



Report

Report number/reference: RMB/SGW	Date issued: 21st July 2009
Agenda Item: 13	Date of Meeting: 23rd July 2009
This report is: For information	Meeting Venue: WMFS HQ

Report Title:

WMRMB Regional Improvement Group

Report Author:

Steve Worrall
WMRMB Programme Manager

Circulated to:

- WMRMB

Please forward to:

Summary:

A WMRMB review completed in 2008 identified that that whilst small scale efficiencies could be achieved through some limited regional or sub-regional working, the real opportunity for capacity building rests in the sharing of *expertise* and *knowledge*. To this end agreement was reached to create a regional improvement group (RIG).

The priority for the RIG was agreed to be the undertaking of critical friend/mock peer reviews using the *'Fire and Rescue Operational Assessment (OpA) Toolkit.'*

This report summarises progress to date.

Recommendation(s):

WMRMB are requested to:

1. Note progress to date and planned activities.

For further information, please contact:

Steve Worrall

WMRMB Programme Manager



01743 260204



07967 465813



01743 260268



steve.worrall@shropshirefire.gov.uk

1. Background Details:

The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008-11 sets out a number of obligations/requirements to be addressed by both fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) and regional management boards (RMBs). Paragraphs 4.3 and 4.5 of the Framework requires RMBs to undertake a review to establish any further areas of efficiencies that can be driven out through collaborative working and sharing functions at regional or sub-regional levels.

A review was conducted by this region in 2008 and concluded that whilst small scale efficiencies could be achieved through some limited regional or sub-regional working, the real opportunity for capacity building lay in the sharing of *expertise* and *knowledge*. To this end, WMRMB agreed at its January 2009 meeting to the creation of regional improvement group (RIG).

The priority for the RIG was agreed to be the undertaking of critical friend/mock peer reviews using the '*Fire and Rescue Operational Assessment (OpA) Toolkit*' published in April 2009.

Progress to date

- The RIG undertook its inaugural meeting on 7th May (Notes from meeting attached at Appendix A).
- In preparation for regionally led OpA reviews arrangements were made to train and accredit regional peer reviewers, with the training arranged through IDeA. In May a total of 14 members of staff from the region successfully completed the peer reviewer course.
- A three-day regional critical-friend OpA peer review took place in Shropshire FRS in July. (No other FRS elected to undertake a critical-friend OpA review).
- The RIG have successfully secured from *Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM)* grant funding of £175,000 to support the sharing of *expertise* and *knowledge* within region. See Appendix B.

Planned Activities

FRAs within the region are currently at the closing stages of their respective formal Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA). The RIG plans to meet shortly to review outcomes from both CAA and OpA reviews. Areas of notable practice and common areas for improvement will be considered by the RIG in partnership with IEWM. Recommendations will be developed for approval by WMRMB to draw upon allocated IEWM funding to address areas for improvement, thus promoting the sharing of knowledge of expertise.

CFOA, on 15th July 2009, published¹ a guide on suggested national performance indicators for data collation (available at on the CFOA website: www.cfoa.org.uk/10461). The RIG proposes to review the guide, seeking out opportunities for regional benchmarking where appropriate, in context of sharing of knowledge of expertise.

¹ CFOA Circular Reference Number 2009/1016

2. Legal Implications:

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

3. Financial Implications:

The Improvement and Efficiency Partnership – West Midlands (IEWM) have awarded a grant of £175,000 to support the activities of the RIG. See Appendix B.

4. Background Papers:

- WMRMB Report - *FRS National Framework 2008-11 Common and Specialist Services Review*. 30th January 2009.
- WMRMB Report – *WMRMB Regional Improvement Group*. 23rd April 2009.

5. Attachments:

- Appendix A – Notes from 'RIG' Meeting 7th May 2009
 - Appendix B – IEWM Grant Notification
-

West Midlands Regional Management Board
**Notes of the meeting of the Regional Improvement Group
held at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
on Thursday 7 May 2009.**

Present: Steve Worrall (SFRS), Ged Edwards (Shrops FRS), Jean Cole (H&WFS), Malcolm Westwood (WMFS), Balbir Singh (Warks FRS), Alison Pritchard (Shrops FRS).

- 1. Apologies**
Apologies for absence were received from Chris Enness (Staffs FRS)
- 2. Operational Assurance Peer Review Process**
Ged presented brief notes on the proposals for the peer reviews within the west midlands brigades (attached).
- 3. Updates**
The current audit situation was discussed and experiences shared.
- 4. Peer Review training**
All present were able to commit to the IDeA training, Warks however would not be able to send representatives to the first tranche but would be interested in further training, Autumn 2009 was suggested. The format of the training to be decided nearer the time.
- 5. Peer Reviews**
As individual Peer Reviews have been organised H&W, Warks and Staffs (contacted after the meeting) were unable to commit to participating in the Regional Peer Reviews at the initial suggested dates. WMFS felt that as they had undergone the process as a pilot they were unsure how the Regional Peer Review would benefit them at this stage.

Shrops will undertake a peer review on 23, 24 and 25 June, could all let Alison know availability of officers for these dates. Accommodation and other housekeeping arrangements will be discussed nearer the time.
- 6. The way forward**
The group discussed carrying out peer reviews either pre or post the IDeA reviews. The post review would be focused on the IDeA feedback, monitoring and considering emerging common themes within improvement plans. The role of the group to support regional performance improvement and sharing of knowledge and information.
- 7. Other matters arising**
The group discussed the benefits of holding bi-monthly Performance meetings and it was agreed that these should be organised with the role of chairperson rotated.
- 8. Date of next meeting**
Could all let Alison know their availability for the first two weeks in July ASAP (and whether you have accommodation available for a meeting on those dates). A report will go to the next RMB meeting scheduled for 23 July 2009.

(Separate attachment)



Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
Brigade Headquarters
St Michael's Street
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY1 2HJ

14th July 2009

Fao: Mr Steve Worrall, WMRMB Programme Manager,
CC: Mr Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer,

Dear Steve,

West Midland Fire Authorities' Common and Specialist Services Review

I am pleased to confirm that Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM) has allocated Grant Funding of £175,000 to support the Common and Specialist Services Review programme.

Interim funding for this project can be claimed now with the remainder being paid upon project completion via submission of an IEWM Claim Form and associated invoice; if this is likely to be problematic, please contact Ged Bowles on 07827 894190, gbowles@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk to discuss claiming funding for this project.

This award is made subject to you agreeing to work with IEWM to:

- Actively promote the project both regionally and nationally
- Effectively capture Return on Investment and all associated efficiencies/benefits
- Transfer knowledge and disseminate key learning and outcomes

Should you have any queries regarding this award, or any of the provisions highlighted overleaf, please contact Ged Bowles.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you every success with the project.

Yours sincerely

Andy Hancox,
Director
ahancox@westmidlandsiep.gov.uk

Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands conditions of funding:

- For all approved projects, the minimum project documentation required by IEWM includes:
 - A Project Plan
 - A mieTool - Return on Investment or agreed equivalent
 - Highlight Report and Claim Form – with agreed milestones
 - Case Study / Evaluation

The IEWM Project Management pack is available on our website www.westmidlandsiep.gov.uk. A member of our Programme Management team will contact the Project Manager to ensure they are familiar with our documentation and are clear about the processes for submitting highlight reports and making claims etc.

- Awards of up to £50,000 will normally be paid upon project completion. For projects over £50,000, 25% of funding will be paid in advance with the remainder being released in staged payments, subject to the prior delivery of each milestone as agreed between the Project Manager and IEWM.
- Claims are submitted using the IEWM Project Highlight Report, signed by the Local Authority/Partnership Project Manager and countersigned by the IEWM Workstream Manager. All claims must be accompanied by an invoice from the authority accountable for the project.
- All Project Managers will provide IEWM with a project plan containing the key project tasks and milestones etc., supported by the submission of regular progress updates/highlight reports so that project delivery can be effectively monitored.
- IEWM must be able to identify the cashable; non cashable and qualitative benefits/associated delivery timescale for all projects. Where projects are expecting to generate cashable efficiencies, IEWM requires a mieTool Return on Investment (ROI) calculation to be completed to provide a robust estimate of the level of financial returns expected. Again, a member of our Programme Team will provide guidance and support for the Project Manager to complete a mieTool calculation.
- IEWM has a significant role to play both regionally and nationally in terms of promoting best practice and encouraging collaborative improvement. All offers of support are provided subject to recipients of grant funding agreeing to:
 - Actively promote the work of IEWM as a key sponsor of your project and to fully engage with our activities;
 - Work with IEWM to disseminate project outcomes and learning through a variety of media and/or learning events etc.;
 - Collaborate with other authorities at a regional or national level as appropriate;
 - Publish all project outcomes, benefits and efficiencies delivered using the IEWM case study format;
 - Capture and make available to IEWM (and through us, the National Improvement & Efficiency Programme Office) details of all outputs delivered.
- All 'Products' produced are co-owned with IEWM (for example, this will include any tools, documentation and promotional materials developed as part of this project/programme).
- Please note failure to achieve agreed milestones or deliver the intended project outcomes may ultimately impact upon the amount of funding received.
- All projects should maintain a record of their revenue and capital expenditure and provide this on request to IEWM.
- All claims should be made in accordance with the agreed payment schedule. IEWM reserves the right to redirect funding to other priorities where claims have not been made in a timely manner and sufficient notice of our intention to redirect funding has been given.