

<p><b>Minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board</b></p>
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**30<sup>th</sup> July, 2004 at 11.00 a.m.**  
**at the West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham**

**Present:**       **Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority**  
Councillors G Davis, Udall and Taylor  
**Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority**  
Councillors Austin (Chair), Box (substitute for Councillor Hartin) and Councillor Lt Col Littlejohns.  
**Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority**  
Councillors Banks, Bather and D Davis.  
**Representing Warwickshire County Council**  
Councillors Haynes, Hobbs and Shilton.  
**Representing West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority**  
Councillors Eustace, Hinton and Hogarth.

**Observer:**       Councillor Kazi.

**Advisors:**       Acting Chief Fire Officer Brown (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service)  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Maltby (representing Chief Fire Officer Doig – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service)  
Chief Fire Officer Kerr (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service)  
Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service)  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Tregunna (representing Chief Fire Officer O'Dwyer) – Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade.

F N Summers (Clerk)  
M Griffiths (representing L Bateman - Treasurer)  
C Witham (Assistant Legal Advisor)  
S Worrall (Programme Manager).

**Apologies:**       Councillor Hartin;  
Chief Fire Officers Doig and O'Dwyer; L Bateman and J Cole (ODPM Business Change Manager).

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16/04     **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked West Midlands Fire Service for hosting the meeting. The Chair reported on correspondence received from The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP, Minister for Local and Regional Government in relation to the FiReControl Project – Regional Commitment. A draft response from the Chair would be considered at the meeting (see Minute No. 21/04 below).

The Clerk reported that at the annual meeting of the West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2004, Councillor N Eustace had been appointed to serve on the West Midlands Regional Management Board during 2004/2005 in place of Councillor Kazi.

17/04     **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the annual meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2004 be confirmed as a correct record.

18/04     **Regional Management Board Programme Plan**

The Programme Manager submitted the Regional Management Board's Programme Plan. The adoption of this document would facilitate the initiation of the Modernisation Programme and enable the formal launch of the portfolio of projects. The Programme Plan would be used to oversee the delivery of a broad, cross-cutting portfolio of projects in accordance with the Government's overall modernisation agenda and proposals for the reform of the region's fire and rescue services.

To underpin and support both the Programme and associated projects, a range of strategy documents, plans and templates had been created or were in production. These documents complied with Office of Government Commerce (OGC) guidance. The documents developed to date, together with those under production, would provide a clear and robust strategy and reduce future risk within the Programme and projects.

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The Programme Plan was a key control document for the Modernisation Programme. It would be used throughout the Programme to monitor progress and to provide a basis for tracking the impact of each project on the Programme's overall goals, benefits, risks and costs. The Project Manager would monitor the inter-relation between each project and identify any necessary action when it appeared that delays in one project might adversely affect another.

The Programme Plan had been developed in accordance with the draft Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Fire and Rescue National Framework 2004/2005 document. The final edition of the framework document had recently been released. The impact of any changes arising from this document would be assessed and reported to the Regional Management Board in due course.

The Programme Plan documented costs that were likely to arise to support the management and delivery of the modernisation programme during 2004/2005.

The Board acknowledged that some minor amendments were required to the Programme Plan that would reflect outstanding issues in respect of some projects. Chief Fire Officer Sheehan indicated that following the annual meeting of West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2004, Councillor Eustace would be the nominated Senior Responsible Owner for the Fire Investigation project. Councillor P Howard would be nominated in respect of the Private Finance Initiative project. All the other nominees from West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority would be as previously notified to the Programme Manager. The Programme Manager undertook to clarify other issues raised by Members.

The Programme Manager also outlined the need for a number of modifications in respect of specific projects within the Programme Plan. It was anticipated that it might become necessary to merge or split some projects as deemed appropriate during the life of the Programme. The Board supported the adoption of the Programme Plan and noted that it would be necessary to monitor, tailor and develop the Plan as the modernisation project matured taking account of future developments. A progress report would be given to the Programme Board meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2004.

**Resolved** to recommend to the constituent fire authorities that the Regional Management Board Programme Plan be approved and adopted.

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### **19/04     Regional Management Board Modernisation Programme – Progress Report**

The Board received a progress report on the development of the Regional Management Board Modernisation Programme. The report made reference to the following issues and projects:-

- Liaison with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM);
- Liaison with the ODPM Business Change Manager;
- Programme Strategy Documents/Plans/Templates;
- Programme Training;
- Regional Management Board Website;
- Project Mandates;
- Project Initiation Document (PID);
- Programme Plan;
- Project Manager Workshops.

To assist with the monitoring of the Modernisation Programme, individual Project Managers would be requested to provide monthly progress reports (Highlight Reports) to the Programme Board. A summary of the monitoring reports (End Tranche Report) would then be submitted to the Regional Management Board. It was acknowledged that the emphasis on Project Managers would be to concentrate on service delivery issues and outputs.

Reference was made to the importance of undertaking consultation with the workforce regarding the regional modernisation programme. A Member also stated that he had experienced difficulties in attending recent training events. The Programme Manager indicated that assistance would be given to any Members who required further advice on a one to one basis.

### **20/04     Appointment of Programme Manager**

Further to Minute No. 13/04, the Board considered the appointment of the Regional Programme Manager. The post had been advertised within the regional fire brigades and one application had been received. The applicant fully met the person specification and the other selection criteria previously endorsed by the Board.

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The indicative costs of the post were approximately £50,000 in the first year. This, together with the Programme Office costs, was contained in the Programme Plan (see Minute No. 18/04 above). The costs would be apportioned equally between the constituent fire authorities.

**Resolved** to recommend to Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority that Mr S Worrall (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service) be appointed to the post of Programme Manager in accordance with the salary and terms and conditions of employment applicable to the post.

21/04     **Correspondence Relating to the Regional Management Board**

With reference to Minute No. 15/04, it was noted that correspondence received relating to the work of the Regional Management Board was included as a standing item on the agenda. This provided for discussion of relevant circulars and other communications received between meetings. The Board received a copy of Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Circular 15-2004 (Improving communications – new look and new process for circulars).

The Chair circulated a copy of a letter from The Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP (Minister for Local and Regional Government) concerning the FiReControl Project. Following a seminar held in London on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2004, the Minister had written to the Chairs of Regional Management Boards asking for their formal commitment, on behalf of their Regional Boards, to making the FiReControl project a success. The Chair circulated his draft response.

The Board expressed concerns and emphasised the need for more detailed information on the implications for authorities before a firm commitment to the project could be given. There was a need to ensure transparency in terms of the likely costs/savings and benefits associated with the project. Whilst recognising the difficulties associated with accurately quantifying the costs/savings of such a complex project, the Board endorsed the view that this information was fundamental to the development of a meaningful business case. It was noted that a presentation on the FiRe Control Project would be given at the next meeting of the Board on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2004.

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The Board endorsed the contents of the Chair's draft response and asked for the letter to be forwarded to the Minister with the addition of a statement that the West Midlands Regional Management Board had endorsed the views.

The Board commented that, in future, official correspondence on behalf of the West Midlands Regional Management Board should be issued from the Clerk's Office. Appropriate letterheads would be produced for this purpose.

(Meeting ended at 11.37 a.m.)

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