

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND CIVIL DEFENCE AUTHORITY**

**22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2004**

1. **RESTRUCTURE OF STATION MANAGEMENT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT approval is given to a restructure of station management as set out in the report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to seek the Authority's approval to restructure the management of fire stations by grouping stations together on the basis of local authority boundaries.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following the wide-ranging restructure of West Midlands Fire Service in 2001 there has been significant change in the Fire and Rescue Service and its focus is now firmly on the implementation of the modernising agenda. Preliminary work identified that a number of benefits resulted from the 2001 restructure. However, in the new environment there is a need for further enhancement.
- 3.2 A project was initiated in July this year to build on the earlier work and develop proposals for change. The main focus was on station management and the recommendations in this report are specifically applicable to that. However it is intended to extend the project to review all areas of Brigade management, including supervisory arrangements on Watches.
- 3.3 Part of the project involved consultation with officers at all managerial levels within the Brigade. This confirmed and reinforced the need for change. In particular, Station Commanders recognise this need and support the general principles of this report.

3.4 The proposals in this report are designed to retain the benefits that were gained from the 2001 review in that:

- The ability to engage with, and be recognised by, local communities was enhanced.
- Responsibility and accountability for service delivery were devolved to an appropriate level.
- Autonomy and local innovation were encouraged and facilitated.
- Management presence and focus on stations were increased.
- Communications routes between the centre and stations were shorter.

3.5 The proposals also overcome some of the disadvantages of our current structure in the context of modernisation, for example:

- Although communications routes are short, the lack of an intermediate structure between Headquarters and stations makes it difficult to hear individual messages from stations.
- There is perceived isolation of Station Commanders.
- There is reduced ability to provide support to specific local service delivery issues.
- There is reduced capacity to provide support on managerial issues.
- There is difficulty in monitoring and managing performance of people and of service delivery.
- It is difficult to measure the performance and customer focus of support departments.
- There is a need for structure that supports effective development of future managers.

3.6 Some of the issues listed above have become more important as change within the service accelerates. Good communications and ability to ensure that change is effectively implemented are critical to modernisation.

### 3.7 **Proposals**

3.7.1 Stations are currently grouped along local authority district lines for the purpose of risk management, training and other key functions. A manager will be put in place to manage each of the districts. These will comprise between two and seven stations.

- 3.7.2 To provide a coherent approach the Birmingham area will come under the overall control of one Senior Manager but, because of its size, will be divided into three areas using ward and delivery area boundaries. Each of these will be managed as a district.
- 3.7.3 The current structure of one Station Commander per station is inappropriate in that stations have widely different risk profiles, resources and staff. In the revised structure managers will be responsible for one or more stations depending on the risk and resources of those stations. These managers will form teams led by the overall managers of the districts. In Birmingham, as outlined in 3.7.2 above, there will be an overall Area Manager. The districts will have structures tailored to their individual needs and risk profile rather than a “one size fits all” approach.
- 3.7.4 The new roles created will be aligned to those within the national Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). At present the Brigade maintains posts assimilated to Station, Group and Area Manager for pay purposes.
- 3.7.5 The overall effect will be a reduction in the number of Station Managers by 26 and an increase in the number of Group and Area Managers by 23 giving an overall reduction of three uniformed posts.
- 3.7.6 It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the numbers of administrative posts or hours to support the new structure. This will be the equivalent of 6 part time posts. One each will be attached to the Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Dudley, Birmingham and Coventry Districts.
- 3.7.7 These staff will provide extra capacity to deal with the increase in administration related to prevention work and partnership involvement within the districts. This work will be in support of the District Managers’ Directed Action Plans and the work of the newly created Strategic Reserve.
- 3.7.8 The posts have been subject to job evaluation and have come out at a Grade 6.

3.7.9 The overall changes in numbers of posts are summarised at Appendix 1.

3.7.10 The detailed proposed management structures for each district are given at Appendix 2. It should be noted that the grades shown are provisional and subject to ratification once the outcome of national work on job size and job weighting has been completed and applied to the new roles. The financial implications of this report reflect the maximum likely cost of the proposal.

### 3.8 **Additional Benefits**

As well as giving the benefits listed in 3.4 and 3.5 above, these proposals provide the following advantages:

- 3.8.1 A team with an identified leader will be responsible and accountable for a local authority district or city.
- 3.8.2 These areas will align with ward and local authority boundaries to support partnership and liaison with communities.
- 3.8.3 The team leaders can co-ordinate effort and ensure that performance of the stations in their district is good and that the right support is provided by Headquarters Departments.

### 3.9 **Implementation**

- 3.9.1 Subject to approval, implementation will commence from January 2005 to be completed by September 2005.
- 3.9.2 Implementation will take account of the need to provide operational officer cover. The number of officers currently required to operate this cover is 60. This proposal will provide a total establishment of 60 when headquarters staff are taken into account.
- 3.9.3 It is intended that one-off implementation costs will be minimised by making use of existing accommodation and ICT infrastructure wherever possible.

### 3.10 **Further Project Stages**

It is intended to extend this review into departmental and watch management structure as part of the longer term project plan. When these future stages are completed any proposals will be the subject of further reports to the Authority.

## 4. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

This project will recognise and support the need to offer equal and fair opportunity to all staff.

## 5. **CORPORATE AIMS SUPPORTED**

The principal corporate aims supported by the information in this report are as follows:

1. To meet the Fire Authority's statutory duties, standards and expectations.
11. To continuously modernise and improve the quality of service.
12. To improve channels of communication.

## 6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

## 7. **TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

Consultation with the trade unions is in progress. The outcomes will be forwarded to Members as soon as consultation is complete and before the meeting of the Authority.

## 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The additional annual salary costs, excluding superannuation, would be approximately £8,625 as detailed below:-

	£	£	£	£
	BASIC	FLEXI	N.I.	TOTAL
<b><u>CURRENT</u></b>				
Station Manager B (x 40)	1,422,360	284,472	155,040	<b><u>1,861,872</u></b>
<b><u>PROPOSED</u></b>				
Station Manager A (x 7)	232,449	46,490	24,696	<b>303,635</b>
Station Manager B (x 7)	248,913	49,783	27,216	<b>325,912</b>
Group Manager A (x 14)	527,394	105,479	58,968	<b>691,841</b>
Group Manager B (x 7)	288,127	57,625	33,264	<b>379,016</b>
Area Manager A (x 1)	44,325	8,865	4,932	<b>58,122</b>
Area Manager B (x 1)	47,814	9,563	5,772	<b>63,149</b>
				<b><u>1,821,674</u></b>
Admin Grade 6 (x 3 FTE)	44,793		4,030	<b>48,823</b>
				<b><u>1,870,497</u></b>
<b>Additional Costs</b>				<b><u>8,625</u></b>

If the proposal was approved, the ongoing additional cost would need to be accommodated within the Authority's Budgetary Plans.

- 8.2 It is estimated there would be some 'one off' expenditure of £20,000 incurred in the current year to allow any necessary building and ICT modifications to be undertaken. This would be accommodated from within existing budgets.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Project Documentation – Review of Station Management Structure

F. J. E. SHEEHAN  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

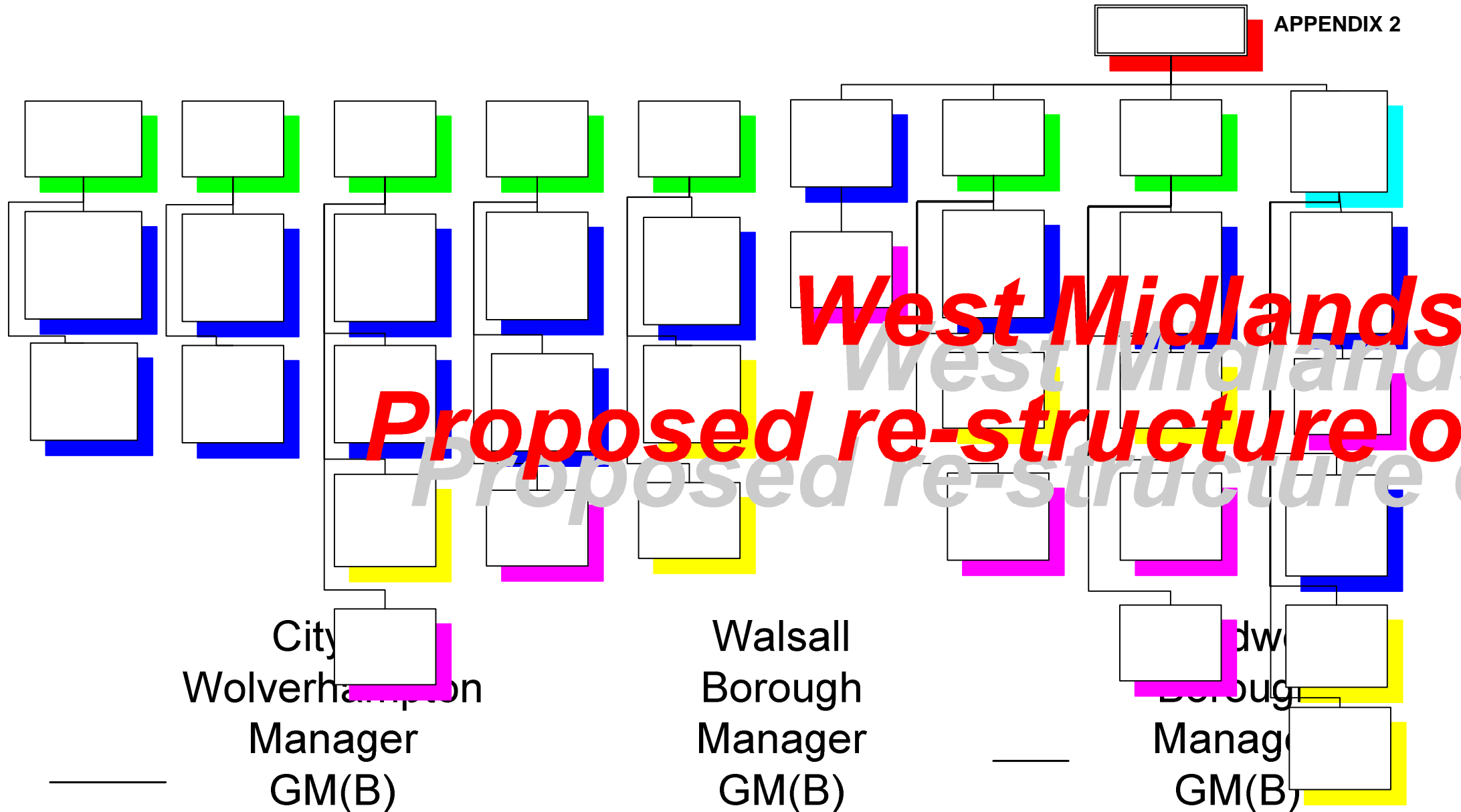
APPENDIX 1

**Comparison of Current and Proposed Station Management and Administration Posts**

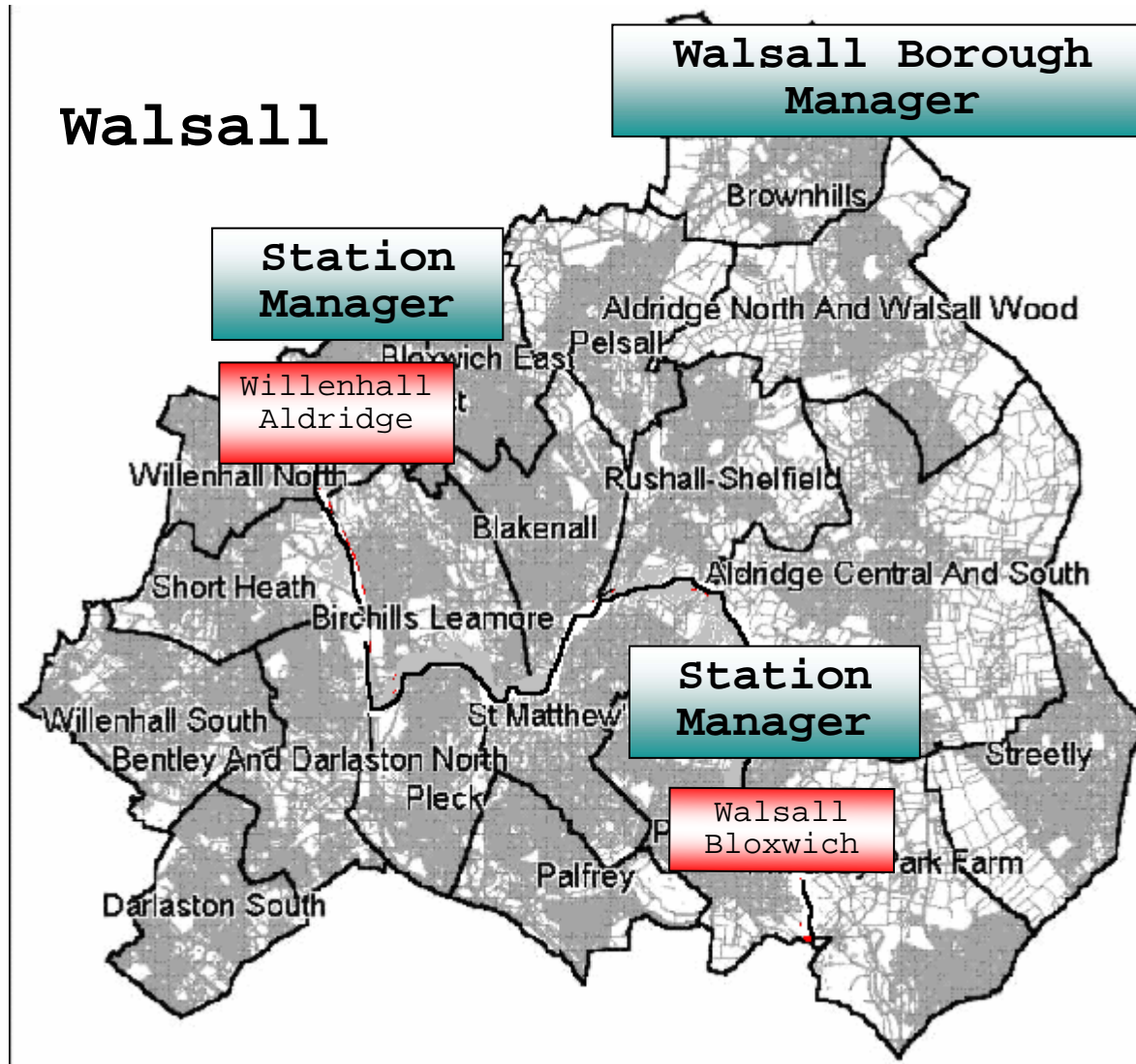
**IMPORTANT – Please note that these grades are provisional and may go up or down as a result of the application of national guidance for job weight and job size.**

CURRENT			PROPOSED	
Current Available Ranks	Equivalent Role and Grade (for pay)	Current Number	Role and Grade	Proposed Number
			Station Manager A	7
Assistant Divisional Officer	Station Manager B	40	Station Manager B	7
			Group Manager A	14
Divisional Officer	Group Manager B	0	Group Manager B	7
			Area Manager A	1
Senior Divisional Officer	Area Manager B	0	Area Manager B	1
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Administration/Clerical Posts</b>	<b>Grade 7 (Part time)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Grade 7 (Part time)</b>	<b>40</b>
			<b>Grade 6 (Part time)</b>	<b>6</b>





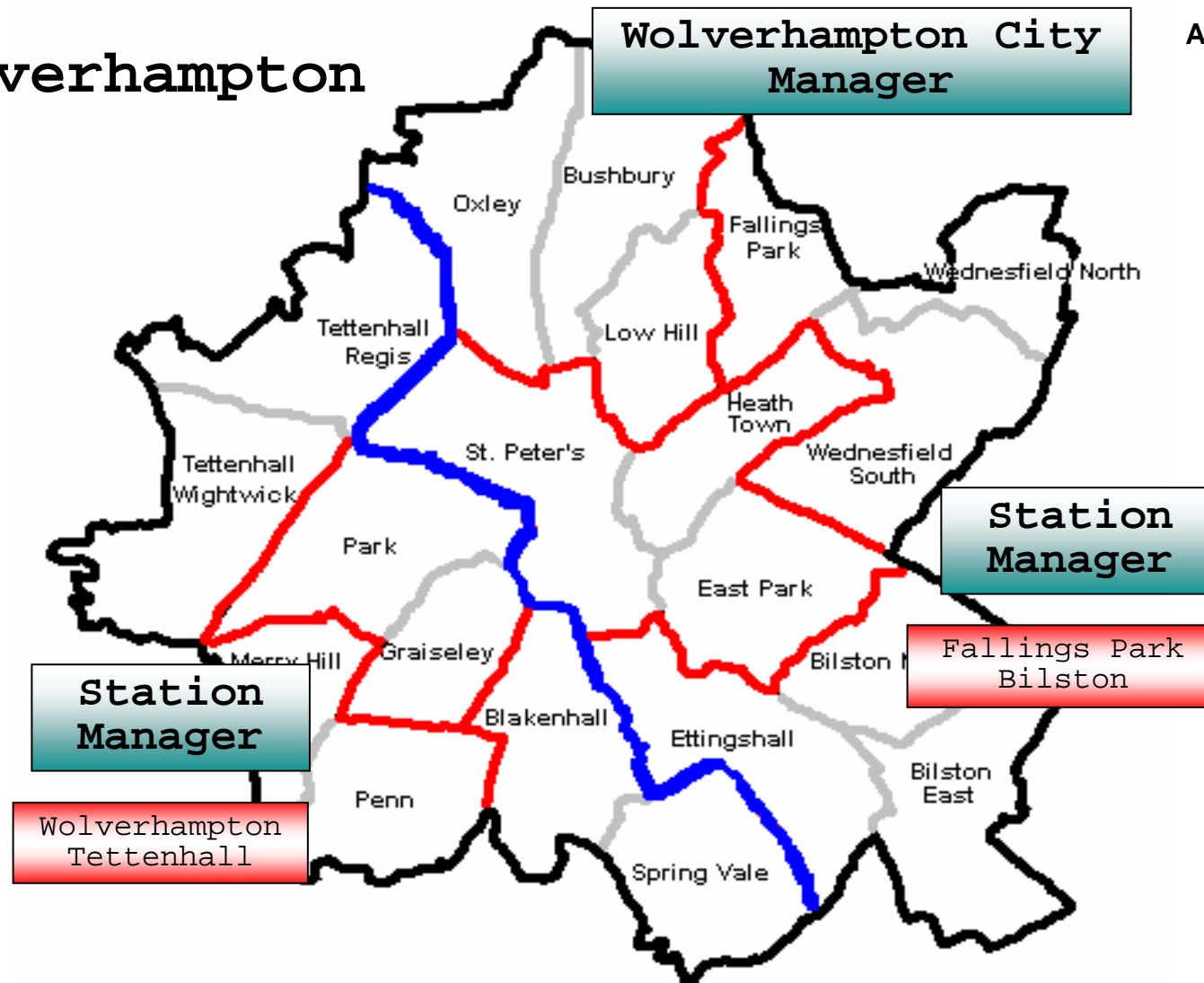
# Walsall



## APPENDIX 2

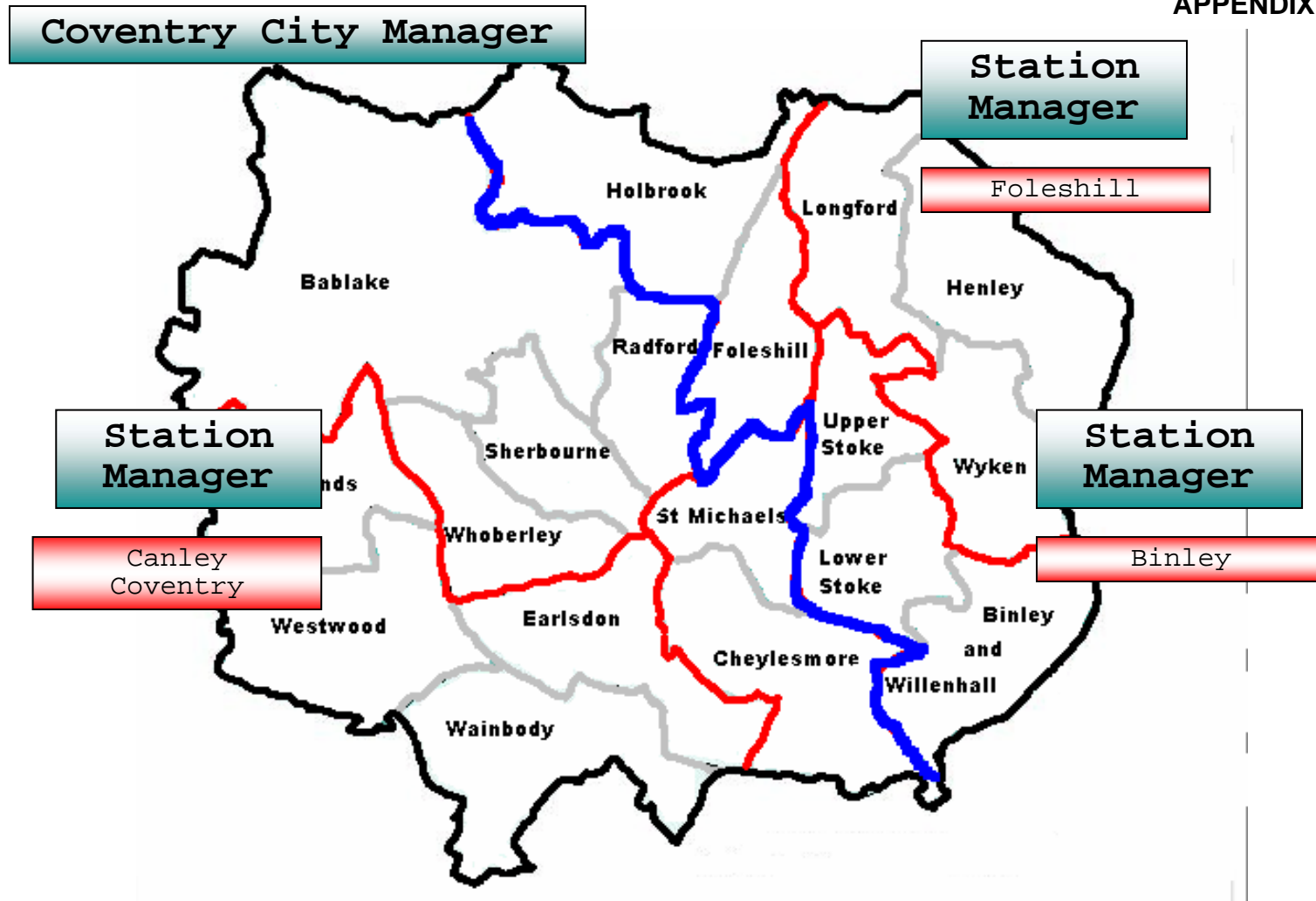
# Wolverhampton

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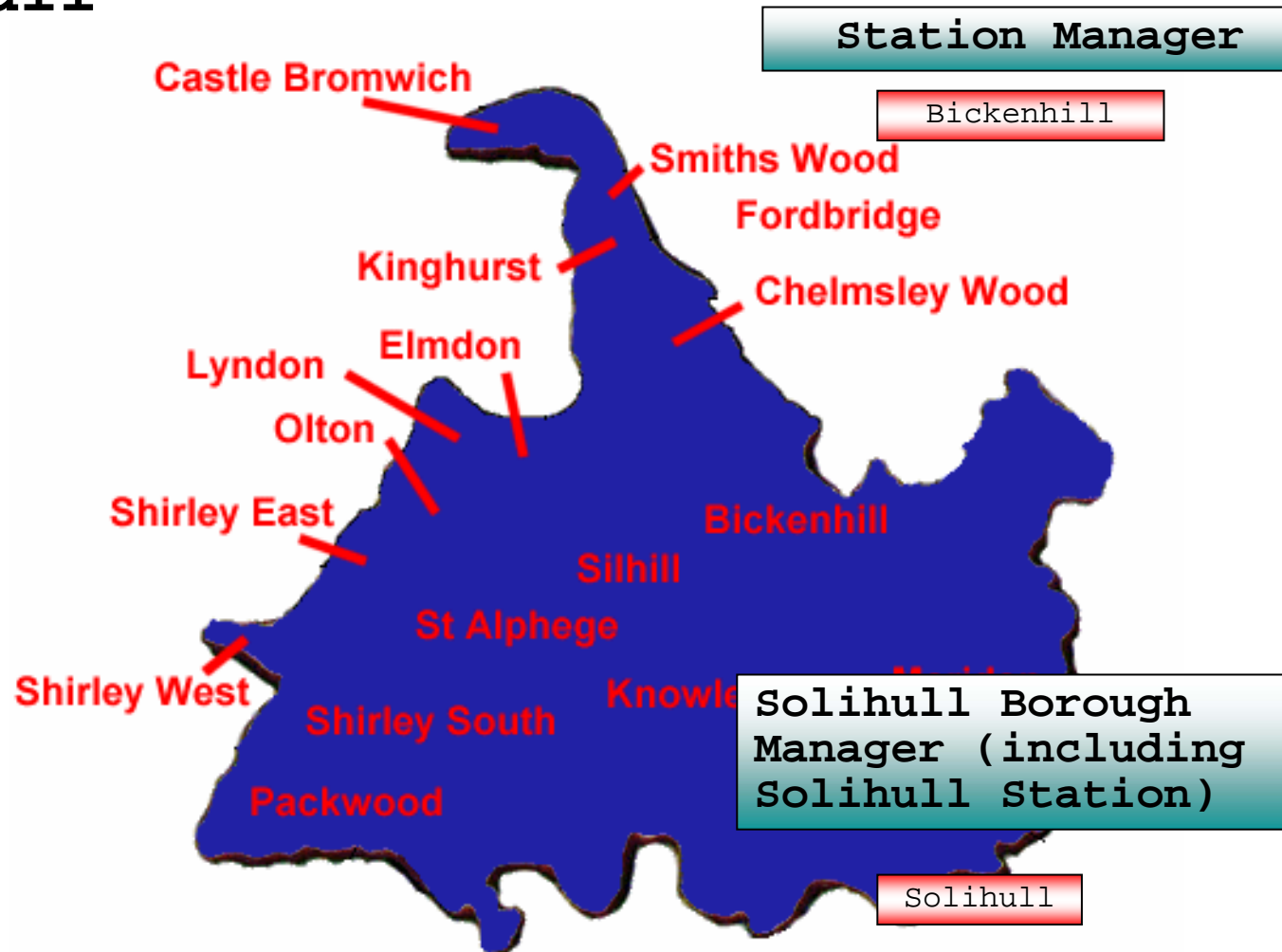


# Coventry

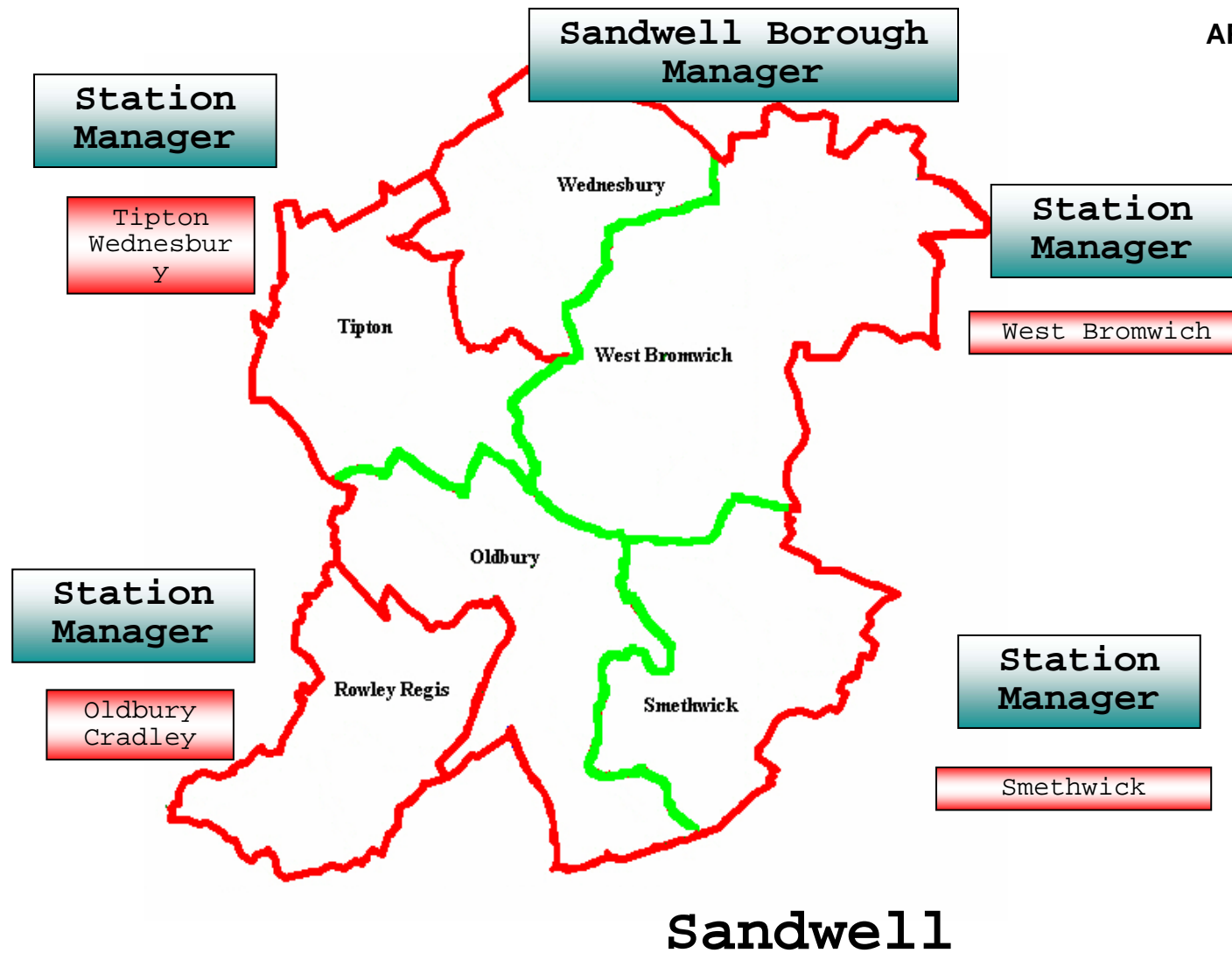
APPENDIX 2



# Solihull



APPENDIX 2



**Station  
Manager**

Dudley  
Sedgley

**Station  
Manager**

Halesowen  
Stourbridge

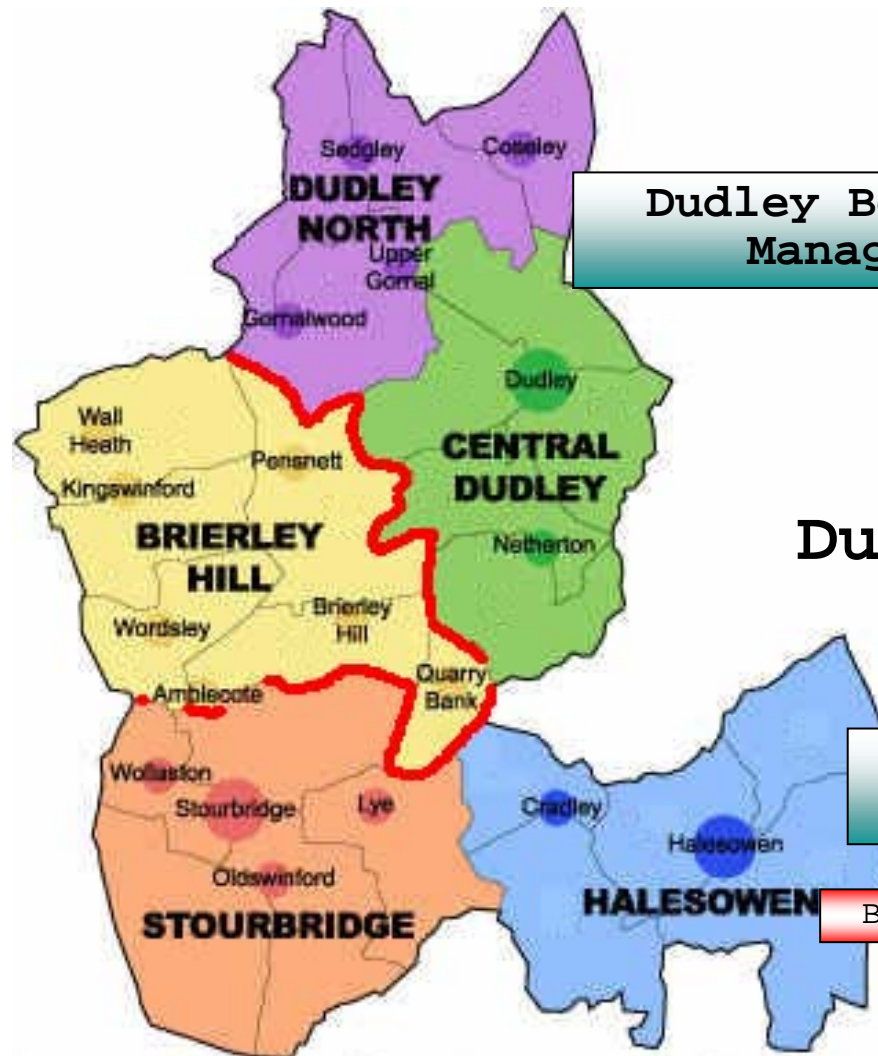
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**Dudley Borough  
Manager**

**Dudley**

**Station  
Manager**

Brierley Hill

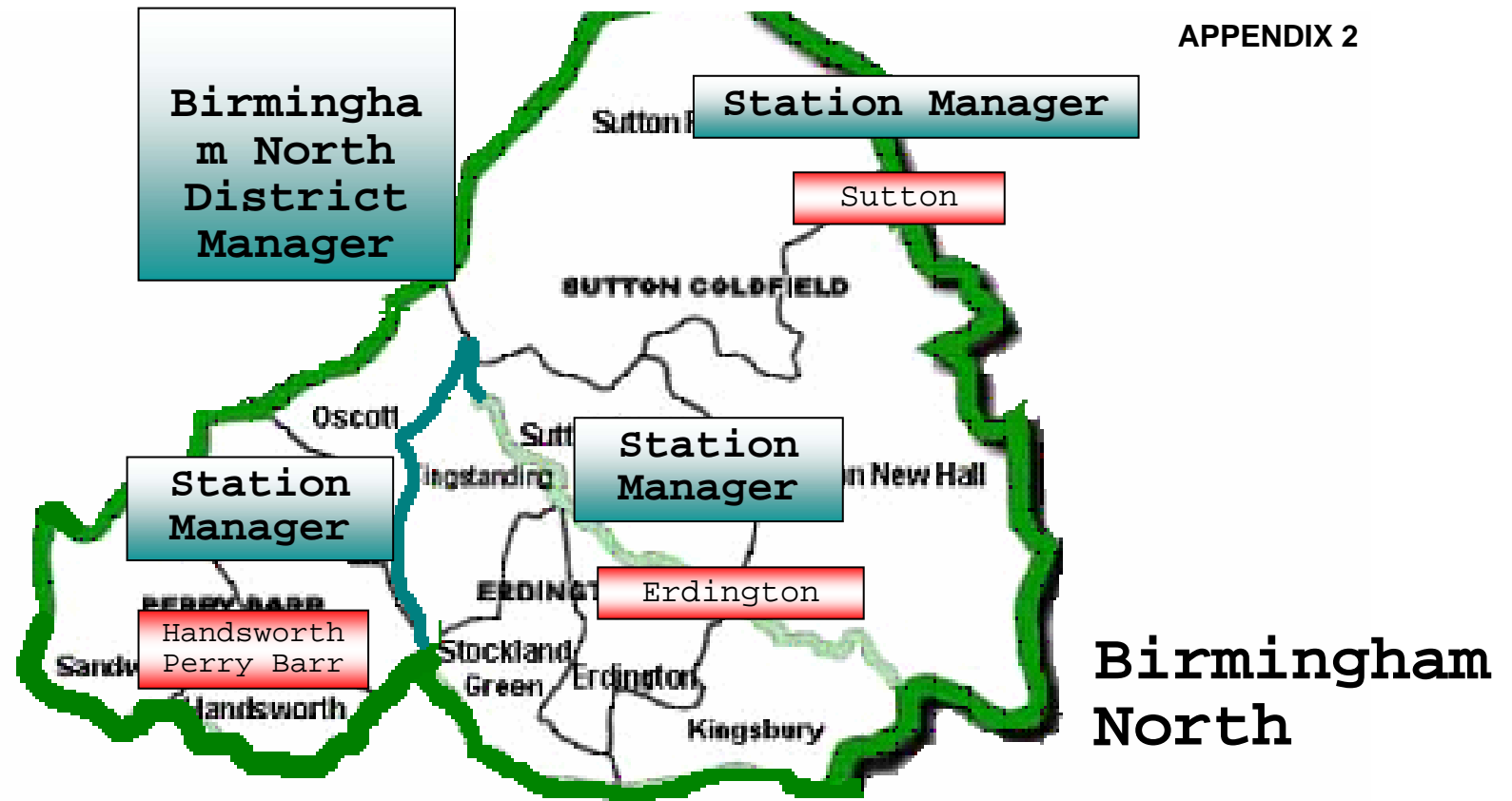


# Birmingham

## APPENDIX 2

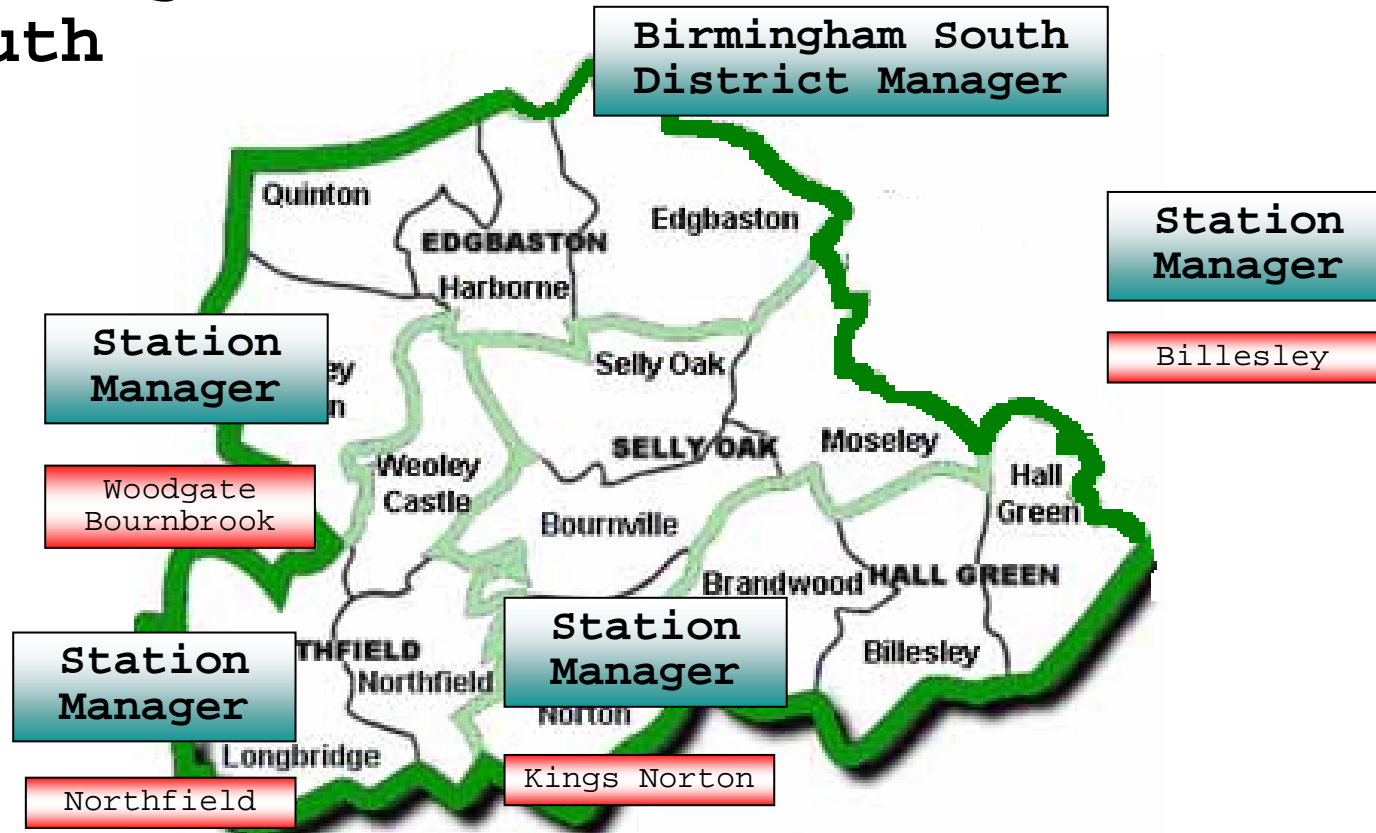






# Birmingham South

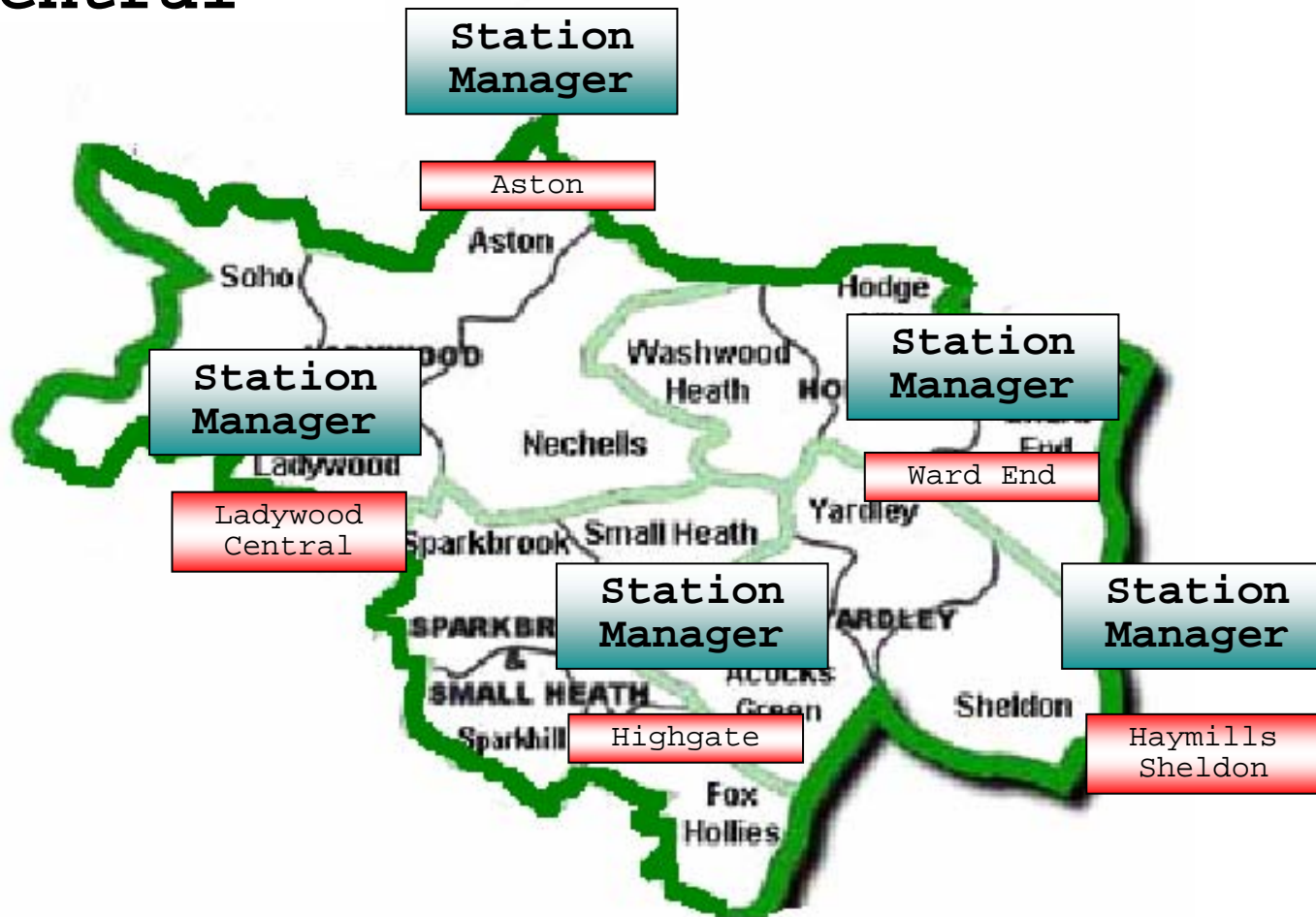
## APPENDIX 2



# Birmingham Central

Birmingham Central  
District Manager

APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 2

