# Annual Report
# 2005/06

## August 2006

*Delivering a proactive partnership to the Region's communities that satisfies the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable.*

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# Introduction



*Cllr Nigel Hartin*
*Vice-Chair*

*Cllr Richard Hobbs*
*Vice-Chair*

*Cllr David Hinton*
*Chair*

*Cllr Derek Davis*
*Vice-Chair*

*Cllr Godfrey Davis*
*Vice-Chair*

It gives us great pleasure to introduce to you, the Annual Report 2005/06 of West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB).

WMRMB was formed in April 2004 with the aim of delivering the United Kingdom Government's agenda of reform and modernisation of the fire and rescue services of the West Midlands Region in central England.

It is an honour and privilege for us to lead what, during 2005/06, has been officially recognised through Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process as being England's best performing region of Fire and Rescue Services. Achieving a 100 per cent 'Good' rating at a regional level is a tribute to the successful collaborative project working arrangements of WMRMB and a dedicated workforce. This is a great achievement for the Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands region and we are justly proud of it.

As WMRMB now enters its third year, it does so having firmly established its foundations on which to build a safer environment for the collective communities of the West Midlands Region.   Our *foundations* are built on tried and tested approaches to collaborative working based on our successes and, on occasion, our failures.  Acting as leading regional management board we continue to offer support and guidance to other regions in our collective pursuit of delivering a modernised fire and rescue service to the nation.

August 2006

## Executive Summary

The independent review of fire and rescue services undertaken by Sir George Bain identified many recommendations for reform and modernisation. These recommendations have been developed and refined by Government within the initial and subsequent framework documents. The framework documents place responsibilities upon fire and rescue authorities, who through regional collaboration, are required to accomplish modernisation and reform of the fire and rescue services.

The framework documents mandate fire and rescue authorities to establish Regional Management Boards (RMB). Each RMB is required to institute:
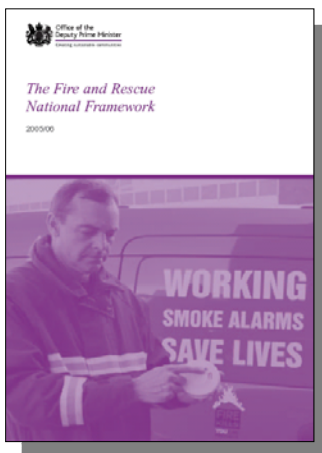


> ➢ **clear aims and objectives;**
> ➢ **delegated powers that are appropriate to those aims and objectives;**
> ➢ **plans for meeting the requirements of six key areas identified by Sir George Bain;**
> ➢ **provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the capacity - both resources and expertise - to deliver those plans, and**
> ➢ **demonstrate continuing and measurable progress towards meeting those plans.**

This Annual Report documents WMRMB progress during 2005/06 for addressing Government's agenda of reform and modernisation of the region's fire and rescue services.

WMRMB's mission is to deliver a proactive partnership to the region's communities that satisfies the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable. WMRMB has a collective vision to realise the full potential of Service collaboration, thereby resulting in the delivery of improved efficiencies and secure enhanced operational resilience across the West Midlands Region. In delivering this vision the region aims to deliver the co-ordinated organisation, direction and implementation of a portfolio of projects and activities that together achieve the outcomes and realise the benefits of a modernised and reformed fire and rescue service.

Operating within Government's de facto project and programme management methodologies WMRMB is delivering the change required through seven thematic project boards.

# West Midlands Regional Management Board

In the interests of co-operating more effectively the fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) of the West Midlands region formally agreed in March 2004 to the establishment of a *joint advisory committee* under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. The committee is known as the *West Midlands Regional Management Board.*

The Board consists of 15 elected Members, three from each of the following FRAs:

- ➢ **Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority**
- ➢ **Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority**
- ➢ **Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority**
- ➢ **Warwickshire County Council**
- ➢ **West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**
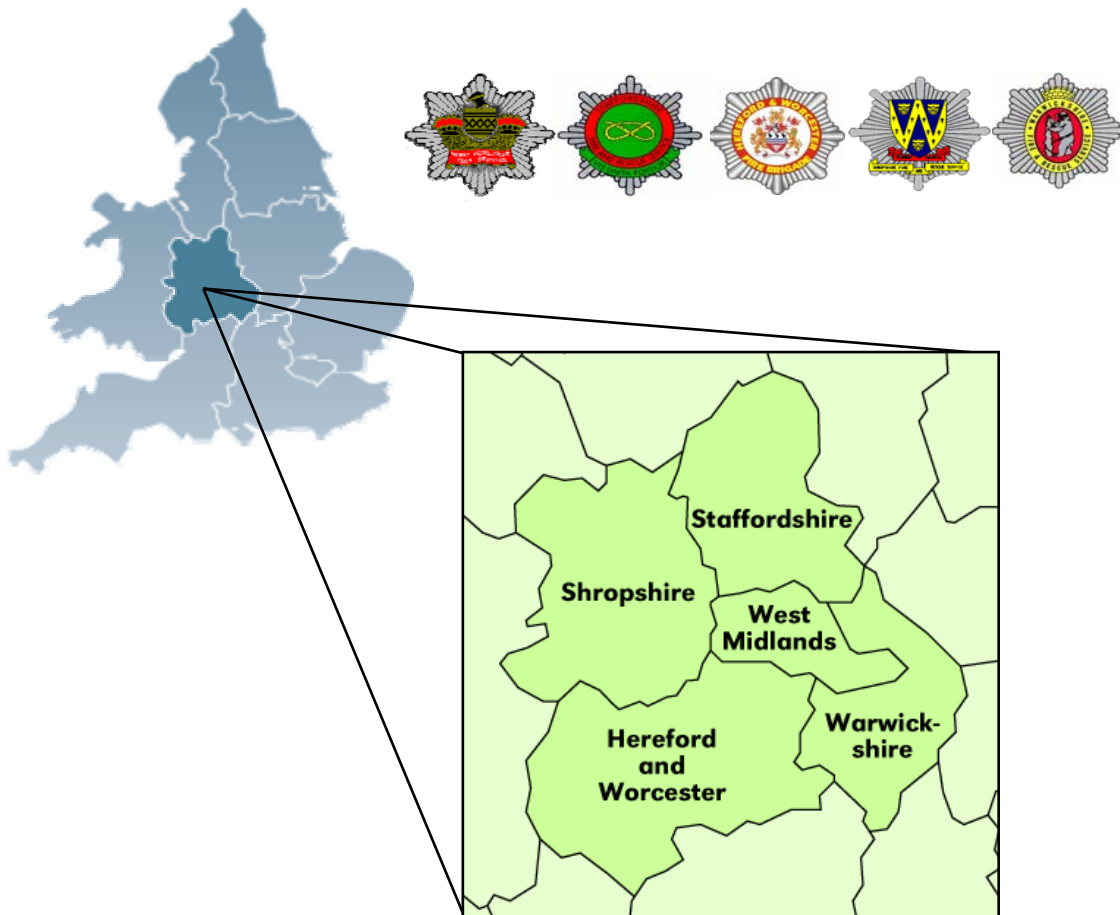
# What is our Vision, Aims & Objectives?

The mission, vision, aims and objectives of WMRMB are:

➢ **Mission Statement**

To deliver a proactive partnership to the Region's communities that satisfies the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable.

➢ **Vision Statement**

To realise the full potential of Service collaboration, thereby resulting in the delivery of improved efficiencies and secure enhanced operational resilience across the West Midlands Region.

➢ **Aim**

To deliver the co-ordinated organisation, direction and implementation of a portfolio of projects and activities that together achieve the outcomes and realise the benefits of a modernised and reformed fire and rescue service.

➢ **Objectives**

WMRMB's primary objective is the implementation and delivery of Government's agenda of reform and modernisation within the fire and rescue services of the West Midlands region. The modernisation agenda is both service critical and time critical to meet Government's framework criteria, and as a consequence, is managed and delivered in accordance with Government prescribed project and programme management methodologies.

During 2005/06 WMRMB has sought to address the following objectives that will deliver improved capability:

(i)    the coordination of all activities through seven thematic project boards to secure the delivery of:
   a. Integration of common specialist services (e.g. fire investigation).
   b. Development and implementation of effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies.
   c. Introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions.
   d. Development of a regional approach to training.
   e. Establishment of regional control centre.
   f. Introduction of regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy.
(ii)   implement and promote a coherent and structured approach to project and programme management within the region that conforms to Government's de facto standards, but moreover facilitates reform and modernisation, and
(iii)  deliver improved capability to the region's resources to enable the achievement of, and contribution to, the targets and priorities of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

# How we manage our Business

WMRMB operates in an advisory capacity to the region's five fire and rescue authorities, it has addressed its requirement to have ***delegated powers*** and responsibilities in the following manner:

(i)    the establishment of a joint advisory committee under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972;

(ii)   The creation of a modernisation programme to address regional modernisation and reform;

(iii)  The establishment of a formal Programme Board that provides governance and leadership to the modernisation programme;

(iv)  The establishment of a regional Treasurers' Working Group;

(v)   The introduction of formal programme and project methodologies (MSP, PRINCE2 and MoR) to deliver the modernisation programme;

(vi)  The formal appointment of a Programme Manager;

(vii) The establishment of a regional Programme Office;

(viii) The appointment of key stakeholders to all project boards;

(ix)  The appointment of elected Members to act as Senior Responsible Owners to all projects;

(x)   The appointment of Business Change Managers, and

(xi)  The creation of a WMRMB Website acting as a central point of information.

WMRMB holds four public meetings and four Programme Board meetings (closed) per annum.  Details of meetings held (and scheduled future meetings) can be accessed via the region's website: www.wmrmb.co.uk

WMRMB's objectives are delivered through a Modernisation Programme Plan that is managed and controlled though the region's Programme Board.  The Programme is managed in accordance with the Office of Government Commerce's (OGC) Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) methodology, a methodology that provides and maintains a strategic view over a set of projects, aligning and co-coordinating them within a programme of business change in support of both Government's and the WMRMB's specific strategies.

MSP allows WMRMB to organise, manage, accommodate, and control these changes so that the eventual outcome meets the objectives set by the modernisation strategy.

An overview of the Programme organisation within the WMRMB environment is illustrated in Figure 1 below.
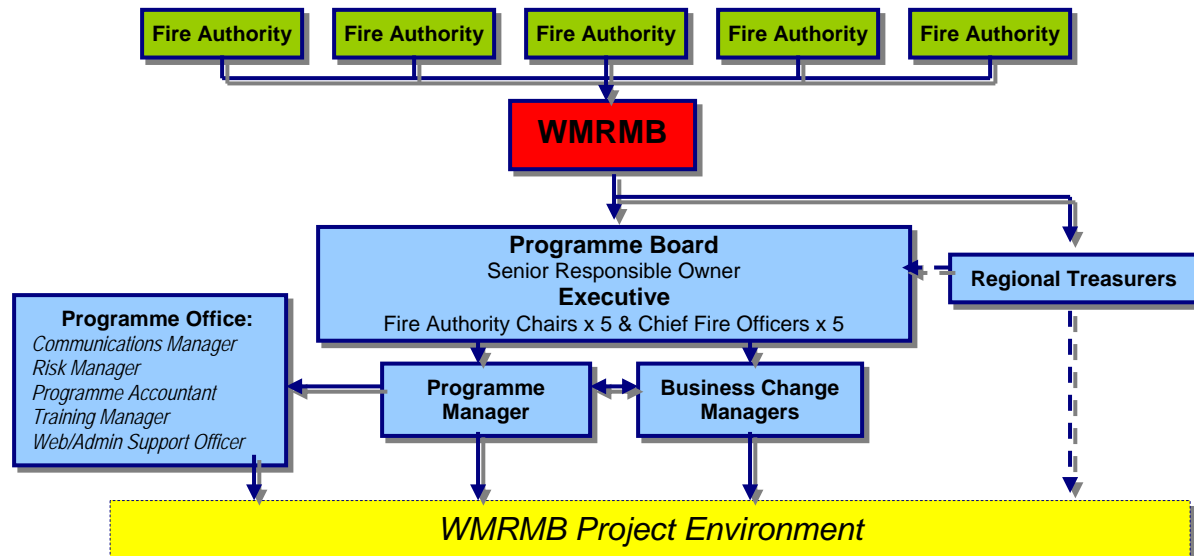
**Figure 1.WMRMB Programme Governance & Structure arrangements**

The Programme is governed through a formally established Programme Board Executive (Board) representative of the key stakeholders within the Region. The Board's appointed Programme Manager (who heads the Programme Office) undertakes the day-to-day management of the Programme. The Programme Office is core to providing professional support and expertise to the Region's various current and future modernisation projects. Business Change Managers have been appointed from relevant Brigade Managers. Their role is benefits' management together with the implementation and embedding of the new capabilities delivered by the WMRMB's modernisation projects.

The Programme's objectives are addressed by seven thematic project boards. The project boards have been created to focus on the following areas:

- Fire Safety
- Performance
- Procurement
- Resilience

- Fire Control
- Resources (HRM)
- Response

It is vital that the work of each of these thematic project areas is conducted in a uniform and structured manner. In order to promote transparency and accountability within each project, the project's appointed Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) has been secured from an Authority other than the Lead Authority tasked with managing and delivering the assigned project. Elected Members undertake the role of SRO.

An overview of the project organisation within the WMRMB programme environment is illustrated in Figure 2 below.
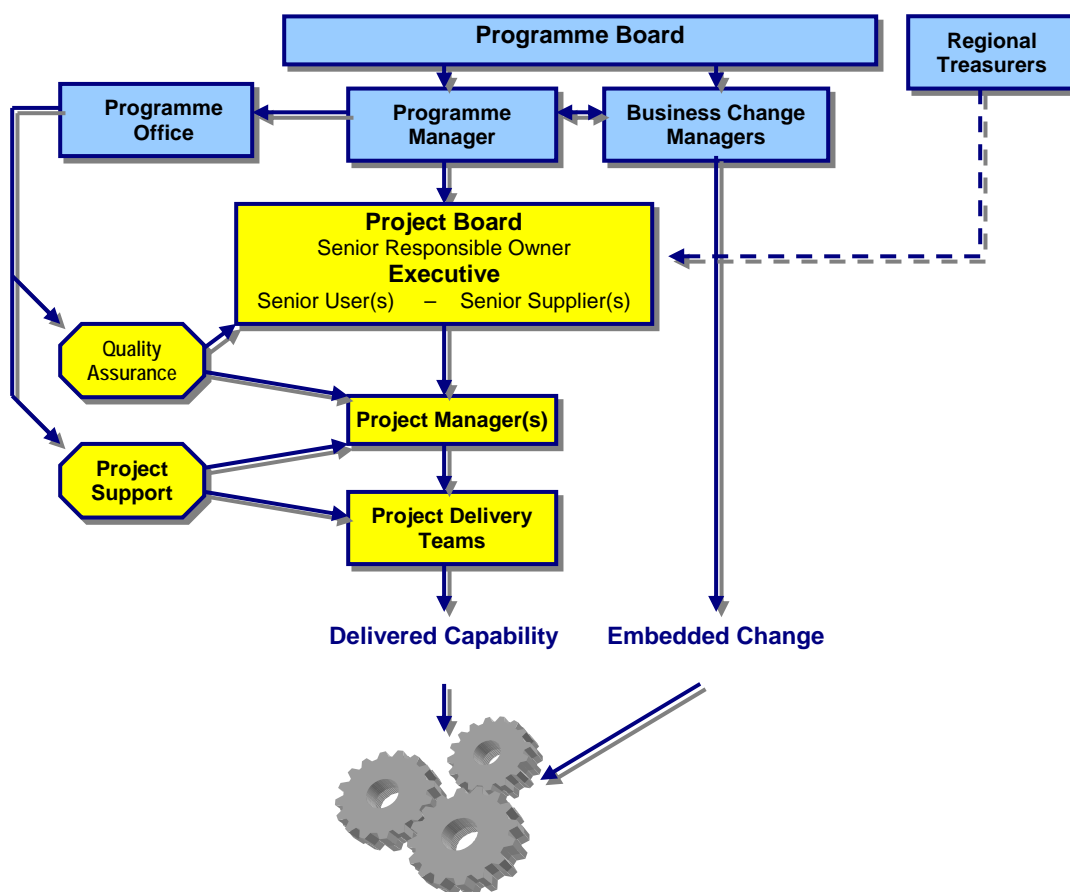
**Figure 2. WMRMB Project Organisation**

# What have we Achieved?

The National Framework sets out requirements for RMBs.  Principally, RMBs are expected to address:

> ➤ Integration of common specialist services (e.g. fire investigation).
> ➤ Development and implementation of effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies.
> ➤ Introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions.
> ➤ Development of a regional approach to training.
> ➤ Establishment of regional control centre.
> ➤ Introduction of regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy.

WMRMB has been active in striving to deliver against these requirements.  Appendix A provides an overview of WMRMB's activities, current and future, to support the delivery of Government's modernisation agenda.  In summary, during 2005/06, the following outcomes were achieved.

**Integration of common specialist services (e.g. fire investigation).**  WMRMB has successfully developed and implemented strategic policy frameworks for IRMP, fire investigation and health & safety.   WMRMB has also developed and implemented a regional policy to support the implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order and strategies that address the adoption of DCLG and CFOA guidance documents for the reduction of false alarms.  Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding has been created for the management of hoax fire calls.  This should result in a 10 per cent per annum reduction in hoax calls.

In addition, the region's staff involved in performance management have successfully developed and implemented a regional CPA peer review programme in preparation for the formal Audit Commission led reviews during 2005.

**Development and implementation of effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies.**  WMRMB has overseen the implementation of 9 mass decontamination response units, 5 mass decontamination resilience units, 2 interim urban search and rescue units, 4 high volume pumping units, the introduction of a specialist hazardous material identification team and 96 thermal imaging cameras.  In support of Element 1 of Civil Contingencies Act, WMRMB has also identified sources of risk within the region and assessed their likelihood of occurrence and potential impact.

**Introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions and development of a regional approach to training.**

WMRMB has been creative in developing and implementing several strategic regional policy documents in respect of:

> ➢ Individual Personal Development Review
> ➢ Firefighter Phase 1 Development
> ➢ Supervisory Manager Development
> ➢ Shared delivery of Assessment Development Centres
> ➢ Workplace Assessment

In addition, WMRMB has facilitated the procurement of regionally branded Firefighter Recruitment DVDs, resulting in a collective saving of £6,750.



**Establishment of regional control centre.**
WMRMB has established a full-time regional Fire Control Project Team tasked with coordinating the region's preparations to ensure the smooth transition to the new Regional Control Centre, and in parallel, to the controlled migration to the digital Airwave Service. The region is active in both its support and contribution to the nationally led FiReControl and FireLink projects.

**Introduction of regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy.** WMRMB has been extremely proactive in supporting the establishment of FiReBuy to drive the national procurement strategy. This has resulted in the implementation of regional procurement arrangements and the proposal to appoint a coordinating regional procurement officer, supported by lead procurement officers within each FRA. WMRMB has also addressed the procurement of operational equipment, hydraulic testing, e-tendering arrangements, regional insurance options, regional utilities contracts, stockholding rationalisation, technical services collaboration and regional occupational health. WMRMB has also established a regional Transport Officers' Group and Estates Officers' Group. WMRMB's initiatives have resulted in £18,000 of regional savings to date. Moreover, WMRMB has created an environment of true collaboration in the context of regional procurement.

# Business Change Manager's Report

WMRMB has established itself as one of the nation's leading RMBs and should be justly proud of its collective achievement of securing a CPA 'Good' rating across the region's FRAs. The outcome of the CPA process is in no small part testament to the excellent collaborative working and sharing of best practice across FRA boundaries within the region.

The policies and approach developed by WMRMB continues to attract interest from other RMBs and is increasingly being emulated. The region's approach ensures transparency, user engagement, elected member involvement, effective risk management and exemplary use of recommended project and programme methodologies. The creative and interactive website provides an informative portal to the region's activities, providing stakeholders with a valuable point of reference.

The National Framework requires RMBs to *'demonstrate continuing and measurable progress.'* I can confirm that WMRMB continues to demonstrate measurable progress. 2005/06 has witnessed developments on several project fronts, some more progressive than others. In particular, the outcomes achieved via the region's Performance and Procurement Thematic Project Boards are to be applauded. The planned project work for 2006/07 should deliver further modernisation and generate savings.

**Tina Thomas**
*Business Change Manager – West Midlands Region*
July 2006

# Our Expenditure

WMRMB is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money expended to support the region's Modernisation Programme is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

WMRMB is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control (*see Appendix B for the Statement of Internal Control*) which facilitates the effective exercise of the Board's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.  The Board has no direct financial resource that is spent by itself.  It relies on an annual financial contribution of £50,000 towards the regional administration costs from each of the five constituent FRAs.  Should WMRMB under-spend against this contribution in any one year each individual FRA formalises the future use of this carry-forward for WMRMB purposes as part of its annual closure of accounts.

With regard to the operation of the specific projects and programme that form the regional agenda, these are managed via the appointed WMRMB Programme Board.  A specific set of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders has been adopted by WMRMB, which set the framework within which officers involved in the regional projects have to operate.  These Financial Regulations and Standing Orders compliment those in existence in each FRA and provide an agreed standard approach to regional activity.  The WMRMB appointed Treasurer oversees the financial aspects of its operation.

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of WMRMB's Statement of Accounts which in terms of the Code of Practice on Local Board Accounting in Great Britain, is required to present fairly the financial position of WMRMB at the accounting date and its income and spending for the year.  The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of WMRMB's accounting records and of its systems of internal control.  Expenditure for the period 2005/06 is shown in table 1 below.

| Expenditure Area 2005/06 | Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Under/ (Overspend) £'000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Programme Office Staff Costs | 153.3 | 133.5 | 19.8 |
| Project Staff Costs | 99.0 | 60.0 | 39.0 |
| Training | 59.4 | 30.1 | 29.3 |
| Video conferencing facilities | 18.0 | 17.4 | 0.6 |
| Project stationary (WMRMB H&S Calendar) | 8.1 | 8.1 | 0.0 |
| Contingency | 13.5 | 0.0 | 13.5 |
| | 351.3 | 249.1 | 102.2 |

Table 1 - Expenditure for the period 2005/06

The constituent FRAs of WMRMB have recorded, published and submitted their annual efficiency savings for 2005/06 within a regional Annual Efficiency Statement (*see Appendix C for a summary of the Annual Efficiency Statement*).

## Outlook for 2006-08

WMRMB has reviewed the *Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-08* and has produced a two-year Programme Plan of activity that promises further modernisation within the region.  The Plan is closely aligned to the National Framework, with activity managed through the region's existing seven thematic project boards.

Details regarding the National Framework and WMRMB's Modernisation Programme can accessed via the region's website: www.wmrmb.co.uk
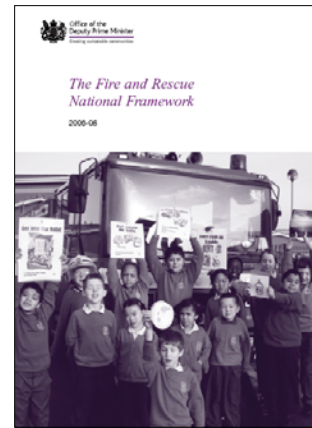
# Glossary of Terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **Business Change Manager** | The role responsible for benefits management |
| **Fire Authority** | A statutory body established under the Fire Services Act 2004 |
| **FiReControl** | The DCLG national project established to oversee the development and implementation of regional fire controls |
| **Firelink** | The DCLG national project established to oversee the procurement and implementation of national fire service voice and data communications system |
| **IRMP** | Integrated Risk Management Plan |
| **New Dimension** | The DCLG national project established to oversee the development and implementation of contingency measures within the fire and rescue service to mitigate the effects of terrorism |
| **DCLG** | Department of Communities and Local Government *(formally the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)* |
| **OGC** | Office of Government Commerce |
| **PRINCE2** | **PR**ojects **IN** a **C**ontrolled **E**nvironment (Version **2**) |
| **Programme** | A portfolio of projects and activities that are co-ordinated and managed as a unit such that they achieve outcomes and realise benefits |
| **Programme Board** | The Sponsoring Group established to assist in the direction-setting and leadership of the programme |
| **Programme Manager** | The role responsible for the set-up, management and delivery of the programme |
| **Programme Office** | The function providing the information and support hub for the programme and its deliver objectives |
| **Programme Plan** | The document scheduling the projects, their costs, resources, risks, and transition activities together with the monitoring and control activities |
| **Project** | A temporary organisation that is created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products according to a specified Business Case |
| **Project Board** | The Sponsoring Group established to assist in the direction-setting and leadership of a project |

**Project Manager**

The person given the authority and responsibility to manage the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board

**Project Portfolio**

A list of all the projects and activities to deliver the required 'future state' described in the programme's 'Blueprint'

**RMB**

Regional Management Board

**Senior Responsible Owner**

The role ultimately accountable for the successful delivery of a project/programme

**WMRMB**

West Midlands Regional Management Board

# Appendix A – Thematic Project Board Activity 2005/06

# Fire Safety Thematic Project Board

## Senior Responsible Owner: Brigadier Peter Jones, Cllr

## Lead Officer: ACFO Jon Hall

## Scope of Project
The scope of this project has been to address the preparatory arrangements necessary to accommodate the introduction of the Regulatory Reform Order, and secondly, the implementation of measures to reduce false alarm calls to the fire and rescue services.

## Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 1.30, 1.31, 1.32 | Regulatory Reform Order | Regional initiated collaborative activity |
| 3.10 | Reducing False Alarms | Regional initiated collaborative activity |

## Achievements
The Project Board has successfully developed and implemented a regional policy document that addresses the adoption of DCLG and CFOA guidance documents for the reduction of false alarms. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding has been created for the management of hoax fire calls. This should result in a 10 per cent per annum reduction in hoax calls.

The Board has also developed a regional policy to support the implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order, whilst enabling each FRA to meet their respective IRMP needs.

## On-going work
Whilst a regional Regulatory Reform Order policy has been developed, progress in the implementation of the policy has been impacted by the delayed introduction of the Order by Government.

## Barriers to progress
Continued delays in the introduction of the Regulatory Reform Order present a barrier to WMRMB's ability to progress a number of regional fire safety initiatives.

# Performance Thematic Project Board

## Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Peter Hogarth

## Lead Officer: Ged Edwards

## Scope of Project
The scope of this project has been to address, through collaborative means, the management of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and Best Value within the region.

## Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8.2 & 8.5 | CPA | Regional initiated collaborative activity |
| 8.16 | Best Value | Regional initiated collaborative activity |

## Achievements
The Project Board has been extremely successfully in developing and implementing a regional CPA peer review programme in preparation for the formal Audit Commission led reviews during 2005.  The success of the preparatory reviews undertaken led to all five fire authorities within the region achieving a 'Good' CPA rating, the only region to do so in England.

The Board has also developed a generic WMRMB Best Value Review Template to aid consistency of approach to any forthcoming reviews conducted by fire authorities within the region.   It is hoped that this will also be of benefit to other RMBs.

## On-going work
In April 2006 the Board led the development and introduction of Operational Assurance Peer Reviews.  It is anticipated that this initiative will lead to similar results to the achieved through CPA.  Worthy of note is that the peer review training and accreditation programme developed by the Board now forms the basis of national peer reviewer training.

# Procurement Thematic Project Board

## Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr John Haynes

## Lead Officer: ACO Alan Brandon

### Scope of Project
The scope of this project has been to address the requirement to introduce regional procurement arrangements that incorporate nationally led procurement initiatives (e.g. FireBuy).  In addition, the Project has explored opportunities to secure external funding.

### Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 2.20 | Procurement | Should/Must do Framework activity |
| 7.14 | External Funding Opportunities | Regional initiated collaborative activity |

### Achievements
The Project Board has been extremely proactive in supporting the establishment of FiReBuy to drive the national procurement strategy.  This has resulted in the implementation of regional procurement arrangements and proposals to appoint a coordinating regional procurement officer, supported by lead procurement officers within each FRA.  The Board has also addressed the procurement of operational equipment, hydraulic testing, e-tendering arrangements, regional insurance options, regional utilities contracts, stockholding rationalisation, technical services collaboration and regional occupational health.   Also established through the Board, is the regional Transport Officers' Group and Estates Officers' Group.  The Board's initiatives have resulted in £18,000 of regional savings to date.  Moreover, the Board has created an environment of true collaboration in the context of regional procurement

### On-going work
The Project Board has set out an ambitious, but achievable three-year plan that includes further closer working with the regional Centre of Excellence, together with the further development of a regional contracts register. The Board envisages that cashable savings of £25,000 and non-cashable savings of £125,000 will be realised during 2006/07.

### Barriers to progress
Staff capacity to address in parallel both local and regional initiatives presents a continuing challenge.

# Resilience Thematic Project Board

## Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Len Bloomer

## Lead Officer: SDO Bob Russell

### Scope of Project
The scope of this project has been, through a regional collaborative approach, to deliver a joined-up approach to the implementation of requirements set out within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and FRS New Dimension Programme.

### Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 4.3 | New Dimension | Regional initiated collaborative activity |
| 4.6 | Civil Contingencies | Regional initiated collaborative activity |

### Achievements
The Project Board has supported FRAs within the region to oversee support of the New Dimension Programme.   This has led to the implementation of 9 mass decontamination response units, 5 mass decontamination resilience units, 2 interim urban search and rescue units, 4 high volume pumping units, introduction of a specialist hazardous material identification team and 96 thermal imaging cameras.  The Board has also, in support of Element 1 of Civil Contingencies Act, identified sources of risk within the region and assessed their likelihood of occurrence and potential impact.

### On-going work
The Board continues to support national and regional civil resilience initiatives.  Within the region, this will, in brief, involve completion of the high volume pumping unit programme (August 2006), introduction of a second specialist hazardous material identification team, enhancement of urban search and rescue units and completion of Elements 2, 3 & 4 of the Civil Contingencies Act.

### Barriers to progress
Delays in central funding to support the region's urban search and rescue programme has led to slippage.

# Fire Control Thematic Project Board

## Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr David Hinton

## Lead Officer: DCFO Peter Dartford

## Scope of Project
The scope of this project is to coordinate the region's preparations for the introduction of the new Regional Control Centre (RCC) in conjunction with the implementation of the FireLink digital radio replacement programme.

## Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 2.7 & 2.18 | FiReControl | Must do activity |
| 4.21, 4.22 & 4.23 | FireLink | Regional initiated collaborative activity |

## Achievements
The Project Board has established a full-time regional Fire Control Project Team tasked with coordinating the region's preparations to ensure the smooth transition to new RCC, and in parallel, to the controlled migration to the digital Airwave Service.

The Board is active in both its support and contribution to these nationally led projects.

## On-going work
The work programme of the Board is dictated, to a large extent, by centrally led FiReControl and FireLink Project Boards.  The region is supporting the current convergence activities.

## Barriers to progress
The absence of detailed anticipated budgetary implications for FRAs to support the introduction of both the RCC and FireLink radio scheme will impact upon FRA financial planning.

# Human Resource Management Thematic Project Board

## Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Nigel Hartin

## Lead Officer: ACFO Robert Hulland

## Scope of Project
The scope of this project is to coordinate the region's activities to address, in a collaborative manner, - staff recruitment, development and management arrangements.

## Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 5.12 | HRM | Should do activity |
| 5.17 & 5.20 | Improving Opportunities | Must do activity |
| 6.7, 6.11 & 6.18 | Development & Leadership | Should do activity |

## Achievements
The Project Board has been creative in developing and implementing several strategic regional policy documents in respect of:

- ➢ Individual Personal Development Review
- ➢ Firefighter Phase 1 Development
- ➢ Supervisory Manager Development
- ➢ Shared delivery of Assessment Development Centres
- ➢ Workplace Assessment

In addition, the Board has also procured and regionally branded Firefighter Recruitment DVDs, resulting in a collective saving of saving of £6,750.

## On-going work
The Board has an active programme of work underway and aims to deliver during 2006 regional strategies that address equality and diversity, learning and development, and human resource management.  In addition, the Board is leading on the introduction of a WMRMB Joint Consultative Forum with representative bodies.

## Barriers to progress
Staff capacity to address in parallel both local and regional initiatives presents a continuing challenge.

# Response Thematic Project Board

**Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Kath Banks**

**Lead Officer: ACFO Stuart Smith**

## Scope of Project
The scope of this project is to coordinate the region's activities to improve regional collaboration in incident preparedness and response.

## Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2005/05
Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

| Paragraph | Subject | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 3.15 & 3.16 | IRMP | Regional collaborative activity |
| 3.3, 3.14 & 3.19 | Incident Response | Regional collaborative activity |
| 3.13 | Mutual Assistance | Regional collaborative activity |
| 3.21, 3.22, 3.24 & 3.25 | Fire Investigation | Should do activity |
| 3.4 & 3.6 | Health & Safety | Regional collaborative activity |

## Achievements
The Project Board has successfully developed and implemented strategic policy frameworks for IRMP, fire investigation and health & safety.   The Board has also assessed the availability of resources for mutual assistance and has prepared a draft agreement for the deployment of regional assets.

## On-going work
The Board is currently appraising IRMP activities within the region to identify new opportunities for collaboration and areas where existing collaboration can be accelerated to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.  Whilst not exclusive to, this review will include areas where there could be a common regional approach to risk management planning e.g. standards, strategic cover arrangements, optimising resource location and provision, prevention and protection arrangements, and longer term capacity building.

# Appendix B – Statement on the System of Internal Control

## Scope of Responsibility

West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Board is a voluntary arrangement operating on an advisory basis between the 5 Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) of:

> ➢ Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority
> ➢ Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority
> ➢ Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
> ➢ Warwickshire County Council
> ➢ West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Its purpose is to oversee the regional co-operative working in pursuance of the statutory requirements imposed through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Act has given statutory effect a Fire and Rescue National Framework that sets out expectations for regional management boards and FRAs. The Act requires FRAs to 'have regard' to the Framework when carrying out their functions.

In discharging this overall responsibility, WMRMB is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Board's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Board has no direct financial resource that is expended by itself. It relies on a financial "contribution" towards the regional administration costs from each of the 5 constituent authorities formalised at year-end across those FRAs. As such, the Board relies on the system of internal control within the constituent FRAs where actual monies remain handled.

With regard to the operation of the specific projects and programme that form the regional agenda, these are managed via an appointed WMRMB Programme Board. A specific set of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders has been adopted by WMRMB, which set the framework within which officers involved in the regional projects have to operate. These Financial Regulations and Standing Orders compliment those in existence in each FRA and provide an agreed standard approach to regional activity.

## The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.  The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Board's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has operated throughout the year ended 31st March 2006 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and accounts.

## The Internal Control Environment

WMRMB has an agreed constitution, which sets out how the Board operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures, which are followed.  This includes Standing Orders, delegations and financial and contract procedure rules adopted by the Board for regional working.

WMRMB has adopted political governance arrangements that ensure it is able to respond to a range of internal and external issues and to deliver on its commitment to the key objectives in the regional work plan known as the WMRMB Programme Plan. Decision making processes are open, transparent, accountable and inclusive and as such are in line with Government expectations on strengthening local democracy.

Lead Members have a key role to "champion" specific themes from the Programme Plan and also meet with officers on a regular basis to discuss progress on issues within their theme.

The WMRMB Programme Board, which comprises of the 5 FRA Chairs and Chief Fire Officers.  The Programme Board receives regular monitoring presentations from each lead member of the work themes.  In addition, a Stakeholder Group comprising Members, Chief Fire Officers and Trade Union representatives regularly discuss the regional agenda.

The Programme Board is responsible for producing the Programme Plan, which outlines the broad strategic direction and priorities for WMRMB to deliver and achieve the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

The Programme Board is supported in its activities by the region's WMRMB Programme Office.  The Programme Office provides project and programme management specialist support to those responsible for delivering the Programme Plan.

The Programme Board has no direct budget under its control; the costs of the Programme Office are funded from the agreed equal contribution made annually by the

5 constituent FRAs.

A Treasurers Group meets regularly and comprises the Treasurer of each of the 5 FRAs chaired by the Treasurer to WMRMB.  The financial implications of individual projects from the Programme Plan are brought to that Group via the Programme Accountant in the Programme Office.  The Group is responsible for determining those project costs/benefits are allocated across the 5 FRAs for recommending to WMRMB.

WMRMB has agreed terms of reference for the Treasurers Group.

Individual Authority Treasurers are responsible for ensuring that gross project costs are incurred within the standing order and financial regulations of their authority where it is the lead authority.  They must therefore also ensure that all authorities have agreed the cost sharing arrangements.

During the year, financial management information is reported regularly to both the Programme Board and WMRMB on the Programme Office commitment.

Risk assessments are monitored for each project and a corporate risk log is regularly updated and reported to both the Programme Board and WMRMB

Officers across all 5 FRAs working on regional projects are provided with guidance on the internal control environment in Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, and other procedural documents. These address, amongst others, the processes for financial management, accounting policies, accounting records and returns, financial planning, budgeting, resource allocation, capital programmes, audit, risk management, security of assets, income, expenditure, external funding and partnerships.

## Review of Effectiveness

WMRMB has responsibility for ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of the system of internal control.  The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the Senior Managers within each constituent FRA who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of each internal control environment, and also by the external auditors who will be required to undertake an annual audit of the regional arrangements.

There are various sources of assurance WMRMB has which to underpin the Statement of Internal Control.  These include:

**The Treasurer**
The Board appointed a Treasurer to oversee the financial aspects of its operation.

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of WMRMB's Statement of Accounts which in terms of the Code of Practice on Local Board Accounting in Great Britain ("the

Code"), is required to present fairly the financial position of WMRMB at the accounting date and its income and spending for the year.

Given the unique position of WMRMB the extent of the applicability of the Code to the operation of the Board has yet to be agreed with the external auditors.

The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of WMRMB's accounting records and of its systems of internal control. Reliance is placed on the robustness of internal audit within each constituent FRA.

**Management**
Project Managers and Lead Officers are responsible for ensuring:

➢ WMRMB's values are met;
➢ Laws and Regulations are complied with;
➢ WMRMB's policies are put into practice including compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Approach;
➢ Required processes (e.g. Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Financial Guidance etc and various supporting procedures) are adhered to;
➢ Financial statements and other published information are accurate and reliable;
➢ Human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively, and
➢ The Performance Management Framework is adhered to.

**External Audit**
The work of WMRMB external auditors will include an assessment of the Board's overall control environment and controls, as well as an examination of the underlying financial accounts. On completion of their work, the external auditors issue an Annual Audit and Inspection Letter to the Board. However, the extent of the auditor's statutory duty with regards to WMRMB has yet to be determined.

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Chair of the Board                             Treasurer

# Appendix C – Annual Efficiency Statement 2005/06

**ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT – WEST MIDLANDS REGION**

**FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES**

**Efficiency Savings Achieved in Financial Year (2005/2006)**

*Summary*

| Category | Annual Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k) | Cumulative Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k) | Annual Non-cashable Efficiency Gain (£k) | Cumulative Non-Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hereford & Worcester | 843 | 1024 | 62 | 62 |
| Shropshire & Wrekin | 264 | 370 | 5 | 17 |
| Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire | 679 | 923 | 250 | 400 |
| Warwickshire | 109 | 381 | 129 | 1,096 |
| West Midlands | 2,467 | 4431 | - | - |
| **Total** *(no double counting)* | **4,362** | **7129** | **446** | **1,575** |

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**Bengali**

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

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यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको अनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

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Bu belgenin Türkçe'sini edinmek ya da Türkçe bilen birisinin size yardımcı olmasını istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

**Urdu**

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براہ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

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