

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**19 FEBRUARY 2024**

1. **WMFS STRATEGY 2024-2027: OUR PLAN TO MAKE THE WEST MIDLANDS SAFER, STRONGER AND HEALTHIER**

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. THAT Members approve the content WMFS Strategy for 2024-2027.
- 1.2. THAT Members note the new range of Key Performance Indicators included within the strategy, which will be reported to the Authority on a six-monthly basis.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1. To provide members with detail of the WMFS Strategy for 2024-2027, including the changes from the previous “Our Plan” for approval.
- 2.2. To outline the changes to the suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the strategy to be reported to Authority at future meetings.
- 2.3. To provide further information on the public facing dashboard and new Annual Report planned as part of the implementation of new KPIs.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. WMFS has previously operated with a three-year rolling strategy, called “Our Plan”, which is updated annually. It is now proposed that the Authority move to a more explicit strategy document across a three-year period, complimented by a separate Community Risk Management Plan. Instead of being re-written annually, the Strategy will remain substantially the same, although targets will be revised annually and minor changes to reflect changing priorities or financial circumstances will be made as required (with Authority approval).

- 3.2. This new strategy is more clearly forward-looking, with a number of “strategic goals” with specific KPIs associated with them. The draft strategy document can be read in **Appendix A**.
- 3.3. The proposed measures are wider ranging than the existing set of KPIs that are reported to Fire Authority, forming what is known as a “balanced scorecard”. Although a number of familiar KPIs remain, such as response times, staff sickness and prevention statistics, new measures covering the other areas of the service not previously reported on, such as digital and data and staff training, have been added. Work will continue to expand and improve this KPI set over the next year to ensure Fire Authority have a more complete picture of service performance.
- 3.4. The new document also sets out more clearly WMFS vision, mission statement and strategic commitments to help the public understand the Service’s purpose and future direction.
- 3.5. As well as introducing a more balanced set of KPIs, the service will be introducing a public-facing performance dashboard for the website and making the current year-end performance report provided to Authority in June each year into a more accessible and public-facing Annual Report, where we will highlight our successes and explain in more detail where we need to continue to improve.
- 3.6. Target setting for the new KPIs will be undertaken following Fire Authority approval of the strategy document – subject to any changes – with final targets brought to the April 2024 Fire Authority meeting for approval.
- 3.7. Members should note that the document outlined within Appendix A will undergo a design process to make it more engaging and accessible following approval. It will also feature a foreword from the CFO and Chair.

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Once approved, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed to ensure the strategy document is accessible, and that the proposed measures are appropriate. Similarly, the linked work plans will be subject to EIAs as required.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications of the strategy document that require the input of the Monitoring Officer.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This strategy does not have any direct financial implications, although it does include strategic goals around maintaining a balanced budget, achieving efficiencies, and increasing productivity. Many of the associated work plans will have financial implications which will be included within annual budget planning.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The strategy document contains a specific strategic goal and measures linked to the services sustainability strategy and commitment to Net-Zero. However, more specifically, there are no direct environmental implications from the production of this strategy document, which will be produced electronically.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- [Our Plan 2023-2026](#)

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JO BOWCOCK  
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**APPENDIX A**

**West Midlands Fire Service  
Strategy 2024-27**

**Our Plan to make the West Midlands Safer,  
Stronger and Healthier**

# Introduction

We are your fire and rescue service, and we are here when you need us. We are hugely proud of what we do and what we have done to get here. This strategy document sets out what we are going to do next to keep improving.

This strategy builds on and replaces our previous three-year rolling strategy, which we called “Our Plan” and which was published every year. This new approach is designed to be more clearly forward looking, and to show you not just what we aim to achieve, but how we will deliver it and how we will measure if we have been successful.

Starting from our vision of a West Midlands that is Safer, Stronger and Healthier, we have set 17 strategic goals for the next three years, each with at least one Key Performance Indicator which will help us determine whether we are achieving that goal. We will report on our progress every year through a refreshed Annual Report, where we will highlight our successes and explain where we need to do more.

We have organised our strategic goals into four areas, aligned to the way we organise our service. However, while these are a convenient way to arrange our goals, everyone in our service has a responsibility to deliver against them and contribute to our intended outcomes.

All our strategic goals and their performance measures then come together to form a “balanced scorecard” which will be a simple, visual representation of our strategy for the next three years, all in one place. We’ll keep this live on our website, where you’ll be able to track our progress, as well as access wider performance data.

How we are going to deliver against each of our strategic goals is explained in more detail in our service delivery plans, and there are links to each provided within the relevant sections of this document. These are more detailed plans covering a specific area of our business, such as our Inclusion Action Plan or our Efficiency and Productivity Plan. Each will also have its own goals and measures but will always be contributing to the delivery of the overall strategic goals of the service.

The strategic goals we have set ourselves, and this strategy as a whole, inform and are informed by our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which is in turn informed by your views and opinions as shared through our 2023 public consultation. The CRMP is an assessment of the foreseeable challenges and risks facing our communities and what needs to be done to meet them. We use this analysis to inform the strategic goals, as well as to determine the specific projects we will undertake to achieve those goals and address the risks.

You can read our CRMP document on our website and explore the data and information that informs it. You can find out about the outcome of our consultation, and how that informed our planning on our website as well.

## About West Midlands Fire Service

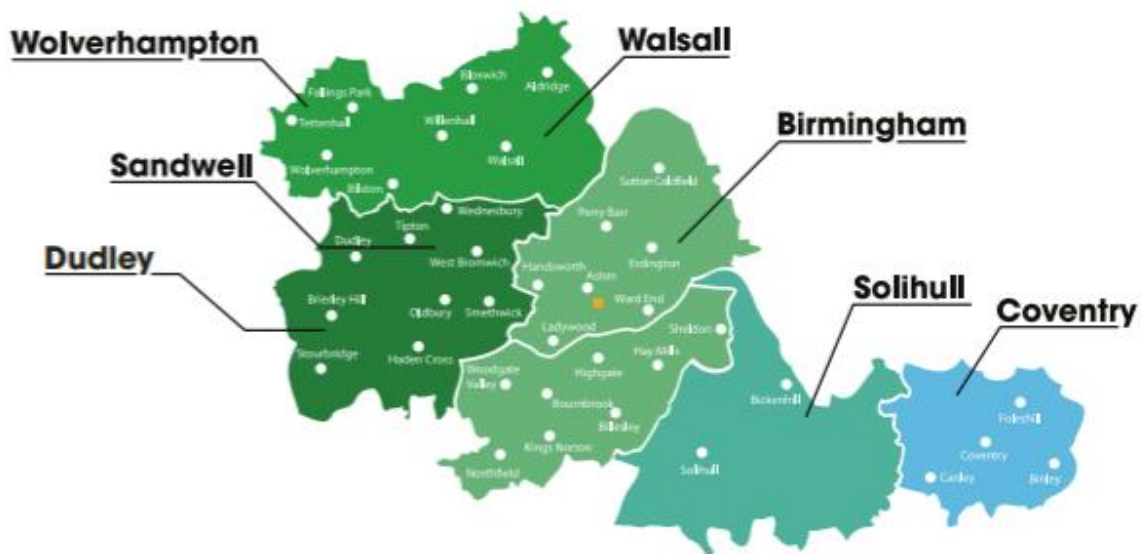
West Midlands Fire Service is the second largest fire and rescue service in England, serving an area of 902km<sup>2</sup> and a population of over 2.9 million people. We serve one of the most diverse and multi-cultural communities in the country, spread across seven local authorities – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Our region contains some of the most deprived communities anywhere in the country, where socio-economic and health factors mean the risk of fire and other emergencies is particularly high. At the same time our major urban centres and industrial areas contain some of the highest risk infrastructure in the UK.

We have 38 fire stations situated strategically across the West Midlands, as well as Headquarters based in central Birmingham. These are staffed by over 1,350 firefighters and officers, supported by over 50 fire control staff in our joint control room with Staffordshire FRS, and 450 specialist support staff.

We make use of a blended fleet of over 70 different vehicles to ensure we are able to respond to emergencies, including Fire Engines (PRLs), Brigade Response Vehicles and specialist vehicles such as Hydraulic Platforms.

We respond to much more than just fires, with rescues, road traffic collisions and other emergencies now making up a bigger proportion of our responses than fires.



You can find out more about our stations, equipment and the services we deliver on our website [\[Link\]](#) and explore the risk picture and recent incident data from across the conurbation using our Risk Explorer Tool [\[Link\]](#).

# Our vision

Everything we do is connected to our vision, the reason we exist and what we always strive for:

**Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier**

# Our Mission Statement

If our vision is where we want to be, our mission statement summarises how we will shape our organisation to ensure we can get there:

**We set up our people to succeed so we can serve our communities with professionalism and pride.**

# Our Strategic Commitments

The goals that we set as a service may change from year to year, or even week to week as we adapt to the challenges and risks that we face. However, as a fire and rescue service and a public body we have several strategic commitments we will always deliver for the people of the West Midlands. These derive from our statutory duties and the public's expectation of the service.

Our communities always know that;

- We are working with our communities and partners to make them safer and healthier through **prevention** of fires and other emergencies.
- We are working to **protect** life and property to make communities safer and businesses stronger.
- We are delivering an assertive, safe, and effective emergency **response** to fires and other emergencies.
- We are safeguarding our people, planet, and future by delivering a **sustainable** service.
- We are promoting positive **culture and values** to maintain the trust of our communities and ensure the West Midlands Fire Service is a safe and welcoming place for everyone to work.
- We are providing **value for money** by delivering our services efficiently and driving improved productivity in everything we do.

# Our Four Areas

We divide our work into four areas through which we will align our strategic goals for the service and measure our success:

- Community Risk Reduction
- People
- Enabling Services
- Value

Although we choose to split our goals amongst these perspectives, every part of the service has a responsibility for delivering against all our strategic goals. Ultimately, everything we do should contribute towards delivering our vision, either directly or indirectly.

## Community Risk Reduction

We refer to some of our services and the individuals who provide them as "community risk reduction" because they directly reduce the likelihood (risk) of a fire or other emergency occurring in our communities. These services are grouped into the following categories:

- **Prevention-** *Delivering activities which support safer and healthier communities.*  
By focusing on those most at risk, our prevention work improves our community's quality of life through, reducing their risk of fire, supporting them to lead healthier lives and educating them on how to be safer on our roads.
- **Protection-** *Protecting life and property to make businesses stronger and communities safer.*  
We inspect high-risk and tall buildings, including residential flats, hospitals, schools and businesses, to keep safe the people who live and work there. We also advise companies on fire safety legislation, to keep their staff and customers safe and help their businesses to grow. Where necessary we can go further and take enforcement action, including prosecution, where we feel the risk is significant.
- **Response-** *Dealing excellently with incidents.*  
Our response to fires and other emergencies continues to be graded 'outstanding' by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. Locally, nationally, and internationally, we respond. saving lives, preventing harm, and safeguarding homes and businesses with the resources you need, when you need them.

There are several teams that deliver our response function:

- **Operations** - The largest number of people employed by the service, each have a critical role on the front-line delivering prevention, protection, and response services to our communities through our network of community fire stations across the West Midlands.
- **Fire Control-** From assisting with Safeguarding our most vulnerable community members to co-ordinating our response to our largest incidents, Fire Control sits at the heart of our Fire Service.
- **Emergency Planning-** meet the organisations statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), as a Category 1 Responder we have six duties, including carrying out risk assessments, business continuity and putting in place emergency plans, as well as leading our multi-agency work.

To find out more any of the areas mentioned above please visit our website [\[link\]](#).



## Goals and Measures

We will protect you by inspecting businesses and residential dwellings, and by educating building owners and responsible persons, to minimise harm and disruption to our communities.	<p>PI-13 The Number of Accidental Fires in Non-Domestic Premises</p> <p>PI-14 (a&amp;b) The Number of False Alarm Calls due to Fire Alarm Equipment in Dwellings and Non-Domestic Premises</p> <p>PI-12 The Number of deliberate fires in derelict buildings</p>
We will target our prevention activities to those in our communities most vulnerable to fire and other emergencies; whilst supporting all our communities to lead longer, safer, and healthier lives.	<p>PI-6 The Number of Safe and Well Points Achieved by the Brigade (with average point score PI-6a as sub-PI)</p> <p>PI-2 Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires</p>
We will be ready to respond to fire and rescue related incidents locally, nationally, and internationally by leading rescue operations to save lives and reduce the impact.	PI-1 Risk-based attendance standard. (Call handling PI-1a as sub-PI)
We will collaborate with other emergency services and organisations to enhance the service we provide.	<p>PI-5 The Percentage of Safe and Well Visits Referred by Our Partners</p> <p><i>%age of operational staff trained JESIP</i></p>
We will build resilience into our service to minimise the impact of disruptive events in the face of dynamic challenges and uncertainties.	<p><i>Business Continuity Plans, including Assessments, that are compliant with CCA requirements as a Category 1 responder.</i></p> <p><i>Compliance with Relevant Fire Standards</i></p>

## Explaining our measures

*Safe and Well Points* are a measure that the service uses to determine the relative risk of a home that we visit where we undertake. The highest the point score, the more risk factors that are present and therefore the higher the risk the home.

## How will be achieve this?

Read more about our plans to deliver against these strategic goals, and our more detailed plans for Prevention, Protection and Response in our Community Risk Reduction Plan [\[link\]](#)

# People

Our People are our greatest asset and a thriving engaged workforce is crucial to our success. We put great focus on our employee experience, creating a positive work environment that promotes well-being and work-life balance. We continue to be an employer of choice for our communities, through our commitment to building a diverse workforce reflective of the rich fabric of our society.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive culture where all our staff understand and live by our values, and where poor behaviour is robustly challenged and effectively dealt with.

We take pride in the support and development we invest in our people. Ensuring our staff are healthy and highly skilled allows them to provide the best possible services to each other and our communities.

## Goals, Measures and Targets

We will ensure our workforce reflects the diverse communities it serves at all levels	(PI 17&17a) %age Black and Minority Ethnic operational staff/all staff  (modified PI 16) %age Female operational staff/all staff
We will create an environment which enables everyone to thrive at work.	% <i>Staff Trust in the service</i>  % of completed <i>IPDRs</i>
We will ensure everyone knows how they contribute to the delivery of excellent services.	% <i>Staff reported understanding of the core values.</i>
We will prioritise wellbeing to make WMFS a safe and healthy place to work for all.	PI-21 and PI-22 - Total Number of Injuries/Total Number of RIDDOR Injuries  PI-18 The Average Number of Working Days/Shifts Lost due to Sickness – All Staff (with PI-19 and PI-20 as sub PIs)
We will champion and continually develop the skills, competencies and behaviours of our workforce.	%age <i>staff CRA Compliance</i>

## Explaining our measures

*RIDDOR Injuries* are the most serious injuries that have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Staff will be asked to report their degree of trust in the organisation – reflecting how comfortable they are at work and their faith in service leadership and our various policies and processes.

An *IPDR (Individual Performance and Development Review)* should be undertaken at least annually with all staff, to help ensure their continuing development and provide evidence of core skills and competence.

We will also measure *staff understanding of core values* through regular staff surveys, with staff tested to ensure they can demonstrate knowledge of the values and how they apply to their work.

*Competency Risk Assessment* (CRA) is how the service determines that each member of staff has the required knowledge and skills to undertake their job, be they a firefighter, member of fire control, or one of our support staff.

**How will we achieve this?**

You can read more about our plans to deliver against these strategic goals and our specific plans in areas such as inclusion, data reporting and staff engagement in our Inclusion Action Plan [\[link\]](#).

# Enabling Services

Designed to facilitate and accelerate delivery of key business goals, Enabling Services play a pivotal role in supporting WMFS to deliver its strategy and make West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier.

Finance, Procurement and Sustainability drive efficiency & value for money alongside supporting resource allocation to enable the delivery of key priorities and transformation.

Communications and engagement lead on engagement both within the service and with our communities, enhancing public awareness of the service, what we can offer and our key safety messages.

The Digital, Data & Technology team leverage technology to enable streamlined operations, data-driven decision making and enhanced service delivery.

Collectively, Enabling Services provide additional expertise to achieve the service's vision by partnering with our community-facing teams to help them be more effective in their roles.

## Goals and Measures

We will deliver the best outcomes for our communities by ensuring we maximise technology, data & insight to enhance and futureproof our services	<i>% services available on any modern device</i>  <i>% data completeness, accuracy &amp; visualisation</i>
We will keep your data safe by enhancing security and gaining accreditation for our systems	<i>Attainment of Cyber Essentials Plus</i>  <i>% staff completion of Cyber Awareness Training</i>
We will provide our staff, communities and partners with informed communications and engagement that can be trusted.	<i>Communications Trust Survey results</i>

## Explaining our measures

*Cyber Essentials Plus* is a government-backed, industry-supported scheme which helps organisations protect themselves against online threats. By aiming for the "Plus" standard, WMFS will be subject to a hands-on technical verification, providing extra assurance of our cyber security.

Our *Communications Trust Survey* is a six-monthly survey carried out with our staff, partners and communities to assess the trust they have in our communications and engagement, including areas such as our community safety campaigns and social media content.

## How will we achieve this?

You can find out more about how we will deliver our goals for technology, data and cyber security by reading our Digital and Data Strategy [\[Link\]](#).

Our Corporate Communications Strategy [\[Link\]](#) provides more information on our approach to effective communications and engagement.

# Value

As a publicly funded service, we are committed to ensuring our services are not only effective, but efficient too, delivering value for money and providing the best return on your investment in us.

Like all local authorities, we are subject to a Duty of Best Value to “*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which [our] functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.*”

Improving efficiency helps us to invest in the people and service we provide to you and helps us to drive continuous improvement.

We must also meet expectations set by central government of the fire and rescue sector as a whole to improve productivity. We need to ensure that our crews and our support staff are making optimal use of their time and achieving the maximum benefit from the resources and money we invest in various activities such a prevention and training.

Of course, we must deliver value in a way that is sustainable for our people, communities and the planet – be that in the products we purchase, the vehicles we use or the way we heat and maintain our buildings – with the ultimate aim of achieving the West Midlands wide ambition of net-zero by 2041.

## Goals and Measures

We will be financially sustainable, effectively planning how we use our resources and maintaining affordable levels of spending.	Balanced Budget
We will deliver efficiencies to improve value for money and maintain services.	Delivery of savings target
We will continue to improve the productivity of all our staff to deliver more positive outcomes with our investment.	<i>Productivity measure (e.g., total volume of productive output divided by workforce WTE).</i>  <i>Economic and Social Cost of Fire Measures</i>
We will enhance sustainability and operate our service ethically as we continue our journey towards net zero.	<i>PI-23 Total Service Carbon Footprint/Output</i>  PI 24&25 Gas/Electric/Fuel are currently measured so could be used. Further down insight is based on high levels of assumptions.

## Explaining our measures

*Total Carbon Footprint* is measured in terms of tonnes of “CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent” emissions either produced directly by the organisation from things like heating and fuelling vehicles (called Scope 1), and indirectly from the energy we buy (Scope 2). CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent is a measure designed to take account of all types of greenhouse gases, but provide a consistent measure in terms of the environmental impact they have equivalent to a standard measure of CO<sub>2</sub>, the most common greenhouse gas.

### **How will be achieve this?**

You can read more about our approach to meeting our efficiency and productivity targets in our annual Efficiency and Productivity Plan [\[LINK\]](#), which is updated every March. This report is produced at the request of the Home Office and sets out how we will meet the targets set for us by Government and reflected in our goals above.

Our Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan [\[Link\]](#) are agreed and published every February and will provide further detail on how we will deliver our efficiency goal and achieve a balanced budget.

You can also read more about how we will deliver on our commitment to achieving Net Zero within our Sustainability Strategy [\[Link\]](#).

## Our Balanced Scorecard

Our balanced scorecard brings together the goals from each of our perspectives and our Key Performance Indicators in one place. We publish a live version of this on our website so that we can be held to account for how we are delivering against our goals. [\[LINK\]](#)

Our Fire Authority receive and scrutinise six-monthly reports on our Key Performance Indicators and agree the targets that are set for all of them. You can read those reports and the minutes of those meetings on our WMFRA CMIS pages [\[LINK\]](#).

Alongside the live dashboard and the quarterly authority reports, the service publishes an Annual Report to look in more depth at our performance and the reasons why we met, missed or exceeded our targets. [\[LINK\]](#)

[\[Diagram\]](#)