

<p>Minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board</p>
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10th June, 2005 at 11.00 a.m.
at Shire Hall, Warwick

Present: **Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority**
Councillors G Davis, Brigadier Jones and Udall;
Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Councillors Eade, Hartin and Morgan;
Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Councillor Banks;
Representing Warwickshire County Council
Councillors Haynes (Chair), Hobbs and Shilton;
Representing West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority
Councillors Hinton and Hogarth.

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

L Bateman and C Juckes (Treasurer);
A Brandon (Regional Procurement Project Director)
P Dartford (Regional FireControl Project Director);
N Summers (Clerk)
S Worrall (Programme Manager).

Visitors: Jean Cole (Government Office West Midlands);

Observers: Mr A Rotchell.

Apologies: Councillors Bloomer, D Davis and Eustace;
Chief Fire Officer Doig;
John Gregory (Legal Adviser)

14/05 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed Councillor Eade and Chief Fire Officer Hayden to their first meeting of the Regional Management Board (RMB).

The Chair reminded members that the announcement of the location of the Regional Control Room was imminent.

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It was suggested that regional representatives of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) should be invited to attend a future meeting of the RMB to give a presentation on their view on the introduction of Regional Control Rooms.

Resolved that arrangements be made for representatives of the FBU to give a presentation to a future meeting of the RMB on their views on the introduction of Regional Control Rooms.

15/05 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January, 2005, be confirmed as a correct record.

16/05 **Meeting of the Programme Board**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 29th April, 2005.

17/05 **Meeting Protocols for the Regional Management Board**

The Clerk submitted proposed protocols drawn up at a meeting of Chairs of the constituent Fire Authorities for the management of business at future meetings of the RMB.

If approved, a further report would be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the RMB proposing a revision of standing orders and procedures in line with the protocols.

The Chair indicated that the Vice Chair and one officer were also permitted to attend the regular Regional RMB Chairs' meetings organised by the Local Government Association. It was proposed and agreed that the four Vice Chairs would attend in rotation.

Resolved that the protocols be endorsed.

18/05 **Draft Regional Procurement Strategy**

The Board considered a draft Regional Procurement Strategy that had

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been drawn up by the WMRMB Regional Procurement Project Board. The draft Strategy set out a vision for the strategic procurement of goods, works and services in an efficient and cost effective manner within an interlinked national, regional and local procurement framework.

Members asked how the Strategy would be implemented in relation to existing procurement contracts. The Project Director indicated that the Strategy would be phased in to avoid any penalties. Reference was made to the introduction of FireBuy and how it would relate to the regional strategy. The Project Director reported that FireBuy would cover specific areas of procurement, and individual Fire Authorities could choose which areas they subscribed to.

A member asked whether the strategy would include the procurement of insurance on a regional basis. The Treasurer reported that the draft National Procurement Strategy provided that RMBs should consider regional insurance procurement by June 2006. Regional insurance officers were already looking at the practicalities of such an arrangement. Many existing insurance agreements extended beyond 2006, but issues of standardisation and the possibility of dealing with some elements of insurance regionally were being examined.

With reference to paragraph 6.4 of the Strategy, a member emphasised the importance of authorities supporting local businesses wherever possible.

Members asked to see a copy of the report commissioned by the Project Board on the Region's current procurement processes.

Resolved:

- (1) that the Regional Procurement Strategy attached as an Appendix be approved;
- (2) that a presentation be made to the next meeting of the RMB on the findings of the consultants' report on regional procurement issues.

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19/05 **2005/06 Proposed Budget**

The Board considered a report on the proposed RMB budget for 2005/06.

Each constituent Fire Authority had included provision in its budget for a contribution of £50,000 towards the cost of the Programme Office. It was also anticipated that there would be underspend of £101,290 from 2004/05, and each Fire Authority was to be asked to carry forward its proportion of the underspend for RMB work. In total, it was anticipated that £351,300 would be available for RMB work in 2005/06..

Indicative costs for 2005/06 were as follows:

Programme Office	- £153,300
Training	- £ 44,400
Project costs	- £114,000

This would leave a contingency figure of £39,600.

Resolved that the proposed budget for 2005/06 be approved, subject to constituent Fire Authorities agreeing to carry forward underspend from 2004/05 for RMB purposes.

20/05 **End of Tranche Review 4**

The Board received a report setting out progress with the Modernisation Programme for the period to 31st May, 2005.

The Programme had been in existence for almost one year. Excellent progress had been achieved in some areas, but some projects had failed to deliver the level of outputs expected. Governance and management structures for the programme were robust and had been cited nationally as representing best practice.

A detailed review of activities in the Programme's first year had been undertaken which indicated that the breadth of activity was over-ambitious in some areas, resulting in a lack of project leadership and control. Rationalisation of the programme was proposed to address these issues (see Minute No 21/05 below).

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Reference was made to anticipated delays at national level in awarding the contract for FireLink which was likely to impact on the Regional Control Rooms project, resulting in delay in implementation and an increase in project cost. These issues had been raised with the National FireControl Project Team, and it was anticipated that any additional costs would be met nationally.

21/05 **WMRMB Modernisation Programme Review 2004/05**

With reference to Minute No 20/05 above, the Board considered a report on a review of progress in the first year of the WMRMB Modernisation Programme in addressing the Government's agenda of reform and modernisation of the region's fire and rescue services.

The Board had been highly successful in creating an environment that had the expertise and governance to deliver modernisation and reform. The Board had the ability to deliver change during 2005/06 but to do so needed to rationalise its structures and offer greater support and leadership to project teams.

The Programme Board had considered a report on this matter and recommended that:

- 1) The current Programme Board structure, management and governance arrangements should remain unaltered;
- 2) The current Programme Office arrangements should remain unaltered;
- 3) The current role of the each Authority's Business Change Manager should remain unaltered;
- 4) The current Treasurers Group arrangements should remain unaltered;
- 5) A Programme Plan for 2005/06 should be developed and approved by the Programme Board that:
 - a) prioritises the requirements of the 2005/06 National Framework document, and
 - b) sets SMART (Specific Measurable Accurate Realistic Timely) aims for the delivery of Framework's requirements;

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6) The current twenty-two project boards should be rationalised to seven thematic project boards, namely:

- Fire Safety
- Performance
- Procurement
- Resilience
- Control
- Human Resource Management
- Response

supported by an eighth project board that would focus specifically on stakeholder engagement;

7) The existing twenty three project areas be assigned to the appropriate project board;

8) The seven new project boards shall comprise (as a minimum):

- 1 x Senior Responsible Owner (elected Member);
- 5 x Project Senior User/Supplier (brigade/area manager, one per authority), one of whom will be designated Project Lead Officer;

9) The Programme Board shall determine and agree nominations to fulfil the project board roles;

10) The existing project boards shall be disbanded in a structured manner through a transition strategy;

11) The new project boards shall develop Business Plans that incorporate SMART objectives that facilitate the delivery of the aims of the Programme Plan;

12) The project boards shall determine the most appropriate use of resources (project managers, project teams, consultants etc) to secure the delivery of the respective Business Plans;

13) The appointed project managers shall complete Project Initiation Documents that summarise their plans for the delivery of the respective Business Plans;

14) The Programme Office shall develop and deliver a training

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programme to equip and prepare the new project boards to undertake their roles and responsibilities;

- 15) The Programme Office shall review and develop further regional templates to ensure uniformity of approach in the development of business plans.

Members supported the rationalisation of the programme. Discussion ensued on the proposal set out in recommendation (6) above to establish an eighth project board focusing on stakeholder engagement. It was agreed that whilst each of the seven project boards might have some stakeholder engagement, there should also be engagement at a strategic level. A wide range of stakeholders could be involved which might include representatives of business and industry as well as trades unions. It was important to maintain a close link with the RMB and constituent Fire Authorities in conducting this strategic engagement, and it was therefore suggested that this would be best accomplished through a sub-group comprising the Chairs of the constituent Fire Authorities reporting direct to the RMB, rather than through an additional project board.

Resolved:

- (1) that the recommendations set out above be approved, subject to (2) below, and that the Programme Board be authorised to oversee their implementation;
- (2) that the recommendation to establish an eighth project board to deal with stakeholder engagement be not approved;
- (3) that a Committee comprising the Chairs of the constituent Fire Authorities be established to deal with stakeholder engagement on behalf of the RMB.

22/05 New Dimension Update

The Board was informed that Mike Reed of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was now unable to attend to give a presentation.

Jean Cole of Government Office West Midlands undertook to make arrangements for the presentation to be made to the next meeting.

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23/05 Correspondence Relating to the Regional Management Board

The Board noted the following items:

- Confirmation from the Audit Commission that the WMRMB will be audited through oversight of the accounts of the five constituent Fire Authorities;
- ODPM Circular 19-2005 indicating a delay in placing a contract for the FireLink project;
- Information from the Local Government Association on revised arrangements for consideration of fire service matters, as a result of which RMBs will be represented on the reconfigured Fire Service Modernisation Task Group;
- Arrangements for FireControl regional project briefings on 28th July 2005 (Birmingham) and 1st July 2005 (London).

24/05 Councillor Richard Udall

Councillor Udall announced that he was retiring as a member of the RMB. He expressed his best wishes for the future success of the RMB. The Chair and members thanked Councillor Udall for his valuable contribution to the work of the Board.

13/05 Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 26th July, 2005 at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Pirehill, Stone (Annual Meeting).

(Meeting ended at 12 noon)

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