

Minutes

Agenda Item 19

24th April, 2008, at 11.00 a.m.
West Midlands Fire Service HQ, Birmingham

Present: **Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority**
Councillor Brigadier Jones (Chair);
Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Councillors Holyoak and West;
Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Councillor Bloomer and D Davis;
Representing Warwickshire County Council
Councillor C Davis and Hobbs;
Representing West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Councillors Eustace and Howard.

Advisors:
Chief Fire Officer Brown (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Dartford (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Hayden (Hereford and Worcester Fire and
Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service);
Chief Fire Officer Taylor (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service).

Lynda Bateman (Treasurer);
Sue Phelps (Clerk) and Georgina Wythes;
Sioned Harper (representing the Legal Adviser);
Steve Worrall (Programme Manager).

Observer: Councillor Lt Col D Allen.

Visitors: Philip Purssey, Sue Croughan, Neil Backes and Andrew Brodie
(West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Control Centre Limited).

Apologies: Councillors Box, Chattaway, Hinton, Taylor and Udall.

1/08 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed Peter Dartford to his first meeting as Chief Fire Officer for the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service; and also reported that Sian Stroud, the Legal Adviser, had recently given birth to a daughter.

2/08 **Minutes**

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

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3/08 Notes of the Programme Board

The Board considered the notes of the meetings of the Programme Board held on 13th December, 2007 and 13th March, 2008.

Resolved that the recommendations of the Programme Board as set out in the notes be approved.

4/08 Correspondence relating to the Regional Management Board

None received.

5/08 Progress Presentation – FireControl Update

Philip Purssey, Director of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Control Centre Limited gave a presentation on progress with commissioning of the Regional Control Centre near Wolverhampton.

He reminded members that this development was part of a national project co-ordinated by the Department of Communities and Local Government, and that 9 regional centres would eventually replace the 46 existing control rooms. The control centres would use compatible integrated technology. The building work for the West Midlands Centre was now complete, and he had taken up his appointment in February, 2008.

The Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) which would run the Control Centre was established in March 2008, following incorporation in February, 2008, and its interim financial and governance structures had been agreed.

It was anticipated that the Centre could become operational as soon as October, 2009, with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue being the first to migrate to the new Centre. The project was on schedule to meet that date. The information system would be installed shortly and testing would take place in September 2009 in readiness for operational delivery.

Work was in hand on the staffing model and shift/rota patterns for the Centre and the LACC would need to make decisions on human resources matters in the near future. Some senior staff had already been appointed and more senior recruitment would take place shortly.

A communications plan was being implemented which included a web site and visits to the new Centre by existing control room staff.

The scope of operations of the Centre was outlined together with an indication of risks for the project.

Members asked for clarification on the proposed staffing model and stressed the importance of getting the right level of staffing to deal with demand. Members

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also enquired whether deviation from the CLG model would impact on the business case. Mr Purssey indicated that investigations were still ongoing on the staffing model and agreed that it was critical to the success of the project to have the right staffing in place. It was hoped that the vast majority of existing control room staff would move to the new Centre.

Members enquired when information would be available on the costs to individual authorities and what provision had been made to compensate authorities for unforeseen costs. Peter Dartford indicated that the full business case should be finalised in June or July 2008 which should give an indicative breakdown per region.

Members indicated that they would need professional advice before taking any major decisions on migrating to Regional Control.

6/08 WMRMB FRS Lead Officer Report

The Programme Manager presented a progress report for the period January to March, 2008, on behalf of Tina Thomas, the FRS Lead Officer. Funding for this post ceased with effect from 31st March, 2008.

Resolved that the Chair write a letter of thanks to Tina Thomas, thanking her for all her work with the Regional Management Board.

7/08 WMRMB Finance Review

The Treasurer indicated that a full report on the Board's finances for 2007/08 would be submitted to the next meeting.

8/08 WMRMB Review 2008

The Board received the WMRMB Review 2008 which set out the findings and recommendations of a recent appraisal of this Region's partnership working arrangements and the requirements of the new National Framework 2008/11.

The Review was considered by the Programme Board at its meeting on 13th March, 2008, which tasked the Chief Fire Officer of the West Midlands Fire Service and the Programme Manager to develop the recommendations into a draft Programme Plan for 2008/09.

Resolved:

- (1) that recommendations 1 and 3 to 13 inclusive be approved in principle, and that reports be brought back to the Board as necessary to agree the detailed implementation thereof, after consultation with Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of constituent Fire Authorities as necessary;

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- (2) that with regard to recommendation 2, the Regional Management Board and the Programme Board alternate, each meeting twice per year.

9/08 **WMRMB Programme Plan 2008/09**

The Programme Manager presented a draft Programme Plan for 2008/09 setting out proposals for the delivery of this Region's activities to meet the requirements of the new draft Fire and Rescue National Framework 2008/11.

Resolved:

- (1) that the draft Programme Plan and Programme Budget be approved in principle pending receipt of the final National Framework for 2008/11 and subject to approval of the WMRMB overall budget;
- (2) that Senior Responsible Owners and Project Lead Officers be appointed to project areas as indicated below:

| <u>Project</u> | <u>SRO</u> | <u>Lead Officer</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Resilience | CFOs Brown/ Dartford | Bob Russell |
| Resources and Development | CFO Hayden | Christine Walker |
| Procurement | CFO Sheehan | Mike Griffiths |
| Shared Services | CFO Taylor | Ged Edwards |

- (3) that the Programme Plan be submitted for further consideration and final approval at the next meeting of the Regional Management Board.

10/08 **Schedule of meetings 2008/09**

Resolved that meetings of the Regional Management Board and Programme Board be held as follows in 2008/09:

| Meeting | Date | Venue |
|---|---|---|
| West Midlands Regional Management Board | 24 th July, 2008 [Annual Meeting] | Sandwell MBC |
| Programme Board | 23 rd October, 2008 | Regional Fire Control tbc or Hereford and Worcester |
| West Midlands Regional Management Board | 22 nd January, 2009 | To be confirmed |
| Programme Board | 23 rd April, 2009 | Regional Fire Control tbc |

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(Meeting ended at 12 noon)

*Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes
Democratic Services Unit
Sandwell MBC
0121-569 3791*