the work had to be carried out between 1st June and September 2007. The cost of the work was estimated to be £3,000.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the proposal to appoint Warwick University to develop a cost apportionment model for the future Regional Control Centre be approved;
- (2) that £3,000 be allocated from the 2007/08 Contingency Budget to meet the cost of the work.

31/07 Progress Presentation - Procurement

Councillor Chattaway, Senior Responsible Owner for the Procurement Project Board, gave a presentation on the work of the project from March to June 2007. The project had already delivered a number of benefits including cashable and non-cashable savings, a regional contracts register, and a draft three-year procurement plan. As a result of the work of the project, each fire authority now approached procurement in a standardised way based on whole-life costing and the FireBuy principle of accepting the most economically advantageous tender.

Capacity was still a major obstacle in achieving the project's objectives.

The future work programme for the project board included collaboration in respect of the national RPE contract, review of Technical Services research; and negotiation with the West Midlands Centre of Excellence on training provision for procurement.

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A major study had been carried out on stock rationalisation which had been circulated to Chief Fire Officers for consideration.

Reference was made to the national procurement agency FireBuy and concerns were expressed that national purchasing was not always relevant to local needs. There were advantages to using FireBuy for major purchases such as IT and communications equipment, and potential advantages for collaborative purchasing which had been demonstrated in other regions.

32/07 **WMRMB Procurement Plan 2006/09**

The Board considered a draft regional procurement plan for 2006/09.

Resolved that the Procurement Plan for 2006/09 be approved.

33/07 **Correspondence relating to the Regional Management Board**

None received.

34/07 **Date of next meeting**

Thursday, 25th October, 2007 at 11.00 am (West Midlands)

(Meeting ended at 1.13 pm)

<p><i>Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes Democratic Services Unit Sandwell MBC 0121-569 3791</i></p>
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