



Report

Notes of the WMRMB Programme Board

Thursday, 28th September, 2007, at 10.30 am
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service HQ

Present:

Cllr Len Bloomer	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Cllr Derek Davis	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Cllr Brigadier Jones	Hereford & Worcester Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Julian Ryder	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Richard Hobbs	Warwickshire County Council
Alan Doig	CFO Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Paul Hayden	CFO Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Glenn Ranger	DCFO Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service
Frank Sheehan	CFO West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service
Alan Taylor	CFO Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service
Lynda Bateman	Treasurer
Peter Dartford	Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Mike Griffiths	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service
Sue Phelps	Clerk
Sian Stroud	Warwickshire County Council
Tina Thomas	Government Office West Midlands
Steve Worrall	Programme Manager
Georgina Wythes	Sandwell MBC

Visitors

John Curtis	Government Office West Midlands
Ged Bowles)	West Midlands Centre of Excellence
David Neale)	

Action by

20/07 Apologies

Apologies were received from:
Cllrs Howard and West; Chief Fire Officer Brown;
Chris Jukes, Ray Kings and Christine Walker.

21/07 Notes of previous meetings

The notes of the meeting held on 29th March, 2007, were received as a correct record of the meeting.

22/07 Matters Arising

None.

23/07 Correspondence

None.

24/07 WMRMB Thematic Project Boards – Progress Review

Representatives of the various thematic project boards submitted progress reports.

[a] Response

Stuart Smith presented the end project report on behalf of the Response Thematic Project Board.

The Board had completed all of its objectives, and its work was to be continued by a Collaboration Forum that would look at operational issues arising from the introduction of the Regional Control Centre; mutual assistance arrangements; operational intelligence sharing; New Dimension and resilience issues; and the outcome of the review of IRMP activity across the region.

Resolved that the closure of the project be agreed.

[b] 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. A three-year procurement plan was in place, and a contracts register and research and development register were available on the WMRMB web site. The Board was also involved with the national ICP project which it was hoped would lead to cashable savings. Work was continuing with the West Midlands Centre of Excellence on the provision of procurement training; a skills and training audit was being undertaken within each Fire Service; and each authority was looking at a specific contract due for renewal from a regional perspective.

Members indicated that it had been anticipated that there would be major opportunities for collaboration on procurement that had not yet materialised. An explanation was given that there had been problems with capacity within the project at the outset, but the region was now seen as well placed in a number of areas, particularly research and development, and participating authorities were now actively taking a regional view on procurement issues. It was accepted that performance on achieving efficiencies had been disappointing. Members emphasised the importance of identifying and quantifying such efficiency savings.

[c] Fire Control

Peter Dartford presented the report on behalf of the Fire Control Thematic Project Board. The Board was overseeing progress on the transition to the Regional Fire Control Centre. The Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) to run the Centre had now been set up and arrangements to provide professional support to the company were in hand. The post of Regional Control Centre Director had been re-advertised, and the possibility of an interim appointment was being considered. Progress was generally good, with limited slippage relating to IS Prime Contractor and Firelink delivery. Slippage was being carefully monitored in the event that it affected the cut-over date.

Members sought guidance on whether the national project team would underwrite any additional costs to individual fire and rescue authorities as a result of slippage. This matter was being pursued with the national project team.

Members enquired about the relationship between the LACC and the WMRMB project boards. The LACC would have to take some key decisions with regard to human resources issues affecting the control centre as soon as possible, so that transition work could commence. However, LACCs in other regions had made good progress by continuing to work alongside and take advantage of the expertise available in existing thematic project boards.

[d] Human Resources Management

Resolved that a presentation on behalf of the Human Resources Management Thematic Project board be made direct to the West Midlands Regional Management Board meeting to be held on 25th October, 2007.

25/07 WMRMB Annual Report

The Board noted the final version of the WMRMB Annual Report 2006/07 which had now been circulated to stakeholders.

26/07 WMRMB FRS Lead Officer Progress Report

The Board noted the quarterly progress report of the Fire and Rescue Service Lead Officer for the period July to September, 2007.

John Curtis of Government Office West Midlands attended the meeting. He outlined the provisions of new Government guidance on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships; emphasized the major role that Fire and Rescue Authorities had to play; and asked how best to work with fire and rescue

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representatives on such partnerships to strengthen their role.

Members felt that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships had been slow to make an impact on the ground, but that there were areas of good practice that could be shared across the region. It was suggested that Fire Authority members and officers directly involved with the Partnerships would benefit from a regional briefing

Resolved that arrangements be made for a regional briefing through the Programme Manager.

Programme
Manager

27/07 Finance Review

The Board noted a report on spend to 31st July, 2007 against the approved budget allocation for 2007/08, and actual time spent on individual projects for the same period.

28/07 East Midlands Regional Management Board Shared Services Project

The Board noted a report with regard to progress on a project commissioned by the East Midlands Regional Management Board to review and identify options in respect of common and specialist back office and support functions in the East Midlands Region. Members had asked for regular updates on this project to keep abreast of proposals that might have relevance for this region.

A further progress report would be submitted in due course.

29/07 West Midlands Centre of Excellence – Business Process Improvement Programme

Ged Bowles and David Neil of the West Midlands Centre of Excellence gave a presentation outlining the West Midlands Business Process Improvement (BPI) Programme. The programme had funding of £800,000 and was an opportunity to promote business process improvement on a regional basis by encouraging collaborative and partnership working and shared services; sharing experience, knowledge and skills; and developing areas where weaknesses had been identified. The anticipated outcome of participation in the programme was the delivery of better services to customers and significant efficiency gains. The BPI programme would provide access to needs analysis, training and development, expert advice, support capacity and a knowledge database. Examples of work already in hand with other authorities were outlined.

The Board was asked to consider how the region might benefit from involvement with the Programme and in particular if the Board should be represented on the Programme Steering Group.

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Resolved that the Lead Officer for the Performance Thematic Project Board and the Programme Manager work with representatives of the West Midlands Centre of Excellence to examine how the Regional Management Board might benefit from involvement in the Programme, taking into account the requirements of the new National Framework objectives and the need to avoid duplication with the work of existing Thematic Project Boards.

Programme
Manager

30/07 Summer Floods 2007

The Board received a presentation on the problems caused by the floods during the summer of 2007; the impact on fire and rescue services across the region and New Dimension resources; and the lessons learnt that would inform agencies in dealing with future similar occurrences.

31/07 WMRMB: 25th October, 2007

It was noted that the next meeting of the West Midlands Regional Management Board would be held on 25th October, 2007 (Host: West Midlands)

32/07 Date of next Programme Board meeting

13th December, 2007 at 10.30 am (Host: Shropshire)

Meeting ended at 12.40 pm

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