



Report

WMRMB Review 2008

February 2008



Document History

Document
Author(s)

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Revision History (See 'Planning and Control Document' for review/revision dates)

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
9 th April 2008		<i>Minor corrections to errors</i>	N/A

Distribution

Name/Organisation	Date of Issue	Version	Reference
WMRMB Programme Board, Programme Office, Treasurers, WMRMB FRS Lead Officer, WMRMB Project Managers, Programme Manager (EMRMB)	29 th February 2008	1	WMRMB Review
WMRMB, CLG	11 th April 2008	1.1	WMRMB Review

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Executive Summary

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008–11 sets out Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service and calls upon Regional Management Boards to now *take stock* of how effectively they have delivered the core functions.

In February 2008 a review of the *partnership* working arrangements within West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) and the requirements of the new National Framework to determine what activities/tasks WMRMB should address during 2008-11, was undertaken. The review made use of the Partnership Assessment Tool which is based on six Partnership Principles which Government developed and considers to be the building blocks for a successful partnership.

The results achieved through use of the tool conclude that the WMRMB partnership is working well enough overall but some aspects may need further exploration and attention. This conclusion is reinforced by 86% of stakeholders who *agree* or *strongly agree* that the partnership is achieving its aims and objectives in respect of delivering the National Framework.

This report has identified that whilst significant progress has been achieved in the delivery of the existing Framework requirements, the outcomes realised by WMRMB have been less than originally envisaged. Evidence provided through the review point to some aspects of the WMRMB partnership that require further action.

In planning ahead for the period 2008-11 the necessity for the region's Fire and Rescue Authorities to engage within WMRMB remains no less important than when the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 was introduced. The outcomes achieved to date, coupled with the region's well established governance structures, position WMRMB well to address the requirements and expectations set out within the new Framework. This report concludes with 13 recommendations which if approved, will result in the introduction of a new Programme Plan that contains a portfolio of four overarching strategic projects streams:

- **Resilience**
- **Resources & Development**
- **Procurement**
- **Shared Services**

These project streams would operate on a *task and finish basis* where appropriate, and will be led by Members or Brigade Managers acting as Senior Responsible Owners.

The review found that the preferred frequency of meetings is that WMRMB meet every six months and that the Programme Board continues to meet quarterly.

The outcomes achieved to date, coupled with the region's well established governance structures, position WMRMB well to address the requirements and expectations set out within the new Framework. But for WMRMB to succeed some fundamental changes must take place to address the issues set out within this report.

1 Introduction

1.1 Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008–11

The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008–11 sets out Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service. It does this by making clear:

- the Government's expectations for the Fire and Rescue Service,
- what Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to do; and
- the support the Government will provide in helping them to meet these objectives.

The Framework is a strategic plan which outlines the outcomes the Government expects to see delivered by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and Regional Management Boards (RMBs) across the range of their functions. It is not a national blueprint and does not provide detailed guidance on how to meet these objectives.

The Framework acknowledges that RMBs have been established for some time and states that - *'it is now time to take stock of how effectively they have delivered the core functions that were set out for them in the White Paper - Our Fire and Rescue Service in 2003'* (Paragraph 4.3). Paragraph 4.4 of the Framework lays out Government's expectation that RMBs are to undertake a review to establish any further efficiencies that can be driven out through collaborative working and sharing functions - *'To that end, Fire and Rescue Authorities working through Regional Management Boards must review the opportunities to deliver greater efficiencies through closer joint working or sharing of functions at regional or sub-regional level and take action to implement those efficiencies'* (Paragraph 4.4).

The Fire Services Act 2004 stipulates that FRAs - *'must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions'* (Part 3, Section 21 (7)).

1.2 West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB)

WMRMB has, since its inception in 2004, devoted in a structured manner FRAs' resources to the delivery of the requirements set out in the previous national frameworks. No small amount of successful outcomes have been achieved and the work of WMRMB has been recognised by the Audit Commission who in their recent audit of fire and rescue services commented – *'The extent to which fire services are engaged in the RMB varies. In some regions, such as the North West and West Midlands, engagement is good and working together is bringing real benefits. In others areas, such as the South West, the fire services support their RMB but have been slow to exploit the opportunities of working together and are making less progress'* (source: Audit Commission (2008). *Fire and Rescue Service National Report January 2008*. Page 18).

1.3 Taking Stock...

In February 2008 a review was undertaken to *'take stock'* of the *partnership* working arrangement of WMRMB and the requirements of the new National Framework to determine what activities/tasks WMRMB should address during 2008-11.

A review questionnaire was circulated to all key stakeholders and a number of interviews have been undertaken with representatives from each FRA within the region. The results of the review are set out within this report.

2 Review Methodology

The review was undertaken by means of interviews and a questionnaire. Questionnaires were circulated to:

- Members of WMRMB
- Members of WMRMB Programme Board
- Project Lead Officers
- Treasurers' Group
- Programme Office

A total of 14 questionnaires were completed and returned. The returns, whilst small, offered a representative sample size from the above groups and FRAs. A series of interviews were conducted with representatives from each of the above groups and also the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC). Anonymity has been assured to all respondents to the questionnaire and interviewees.

The questionnaire was presented in two parts, the Partnership Assessment Tool and the National Framework 2008-11. The questionnaire methodology is discussed below.

The review has not re-visited progress achieved against the seven individual project streams contained within the WMRMB Programme Plan 2006-08. Progress in these areas is reported on a regular basis to WMRMB and recorded within the WMRMB Annual Reports.

2.1 The Partnership Assessment Tool

The Assessment Tool is based on six Partnership Principles which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (*now Communities and Local Government (CLG)*) developed and considers to be the building blocks for a successful partnership.

The six principles are:

- principle 1 – recognise and accept the need for partnership
- principle 2 – develop clarity and realism of purpose
- principle 3 – ensure commitment and ownership
- principle 4 – develop and maintain trust
- principle 5 – create clear and robust partnership arrangements
- principle 6 – monitor, measure and learn



The purpose and use of the tool has been to ascertain from WMRMB partners how far they feel that these building blocks are in place. The assessment exercise is based on stakeholders within the WMRMB identifying and sharing their views about the partnership. It therefore highlights areas of conflict and consensus to be explored,

but it also allows partners to discuss the meaning and relative importance of their responses.

The purpose of this tool is to provide a simple, quick and cost-effective way of assessing the effectiveness of WMRMB partnership working. It enables a rapid appraisal (a quick 'health check') which thus avoids exhaustive, lengthy and costly investigations of partnership working in general. The tool is available for viewing on the region's website – www.wmrmb.co.uk and should be referred to for a full explanation.

2.2 The National Framework 2008-11

The second part of the questionnaire sought to review those areas of the National Framework that stakeholders believe WMRMB should address during 2008-11.

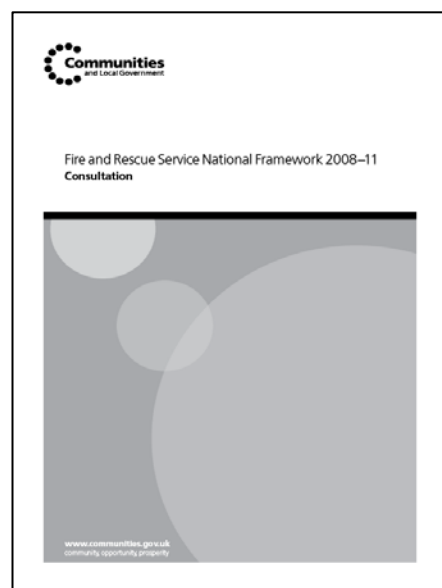
The National Framework 2008-11 (paragraph 4.3) requires RMBs to work together to deliver efficiency, effectiveness and an enhanced resilience capability for FRAs. Government recognises that RMBs have been established for some time and it is now time to take stock of how effectively they have delivered the core functions that were set out for them in the Fire White Paper, Our Fire and Rescue Service in 2003.

The Framework states that RMBs **MUST** have clear aims and objectives, and where needed, costed plans to deliver on their core business, which remains:

- *integrating common and specialist services,*
- *putting in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies,*
- *introducing regional personnel and human resource functions,*
- *developing a regional approach to training, and*
- *introducing regional procurement within the context of the National Improvement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service.*

In considering each area of *core business* in turn, stakeholders, through the review questionnaire and interviews, were asked for their views regarding how, if at all, WMRMB should address the aforesaid areas and other RMB related issues set out within the Framework.

It must be noted that the questionnaire contained an administrative error and omitted to seek views on *developing a regional approach to training*.



3 Analysis of findings

3.1 Questionnaire Findings

The full results regarding the WMRMB partnership are set out within Appendix A.

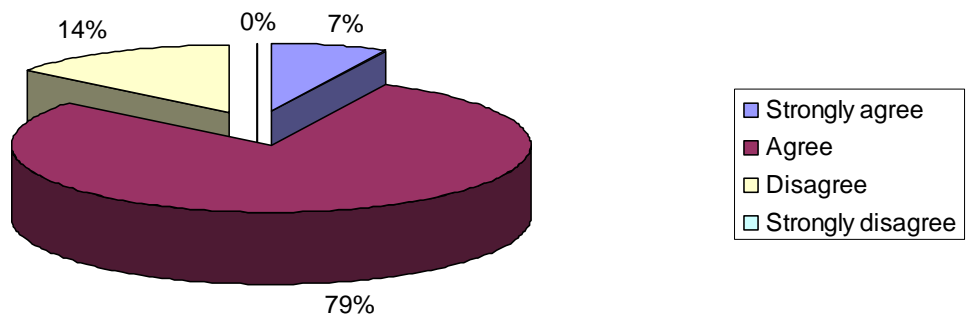
Whilst this is undoubtedly a subjective assessment the scores provided through the questionnaire provide a positive picture of WMRMB partnership, with the scores awarded concluding that: *The partnership is working well enough overall but some aspects may need further exploration and attention.*

This conclusion is reinforced by stakeholders who were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statement in respect of the WMRMB:

‘The WMRMB partnership is achieving its aims and objectives in respect of delivering the National Framework’

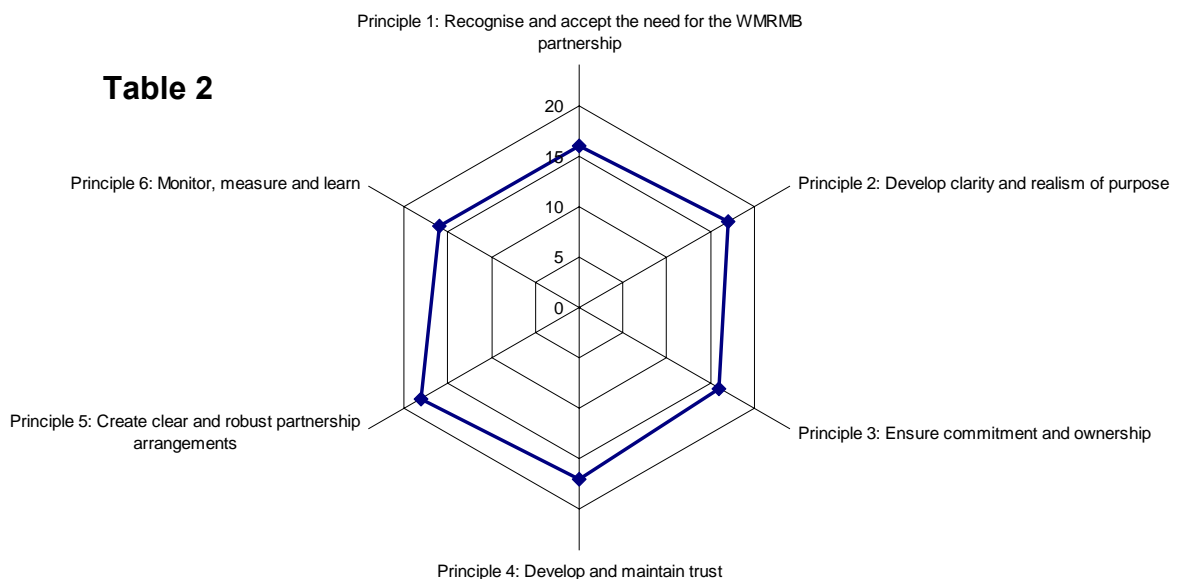
The summary responses are shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1



Using the tool’s guidance, the overall results achieved against the six Partnership Principles are depicted in Table 2 below. The table illustrates a relatively balanced outcome across all six principles, with WMRMB’s greatest strength being its ability to create clear and robust partnership arrangements.

Table 2



In simple terms, the results indicate a satisfactory level of success and maturity of the WMRMB partnership across the six principles. Using the tool's guidance the scores achieved may be interpreted as follows (*the **embolden** text indicates the aggregated WMRMB score range and associated tool commentary*):

Principle 1: recognise and accept the need for WMRMB partnership

- 19-24: Very high recognition and acceptance of the need for partnership
- **13-18: The need for partnership is recognised and accepted**
- 7-12: Recognition and acceptance of the need for partnership is limited
- 6: Recognition and acceptance of the need for partnership is minimal.

Principle 2: develop clarity and realism of purpose

- 19-24: The purpose of the partnership is very clear and realistic
- **13-18: There is some degree of purpose and realism to the partnership**
- 7-12: Only limited clarity and realism of purpose exists
- 6: The partnership lacks any clarity or sense of purpose.

Principle 3: ensure commitment and ownership

- 19-24: The partnership is characterised by strong commitment and wide ownership
- **13-18: There is some degree of commitment to, and ownership of, the partnership**
- 7-12: Only limited partnership commitment and ownership can be identified
- 6: There is little or no commitment to, or ownership of, the partnership.

Principle 4: develop and maintain trust

- 19-24: There is well developed trust among partners
- **13-18: There is some degree of trust amongst partners**
- 7-12: Trust amongst partners is poorly developed
- 6: There is little or no trust among partners.

Principle 5: create clear and robust partnership working arrangements

- 19-24: Partnership working arrangements are very clear and robust
- **13-18: Partnership working arrangements are reasonably clear and robust**
- 7-12: Partnership working arrangements are insufficiently clear and robust
- 6: Partnership working arrangements are poor.

Principle 6: monitor, measure and learn

- 19-24: The partnership monitors, measures and learns from its performance very well
- **13-18: The partnership monitors, measures and learns from its performance reasonably well**
- 7-12: The partnership monitors, measures and learns from its performance poorly in some respects
- 6: The partnership monitors, measures and learns from its performance poorly in most respects or not at all.

When combining the scores for the six Partnership Principles an overall aggregated score of **100** has been achieved by WMRMB. Utilising the tool this aggregated score may be interpreted as:

- 109–144 The partnership is working well enough in all or most respects to make the need for further detailed work unnecessary.
- **73–108** **The partnership is working well enough overall but some aspects may need further exploration and attention.**
- 37–72 The partnership may be working well in some respects but these are outweighed by areas of concern sufficient to require remedial action.
- 36 The partnership is working badly enough in all respects for further detailed remedial work to be essential.

3.2 Frequency of Meetings

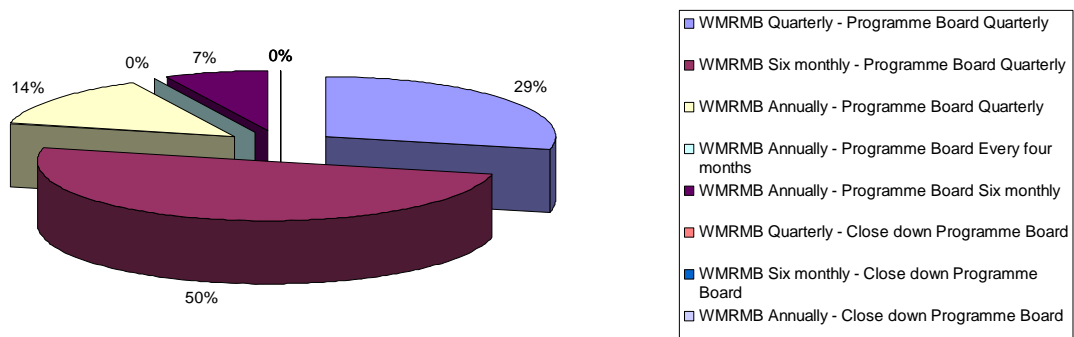
WMRMB and the Programme Board, during 2006-08 met on a quarterly basis to review progress against the WMRMB Programme Plan. The regular frequency of meetings was necessary during the infancy of the partnership to review the seven project streams instigated.

Stakeholders were asked how frequently they thought the meetings should be held during period 2008-11. Several feasible options were presented for consideration, with the following option being preferred by 50% of respondents:

That WMRMB meet every six months and that the Programme Board meets quarterly

The results are summarised in Table 3 below

Table 3



3.3 The National Framework 2008-11

The second part of the questionnaire sought to review those areas of the National Framework that stakeholders believe WMRMB should address during 2008-11.

The summary results indicated against the requirements set out within Paragraph 4.3 of the National Framework are presented in Table 4 below. Full responses are provided in Appendix B.

Table 4

National Framework requirements for RMBs (Para 4.3):	Respondents preferred course of action to address requirement:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating common and specialist services, 	<p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had successfully delivered in this area, Had a positive impact on the 3'E's and resilience, and Existing post-project arrangements are satisfactory. <p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at a regional and/or sub-regional level. <p>The majority of respondents disagreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-establish a formal project board, Delegate this task to a lead authority, third party (CFOA) or outsource it, and Do no further work in this area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies, 	<p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had successfully delivered in this area, and Had a positive impact on the 3'E's and resilience. <p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at a regional level. <p>The majority of respondents disagreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-establish a formal project board, Establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at a sub-regional level. Delegate this task to a lead authority, third party (CFOA) or outsource it, and Do no further work in this area. <p>Respondents expressed a balanced view on the effectiveness of post-project arrangements</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing regional personnel 	<p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had successfully delivered in this area, and

<p>and human resource functions (incorporating developing a regional approach to training)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had a positive impact on the 3'E's and resilience. <p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at regional level. <p>The majority of respondents disagreed that existing post-project arrangements were satisfactory and also disagreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish a formal project board, • Establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at a sub- regional level. • Delegate this task to a lead authority, third party (CFOA) or outsource it, and • Do no further work in this area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing regional procurement within the context of the National Improvement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service. 	<p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had a positive impact on the 3'E's and resilience. <p>The majority of respondents agreed that WMRMB should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish a formal project board, • Establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at regional level. <p>The majority of respondents disagreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMRMB had successfully delivered in this area, and • Existing post-project arrangements were satisfactory, <p>The majority of respondents disagreed with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities in this area at a sub- regional level. • Delegate this task to a lead authority, third party (CFOA) or outsource it, and • Doing no further work in this area.

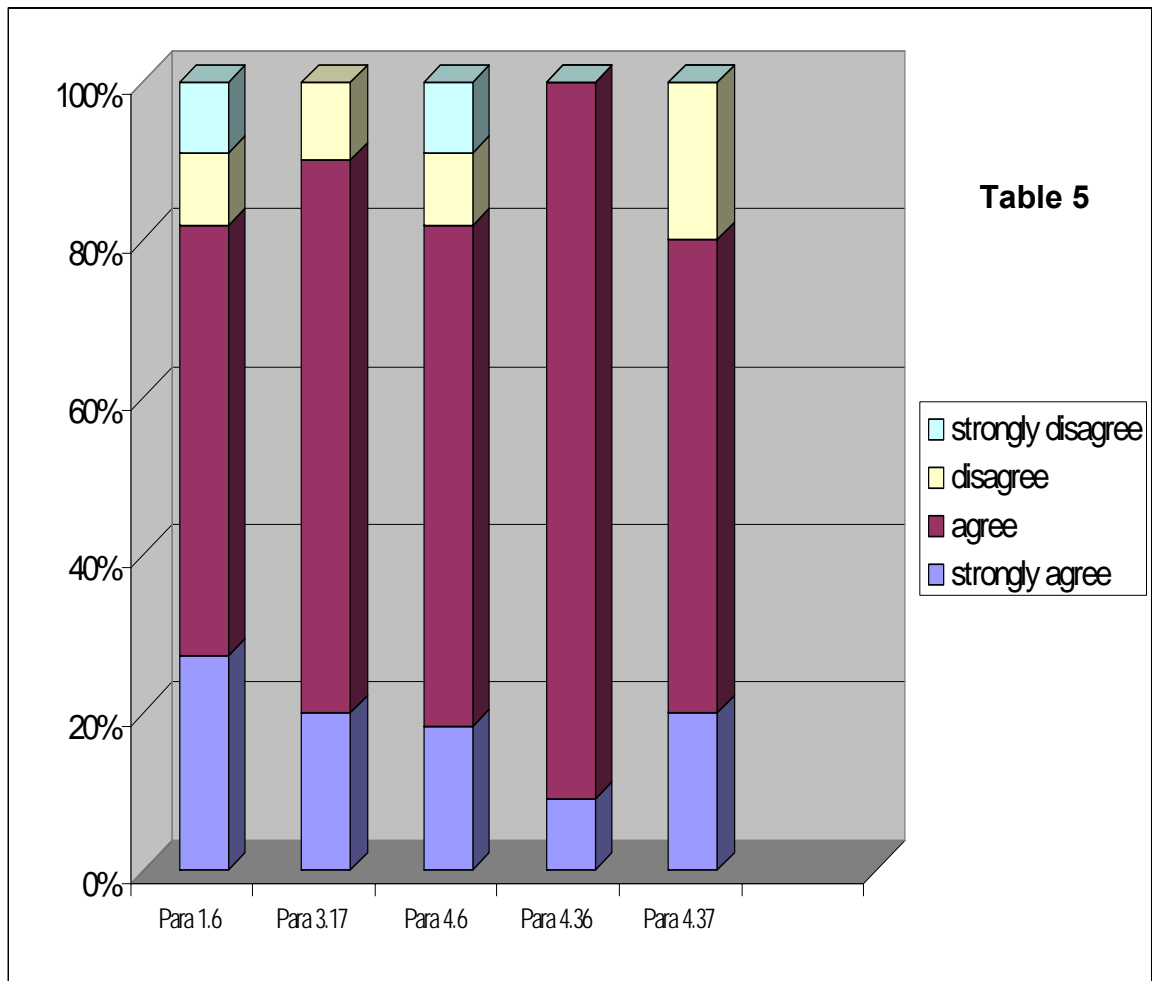
The National Framework 2008-11, in addition to the main requirements set out in paragraph 4.3 (see above), also suggests and/or places 'Should Do' areas of responsibility upon RMBs.

The review sought the views of stakeholders regarding the degree to which WMRMB should engage within the following non-mandatory areas:

- **Paragraph 1.6 (SHOULD):** FRA should review the effectiveness of "cross-border" integration arrangements with neighbouring authorities and set these out appropriately in their IRMPs. Such reviews may best be carried out jointly and RMB provide a potential forum for this to be taken forward.
- **Paragraph 3.17 (SUGGESTION):**...FRAs need to work proactively with potential RDS staff and employers, building on existing good practice. It may be appropriate for Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together on programmes to raise awareness through their RMB or with their neighbours.

- **Paragraph 4.6 (SUGGESTION):** RMBs have played an active and important role in establishing RCCs... However, the relationship between the RMB and the LACC and details of the role of the RMB are matters for local decision. If FRAs wish to formalise relationships between RMBs, RCC companies and FRAs, they can do so via the member’s agreement...
- **Paragraph 4.36 (SHOULD):** FRAs should continue to report efficiencies on an individual authority basis; but CLG will also provide a facility and guidance for authorities to report collectively on efficiency savings delivered through the RMB.
- **Paragraph 4.37 (SUGGESTION):** RIEPs...have an important role to play in supporting improved efficiency... FRAs will wish to ensure that they are properly represented within the partnership’s governance arrangements... FRAs may wish to take this forward jointly through RMBs.

The views of respondents are summarised in Table 5 below. The results indicate that the majority of respondents *agree* that WMRMB should engage within all of the aforesaid areas.



3.4 Interview Feedback

In addition to the information supplied via the questionnaires, the following comments and recommendations were offered during the interviews held. It should be noted that a diverse range of comments were received, some of which are at variance with the results provided through the questionnaire.

- Competing priorities (between FRAs and WMRMB) create capacity issues; preventing resources from fully engaging and supporting regional initiatives.
- The emergence of Local Area Agreements has led to a realignment of resources from regional to local partnerships and priorities.
- The emergence of Local Area Agreements and the associated Comprehensive Area Assessment regime has led some to question the merits and benefits of regional working.
- WMRMB is too focused on process, and not on outcomes.
- We take for granted just how much WMRMB has achieved.
- More engagement/involvement with professional bodies (e.g. CFOA) should take place.
- The WMRMB website offers an excellent focal point and repository for regional information. Its use should be expanded further.
- More frequent and structured meetings with representative bodies should be held.
- WMRMB has successfully introduced the LACC, but the LACC should now operate independently to ensure accountability.
- Whilst the level of trust within the region has improved several-fold since the introduction of WMRMB, a lack of trust still prevails.
- The necessity for WMRMB to meet on such a regular basis should be reduced.
- Resilience issues should be viewed as a priority. A full-time regional resilience staff/operations office/team should be established to enhance resilience further at both a regional and sub-regional level.
- Given the right leadership great things can be achieved through regional collaboration.
- Resilience work is best carried out in other fora such as Local and/or Regional Resilience Forums.
- The lack of direction and support from CLG to the RMBs creates confusion regarding the value of regional work.
- Members and Brigade Managers should engage more fully within WMRMB projects and act as *champions* to specific project streams.
- WMRMB is a mandated entity and FRAs have little choice in membership.
- To aid capacity, greater use of *independent* external resources (e.g. Warwick University) should be made use of to review, as an example, opportunities for integrating common and/or specialist services.
- Where appropriate, sub-regional working should be progressed as an alternative to regional working where projects can languish if not all FRAs are supportive.
- WMRMB overheads should be reduced.
- RMBs should be formally audited and benchmarked.
- WMRMB should set 'SMART' targets aligned to benefits.
- The confusion and uncertainty over FireBuy complicates regional procurement activity.
- The introduction of PRINCE2 across the region, as a result of WMRMB, has brought wider benefits within individual FRAs that are not always reported upon.

- The diversity of FRAs within the region complicates the adoption of a *one-size fits all* approach. Sub-regional working should be pursued where more effective synergy can be achieved.
- Whilst there has been considerable activity within the WMRMB, its measurable outcomes have been few. In terms of cost efficiency, the WMRMB structure and work processes have cost more than has been saved through collaborative working.
- Consideration should be given to the development and introduction of a three-year WMRMB Medium Term Financial Plan coupled to the regional Annual Efficiency Statement.

4 Conclusions

The majority (79%) of respondents completing the review questionnaire agree that WMRMB has achieved its aims and objectives; this is perhaps a view that is contrary to rhetoric expressed from time to time within the region. The outcome attained through the use Partnership Assessment Tool concludes that:

The partnership is working well enough overall but some aspects may need further exploration and attention.

This outcome is arguably reinforced by the Audit Commission who in their recent audit of fire and rescue services commented – ‘*The extent to which fire services are engaged in the RMB varies. In some regions, such as the North West and West Midlands, engagement is good and working together is bringing real benefits.*’ (Source: Audit Commission (2008). *Fire and Rescue Service National Report January 2008*. Page 18).

However, whilst significant progress has been achieved in the delivery of the existing Framework requirements, the outcomes realised by WMRMB have been less than originally envisaged. Anecdotal evidence provided through interviews and the review questionnaires do point to some aspects of the WMRMB partnership that require further exploration and attention. These aspects or issues may be attributable, to a greater or lesser extent, to a number of factors, namely:

- Overly ambitious Government expectations
- Over-ambitious WMRMB Programme Plan
- Lack of challenge from WMRMB to outcomes delivered
- Lack of clear leadership and direction in some project streams
- Lack of trust
- Lack of commitment to some projects by some FRAs
- Unwillingness, by some, to engage in major change issues
- Lack of direction and support from CLG
- Lack of capacity to resource projects
- No national benchmarking/review structures

Whatever the reasons, it is true to say that *more could have been delivered*.

In planning ahead for the period 2008-11 the necessity for the region’s FRAs to engage within WMRMB remains no less important than when the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 was introduced. There is no ‘opt-out’ clause; FRAs are legally obliged to have regard to the National Framework. The outcomes achieved to date, coupled with the region’s well established governance structures, position WMRMB well to address the requirements and expectations set out within the new Framework. But for WMRMB to succeed some fundamental changes must take place to address the issues set out within this report.

5 Recommendations

As a consequence of the feedback submitted through the review questionnaires, together with the information gained through the interviews conducted, the following 13 recommendations are presented for consideration.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the existing governance arrangements remain unaltered in respect of the membership arrangements of WMRMB and the Programme Board.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that for the period 2008-11 that WMRMB meet on a six-monthly basis, and that the Programme Board meets on a quarterly basis.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that a new Programme Plan be prepared and that contains a portfolio of four overarching strategic projects streams:

- **Resilience**
- **Resources & Development**
- **Procurement**
- **Shared Services**

These project streams would operate on a *task and finish basis* where appropriate, delivering against 'SMART' targets aligned to benefits. A proposed outline programme plan is provided at Appendix C.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that each project stream is appointed a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) to act as '*champion*' within the given area, and that the SRO is either an elected Member or Brigade Manager (who sits on WMRMB) tasked with bringing leadership and direction to the project stream.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that consideration is given to the establishment of a full-time regional resilience project team, staffed by seconded officers/managers from each FRA, to accelerate the level of collaboration and cross-border working (both internal and external to the region) to enhance resilience. The costs to support this arrangement are to be borne by each FRA, supplemented by FiReControl and/or New Dimension grants where achievable. This proposal, whilst delivered on a *task and finish basis* should be considered as integral to the transitional arrangements to the regional control centre.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that consideration is given to creating a Human Resource Practitioners *task and finish group* to review any additional areas of activity in respect of human resource management, training and development that could be addressed regionally or sub-regionally, in addition to the initiatives already implemented to date. The results of the review should be submitted to WMRMB for consideration during 2008. It is recommended that existing practitioner groups within the region undertake this review, with no additional cost implications to WMRMB or FRAs.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that the existing regional Procurement Project continues under current arrangements and delivers against the regional procurement plan, with no additional cost implications to WMRMB or FRAs.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that consideration is given to outsourcing, during 2008/09, a detailed review of areas suitable for greater collaboration within common and specialist services. Such a review would require clarity from WMRMB regarding the *in* and *out* of scope areas to be reviewed. An indicative cost for a University operating within the region to undertake this review is circa £10,000. The review's outcome would be expected to offer proposals for implementation (if appropriate and approved) during 2009/10.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that the WMRMB Programme Office be restructured and reduced in size and commitment to provide the following regional resource:

- Programme Manager – 1 day per week
- Web Officer – 1 day per month
- Administration Officer – 1 day per month
- Accountant – 1 day per month

WMRMB may also wish to consider alternative means/resources for delivering this service. For budgetary purposes, utilising existing resources, it is estimated that a budget of £30,000 per annum would be required to deliver this function.

Recommendation 10

It is recommended that the LACC operates independently of the WMRMB, but with the proviso that a progress report is presented to each meeting of WMRMB.

Recommendation 11

It is recommended that the regional Treasurers' Group continue to meet and offer advice, guidance and scrutiny of WMRMB as appropriate. Treasurers should also consider the development and introduction of a three-year WMRMB Medium Term Financial Plan coupled to the regional Annual Efficiency Statement.

Recommendation 12

It is recommended that the WMRMB website be maintained.

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that the authorisation is given to the Programme Manager to develop agreed recommendations, into a detailed WMRMB Programme Plan 2008-11 for consideration by WMRMB.

Appendix A:

The Partnership Assessment Tool: Results

Principle 1: Recognise and accept the need for the WMRMB partnership

Elements of the principle:

- A. Identify principal partnership achievements.
- B. Identify the factors associated with successful partnership working.
- C. Identify the principal barriers to partnership working.
- D. Acknowledge whether the policy context creates voluntary, coerced or mandatory partnership working
- E. Acknowledge the extent of partners' interdependence to achieve some of their goals.
- F. Acknowledge areas in which you are not dependent upon others to achieve your goals.

Rapid Partnership Profile

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the WMRMB partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1. There have been substantial past achievements within the WMRMB partnership.	2	9	3	0
2. The factors associated with successful working are known and understood.	1	13	0	0
3. The principal barriers to successful partnership working are known and understood.	0	12	2	0
4. The extent to which WMRMB partners engage in partnership working voluntarily or under pressure/mandation is recognised and understood.	1	13	0	0
5. There is a clear understanding of WMRMB partners' interdependence in achieving some of their goals.	3	9	2	0
6. There is mutual understanding of those areas of activity where WMRMB partners can achieve some goals by working independently of each other.	1	11	2	0
Score Totals:	32	198	18	0
Overall Score:	16			
Comments:				

Principle 2: Develop clarity and realism of purpose

Elements of the principle:

- A. Ensure that the partnership is built on shared vision, shared values and agreed service principles.
- B. Define clear joint aims and objectives.
- C. Ensure joint aims and objectives are realistic.
- D. Ensure that the partnership has defined clear service outcomes.
- E. Partners' reasons for engaging in the partnership are understood and accepted.
- F. Focus partnership effort on areas of likely success.

Rapid Partnership Profile

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the WMRMB partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1. Our WMRMB partnership has a clear vision, shared values and agreed service principles.	4	8	1	0
2. We have clearly defined joint aims and objectives.	4	9	1	0
3. These joint aims and objectives are realistic.	0	11	2	1
4. The WMRMB partnership has defined clear service outcomes.	1	10	1	1
5. The reason why each WMRMB partner is engaged in the partnership is understood and accepted.	4	7	3	0
6. We have identified where early WMRMB partnership success is most likely.	1	10	2	1
Score Totals:	56	165	20	3
Overall Score:	17			
Comments:				

Principle 3: Ensure commitment and ownership

Elements of the principle:

- A. Ensure appropriate seniority of commitment.
- B. Secure widespread ownership within and outside partner organisations.
- C. Ensure sufficient consistency of commitment.
- D. Recognise and encourage individuals with networking skills.
- E. Ensure that partnership working is not dependent for success solely upon these individuals.
- F. Reward partnership working and discourage and deal with those not working in partnership.

Rapid Partnership Profile

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the WMRMB partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1. There is a clear commitment to WMRMB partnership working from the most senior levels of each partnership organisation.	2	7	4	0
2. There is widespread ownership of the WMRMB partnership across and within all partners.	0	8	5	0
3. Commitment to WMRMB partnership working is sufficiently robust to withstand most threats to its working.	1	6	7	0
4. The WMRMB partnership recognises and encourages networking skills.	2	10	2	0
5. The partnership is not dependent for its success solely upon individuals with these skills.	2	10	2	0
6. Not working in WMRMB partnership is discouraged and dealt with.	2	4	8	0
Score Totals:	36	135	56	0
Overall Score:	16			
Comments:				

Principle 4: Develop and maintain trust

Elements of the principle:

- A. Ensure each partner's contribution is equally recognised and valued.
- B. Ensure fairness in the conduct of the partnership.
- C. Ensure fairness in distribution of partnership benefits.
- D. Ensure the partnership is able to sustain a sufficient level of trust to survive external problems which create mistrust elsewhere.
- E. Trust built up within partnerships needs to be high enough to encourage significant risk taking.
- F. Ensure that the right people are in the right place at the right time.

Rapid Partnership Profile

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the WMRMB partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1. The way the WMRMB partnership is structured recognises and values each partner's contribution.	1	11	2	0
2. The way the WMRMB partnership's work is conducted appropriately recognises each partner's contribution.	1	11	2	0
3. Benefits derived from the WMRMB partnership are fairly distributed among all partners.	1	10	2	1
4. There is sufficient trust within the WMRMB partnership to survive any mistrust that arises elsewhere.	2	6	6	0
5. Levels of trust within the WMRMB partnership are high enough to encourage significant risk-taking.	1	4	9	0
6. The WMRMB partnership has succeeded in having the right people in the right place at the right time to promote partnership working.	1	9	4	0
Score Totals:	28	153	50	1
Overall Score:	17			
Comments:				

Principle 5: Create clear and robust partnership arrangements

Elements of the principle:

- A. Transparency in the financial resources each partner brings to the partnership.
- B. Awareness and appreciation of the non-financial resources each partner brings to the partnership.
- C. Distinguish single from collective responsibilities and ensure they are clear and understood.
- D. Ensure clear lines of accountability for partnership performance.
- E. Develop operational partnership arrangements which are simple, time-limited and task-oriented.
- F. Ensure the prime focus is on process, outcomes and innovation.

Rapid Partnership Profile

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the WMRMB partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1. It is clear what financial resources each partner brings to the WMRMB partnership.	6	7	1	0
2. The resources, other than finance, each partner brings to the WMRMB partnership are understood and appreciated.	3	11	0	0
3. Each WMRMB partner's areas of responsibility are clear and understood.	1	12	1	0
4. There are clear lines of accountability for the performance of the WMRMB partnership as a whole.	3	6	5	0
5. Operational WMRMB partnership arrangements are simple, time-limited and task-oriented.	2	7	5	0
6. The WMRMB partnership's principal focus is on process, outcomes and innovation.	2	5	7	0
Score Totals:	68	144	38	0
Overall Score:	18			
Comments:				

Principle 6: Monitor, measure and learn

Elements of the principle:

- A. Agree a range of success criteria.
- B. Develop arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how well the partnership's service aims and objectives are being met.
- C. Develop arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how effectively the partnership itself is working.
- D. Ensure widespread dissemination of monitoring and review findings amongst partners.
- E. Celebrate and publicise partnership success and root out continuing barriers.
- F. Reconsider/revise partnership aims, objectives and arrangements.

Rapid Partnership Profile

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the WMRMB partnership which is the subject of this assessment exercise as a whole?

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
1. The WMRMB partnership has clear success criteria in terms of both service goals and the partnership itself.	1	7	5	1
2. The WMRMB partnership has clear arrangements effectively to monitor and review how successfully its service aims and objectives are being met.	2	8	4	0
3. There are clear arrangements effectively to monitor and review how the partnership itself is working.	2	7	5	0
4. There are clear arrangements to ensure that monitoring and review findings are, or will be, widely shared and disseminated amongst the partners.	2	7	5	0
5. WMRMB partnership successes are well communicated outside of the partnership.	0	7	6	1
6. There are clear arrangements to ensure that WMRMB partnership aims, objectives and working arrangements are reconsidered and, where necessary, revised in the light of monitoring and review findings.	0	9	5	0
Score Totals:	28	135	60	2
Overall Score:	16			
Comments:				

The Relative Significance of the 6 Principles

Please place a tick in the box you think most appropriate for each Principle:

The Relative Significance of the 6 Principles

Principles	← Importance →				
	High 5	4	3	2	Low 1
Principle 1: recognise and accept the need for partnership	6	3	4	1	0
Principle 2: develop clarity and realism of purpose	7	4	3	0	0
Principle 3: ensure commitment and ownership	7	5	2	0	0
Principle 4: develop and maintain trust	7	5	2	0	0
Principle 5: create clear and robust partnership working arrangements	4	9	0	1	0
Principle 6: monitor, measure and learn	6	4	4	0	0

To what extent do you agree with the following statement in respect of the WMRMB partnership, as a whole, which is the subject of this assessment?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The WMRMB partnership is achieving its aims and objectives in respect of delivering the National Framework	1	10	2	0

Please add below any comments on the performance of the Partnership.

Frequency of Meetings

WMRMB and the Programme Board currently meet on a quarterly basis. During 2008-11 how frequently do you think meetings should be held?

Meeting Options	WMRMB	Programme Board	Please Tick (✓)
Option 1 (<i>Current arrangements</i>)	Quarterly	Quarterly	4
Option 2	Six monthly	Quarterly	7
Option 3	Annually	Quarterly	2
Option 4	Annually	Every four months	0
Option 5	Annually	Six monthly	1
Option 6	Quarterly	<i>Close down Programme Board</i>	0
Option 7	Six monthly		0
Option 8	Annually		0
Option 9 (<i>other – please state</i>)			0

Appendix B:

Fire & Rescue Service National Framework: Results

<i>Integrating common and specialist services</i>	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1. WMRMB has successfully delivered in this area to date.	0	9	3	0
2. The outcomes achieved have had a positive impact upon efficiency, effectiveness and/or an enhanced resilience capability for Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands region.	1	6	5	0
3. WMRMB should re-establish a formal WMRMB Project Board to undertake further work in this area during 2008-11	1	4	7	0
4. WMRMB should establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities within this area at regional level.	0	8	3	0
5. WMRMB should establish 'Task & Finish' Groups to review further opportunities within this area at sub-regional levels.	1	5	5	0
6. WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a lead Fire and Rescue Service/Authority to lead upon.	2	2	8	0
7. WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a third party (e.g. CFOA) to lead upon (if agreeable to the third party).	0	0	11	1
8. WMRMB should outsource this task to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, a Consultancy Firm or University (e.g. Warwick University) to lead upon. <i>(If you 'strongly agree/agree' please state below which organisation should undertake this work.)</i>	0	2	7	3
9. WMRMB should accept that existing post-project arrangements are satisfactory (i.e. the current established forums and practitioner groups etc adequately address this need).	0	8	4	0
10. WMRMB should do nothing further in this area.	0	1	6	5
Other options/comments: (please state)				

Putting in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1. WMRMB has successfully delivered in this area to date.	0	10	2	0
2. The outcomes achieved have had a positive impact upon efficiency, effectiveness and/or an enhanced resilience capability for Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands region.	0	8	4	0
3. WMRMB should re-establish a formal WMRMB Project Board to undertake further work in this area during 2008-11	1	4	6	1
4. WMRMB should establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities within this area at regional level.	0	8	3	1
5. WMRMB should establish 'Task & Finish' Groups to review further opportunities within this area at sub-regional levels.	0	5	5	1
6. WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a lead Fire and Rescue Service/Authority to lead upon.	1	2	8	1
7. WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a third party (e.g. CFOA) to lead upon (if agreeable to the third party).	1	0	8	3
8. WMRMB should outsource this task to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, a Consultancy Firm or University (e.g. Warwick University) to lead upon. <i>(If you 'strongly agree/agree' please state below which organisation should undertake this work.)</i>	1	0	8	3
9. WMRMB should accept that existing post-project arrangements are satisfactory (i.e. the current established forums and practitioner groups etc adequately address this need).	0	6	4	1
10. WMRMB should do nothing further in this area.	1	1	6	3
Other options/comments: (please state)				

<i>Introducing regional personnel and human resource functions</i>	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1. WMRMB has successfully delivered in this area to date.	0	7	4	0
2. The outcomes achieved have had a positive impact upon efficiency, effectiveness and/or an enhanced resilience capability for Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands region.	0	8	3	0
3. WMRMB should re-establish a formal WMRMB Project Board to undertake further work in this area during 2008-11	0	5	7	0
4. WMRMB should establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities within this area at regional level.	1	4	4	0
5. WMRMB should establish 'Task & Finish' Groups to review further opportunities within this area at sub-regional levels.	1	4	6	0
6. WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a lead Fire and Rescue Service/Authority to lead upon.	1	1	9	0
7. WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a third party (e.g. CFOA) to lead upon (if agreeable to the third party).	0	1	9	1
8. WMRMB should outsource this task to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, a Consultancy Firm or University (e.g. Warwick University) to lead upon. <i>(If you 'strongly agree/agree' please state below which organisation should undertake this work.)</i>	0	1	9	1
9. WMRMB should accept that existing post-project arrangements are satisfactory (i.e. the current established forums and practitioner groups etc adequately address this need).	0	4	6	1
10. WMRMB should do nothing further in this area.	0	2	6	3
Other options/comments: (please state)				

Introducing regional procurement within the context of the National Improvement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service		strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
1.	WMRMB has successfully delivered in this area to date.	0	6	5	1
2.	The outcomes achieved have had a positive impact upon efficiency, effectiveness and/or an enhanced resilience capability for Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands region.	0	7	4	1
3.	WMRMB should re-establish a formal WMRMB Project Board to undertake further work in this area during 2008-11	0	7	4	0
4.	WMRMB should establish a 'Task & Finish' Group to review further opportunities within this area at regional level.	2	6	4	0
5.	WMRMB should establish 'Task & Finish' Groups to review further opportunities within this area at sub-regional levels.	1	4	7	0
6.	WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a lead Fire and Rescue Service/Authority to lead upon.	0	5	7	0
7.	WMRMB should delegate responsibility for this task to a third party (e.g. CFOA) to lead upon (if agreeable to the third party).	0	0	9	2
8.	WMRMB should outsource this task to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, a Consultancy Firm or University (e.g. Warwick University) to lead upon. <i>(If you 'strongly agree/agree' please state below which organisation should undertake this work.)</i>	0	1	8	1
9.	WMRMB should accept that existing post-project arrangements are satisfactory (i.e. the current established forums and practitioner groups etc adequately address this need).	0	5	6	1
10.	WMRMB should do nothing further in this area.	0	2	6	3
Other options/comments: (please state)					

The National Framework 2008-11, in addition to the main requirements set out in paragraph 4.3, also suggests and/or places 'Should Do' areas of responsibility upon Regional Management Boards. These areas are summarised below. Please indicate your preference to the WMRMB undertaking these areas of work.

			strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
National Framework 2008-11: 'Should Do' and Suggested Paragraphs						
Para:	Status	Paragraph Summary				
1.6	SHOULD	<i>FRA should review the effectiveness of "cross-border" integration arrangements with neighbouring authorities and set these out appropriately in their IRMPs. Such reviews may best be carried out jointly and RMB provide a potential forum for this to be taken forward.</i> WMRMB should address this task/issue	3	6	1	1
3.17	SUGGESTION	<i>...FRAs need to work proactively with potential RDS staff and employers, building on existing good practice. It may be appropriate for Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together on programmes to raise awareness through their RMB or with their neighbours.</i> WMRMB should address this task/issue	2	8	1	0
4.6	SUGGESTION	<i>RMBs have played an active and important role in establishing RCCs... However, the relationship between the RMB and the LACC and details of the role of the RMB are matters for local decision. If FRAs wish to formalise relationships between RMBs, RCC companies and FRAs, they can do so via the member's agreement...</i> WMRMB should address this task/issue	2	7	1	1
4.36	SHOULD	<i>FRAs should continue to report efficiencies on an individual authority basis; but CLG will also provide a facility and guidance for authorities to report collectively on efficiency savings delivered through the RMB.</i> WMRMB should address this task/issue	1	10	0	0
4.37	SUGGESTION	<i>RIEPs... have an important role to play in supporting improved efficiency... FRAs will wish to ensure that they are properly represented within the partnership's governance arrangements... FRAs may wish to take this forward jointly through RMBs.</i> WMRMB should address this task/issue	2	5	2	0

Appendix C: Outline Programme Plan

Project Stream	Overarching Objectives:	Timescales	Approach to Delivery	Resource/Costs
Resilience	1. Review and where appropriate, develop effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies	Complete reviews by December 2008	Establishment of a full-time regional resilience project team, staffed by seconded officers/managers from each FRA operating on a <i>task and finish basis</i>	Appointment of a group manager from each FRA. The costs to support this arrangement are to be borne by each FRA, supplemented by FiReControl and/or New Dimension grants where achievable
	2. Review cross-border integration arrangements (both internal and external to the region)	Implementation during 2009		
	3. Monitor progress, and where appropriate, support the delivery of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Fire Control	Quarterly monitoring		
Resources & Development	1. Review and where appropriate, introduce regional and/or sub-regional personnel and human resource functions,	Complete reviews by December 2008	Establishment of a Human Resource Practitioners <i>task and finish group</i> to review any additional areas of activity in respect of human resource management, training and development	Utilisation of existing forums/resources – no additional cost implications
	2. Review and where appropriate, introduce regional and/or sub-regional training and development functions,	Implementation during 2009		
	3. Raise awareness of the benefits of the Retained Duty System to both potential recruits and their employers,			
Shared Services	1. Review and where appropriate, consider the integration common and specialist services,	Complete review by December 2008 Implementation during 2009	An outsourced independent review.	Circa £10k
Procurement	1. To continue to introduce regional procurement within the context of the National Improvement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service,	Quarterly reporting of progress/improvements to WMRMB Programme Board	Continuation of current arrangements	Utilisation of existing forums/resources – no additional cost implications