

<p><b>Minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board</b></p>
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**25th January, 2005 at 10.30 a.m.**  
**at Shire Hall, Shrewsbury**

- Present:**        **Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority**  
Councillors G Davis and Udall;  
**Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority**  
Councillors Hartin, Lt. Col. Littlejohns and Morgan;  
**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 Hinton and Hogarth.
- Advisors:**      Chief Fire Officer Brown (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service);  
Chief Fire Officer Kerr (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service);  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Maltby (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service);  
Chief Fire Officer O'Dwyer (Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service);  
Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service).
- J Gregory (Legal Advisor);  
M Griffiths and C Juckes (Representing the Treasurer);  
P Dartford (Regional FireControl Project Director);  
N Summers (Clerk)  
S Worrall (Programme Manager).
- Visitors:**        Jean Cole and Simon Smith (Government Office West Midlands);
- Observers:**      Councillor K Austin;  
Messrs P McCafferey and A Rotchell.
- Apologies:**      Councillors Eustace, Jebb and Taylor;  
Lynda Bateman (Treasurer).

1/05        **Election of Chair**

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter of resignation from Councillor Keith Austin and invited nominations for the office of Chair.

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**Resolved** that Councillor Haynes be elected Chair of the Regional Management Board for the remainder of the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the Board in 2005.

2/05      **Councillor Keith Austin**

Councillor Austin was present at the meeting. The Chair and members thanked Councillor Austin for his excellent contribution to the work of the Regional Management Board, both within the region and at a national level, and wished him every success in the future.

Members welcomed Councillor Morgan who had been appointed by the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority to serve on the Regional Management Board.

3/05      **Minutes**

With reference to Minute No. 38/04 (Trade Union Engagement), Councillor D Davis reported that so far he had met with representatives of two trades unions. A number of points had arisen from the discussions that needed to be explored, and he would report further in due course on the progress of his work to develop effective regional engagement with trade unions.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November, 2004 be confirmed as a correct record.

4/05      **FiReControl Project – Outline Business Case Consultation**

With reference to Minute No 34/04, the Board considered a suggested response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM] to the draft Outline Business Case [OBC] in respect of the national FiReControl Project, which had been circulated for consultation. The views of all Chief Fire Officers had been sought and had been incorporated into the suggested response, which needed to be submitted to ODPM by 4th February, 2005. Arrangements were in hand for each constituent Fire Authority to be asked to endorse the proposed response to the ODPM.

Concerns were expressed that the proposed response included

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detailed interrogation of a number of aspects of the draft OBC. It was suggested that it was not appropriate for the Board to make such detailed comments at this stage as insufficient information was available to reach an informed view, and that the response should be more succinct.

**Resolved** that the Clerk send a response to the ODPM based on the suggested response set out in the report, amended as referred to above.

5/05

**FiReControl Project – Government Consultation on FiReControl Finance and Governance**

Further to Minute No. 34/04, the Board considered a suggested response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM] to the consultation document issued in respect of finance and governance issues relating to the national FiReControl Project. A response needed to be submitted to ODPM by 4th February, 2005.

Arrangements were in hand for each constituent Fire Authority to be asked to endorse the proposed response to the ODPM. Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority had already considered the draft response, and its representatives proposed amendments to the draft that were tabled and considered.

It was clear from the discussion at the meeting that there was no consensus as to which model of governance was favoured for regional FiReControl centres, but there was agreement that there was insufficient information in the consultation paper to make an informed response on which option was preferred.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the amended response proposed by Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority and attached as Appendix 2 be approved for submission to the ODPM, suitably amended to indicate that the Board has not reached a consensus on the model of governance, and subject to endorsement by each of the constituent Fire Authorities; and
- (2) that the Clerk send the agreed response to the ODPM.

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6/05      **Meeting of the Programme Board**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 11th January, 2005.

7/05      **WMRMB Modernisation Programme – Project Prioritisation**

The Board considered a report on a review of all 23 projects within the regional Modernisation Programme against the targets, objectives and priorities set out in the National Framework Document 2005/06, with a view to establishing which projects could deliver early cost efficiencies and improvements in service delivery.

The areas that offered the greatest potential in this regard were the IRMP project and related projects such as Effective Response, Incident Management Protocols and Mutual Assistance. The IRMP project was scheduled for completion in March 2005 and had focused on the sharing of best practice in the development and implementation of integrated risk management plans within each individual Fire Authority. If the remit of the project were amended to collate and compare the IRMPs for each constituent Fire Authority it might be possible to identify best practice and areas of duplication where efficiencies and improvements could be achieved.

The roles of project managers for these projects were currently undertaken on a part-time basis funded by the host brigade, with most project managers devoting from one to three days per month to their respective projects. For the IRMP project to be re-scoped and promptly implemented, it would be necessary to make the position of IRMP Project Manager full-time for a period of six to nine months, funded through the RMB, and for the project managers of the dependent projects to offer every support to implement and secure any recommendations arising from the expanded IRMP project.

Any changes to establishments resulting from these proposals would require the full support of each respective Fire Authority, and would involve the RMB in additional expenditure.

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**Resolved** that the Programme Board be requested to:

- (1) Consider the results of the Project Prioritisation Assessment and determine what level of support should be given to the delivery of high priority projects; and
- (2) Give consideration to the re-scoping of the IRMP project, supported by the appointment of a full-time project manager, to facilitate the early delivery of efficiency savings and improved service delivery within the region.

8/05      **Regional Funding for WMRMB New Dimension Project Manager**

The Board considered a request for WMRMB funding for the post of New Dimension Project Manager for the year 2005/06. This post was currently funded by the West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority (WMFCDA) as project lead authority, but the postholder's Brigade duties with WMFCDA did not allow him to devote sufficient time to his regional duties. The host authority did not have resources available to backfill his substantive post.

An agreement had been reached between the WMFCDA and the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority to fund the project manager post jointly for the remainder of this financial year.

Some members felt that it would be more appropriate for the funding gap to be met by the ODPM through the New Burdens arrangements.

The report was withdrawn and the possibility of alternative funding sources would be investigated.

9/05      **Public Consultation Process – Civil Contingencies Act 2004**

The Board considered whether it wished to prepare a regional response to consultation on the draft regulations and guidance for the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004. The consultation period ended on 3rd March, 2005.

**Resolved** that in view of the timescales involved, the Civil Contingencies Project Board be requested to draft a response for approval by the Chairs of the constituent Fire Authorities on behalf of the Board.

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10/05    **End of Tranche Review 3**

The Board received a report setting out progress with the Modernisation Programme for the period 31st October to 31st December, 2004.

The Programme was predominantly on track, and where there was slippage this was due to external factors. Progress in individual projects within the Modernisation Programme was outlined.

11/05    **Finance Report**

The Board noted a report on spend to date against the approved budget allocation and allocation of time to projects for 2004/05.

12/05    **Correspondence Relating to the Regional Management Board**

The Board noted the following items:

- ODPM Fire and Rescue Circular 1-2005 (Firelink: project update and funding arrangements)
- Agenda for recent and forthcoming meetings of other Regional Management Boards

13/05    **Date of next meeting**

The Board considered the arrangements for its Annual Meeting.

**Resolved:**

- (1)        that the next ordinary meeting of the Board be held at 10.30 am on 29th April, 2005 (West Midlands);
- (2)        that the Annual Meeting of the Board be held on Friday, 10th June, 2005 at 10.30 am (venue to be announced).

(Meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes</i> <i>Democratic Services Unit</i> <i>Sandwell MBC</i> <i>0121-569 3791</i></p>
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