



Preventing



Protecting



Responding

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Corporate Self Assessment 2005

Making West Midlands Safer

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Firefighters working with the community

Background – The West Midlands and its Fire and Civil Defence Authority

The Environment

The West Midlands comprises the three cities of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall. It forms a concentrated urban conurbation surrounded by a mixture of semi-rural and rural counties.

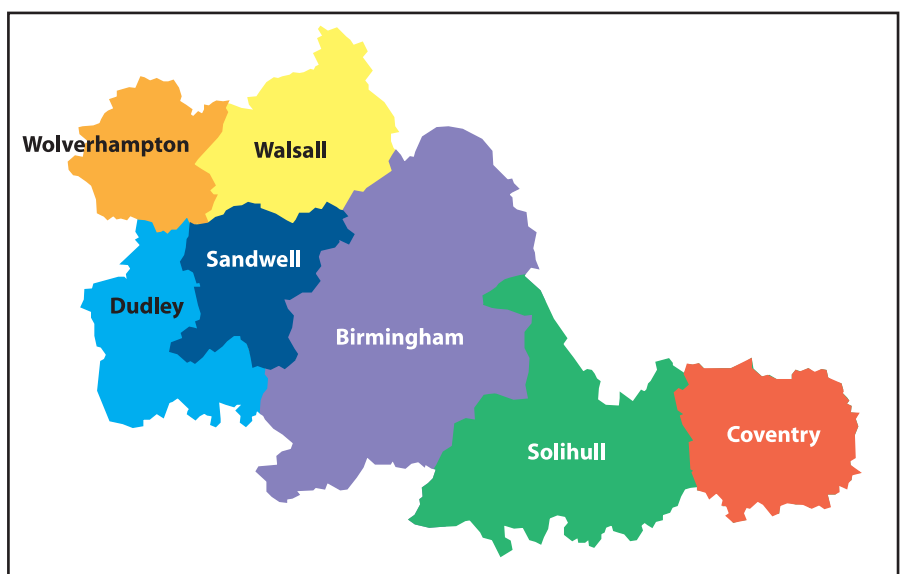
Topography

The area totals 91,276 hectares (350 sq. miles) of which the large majority is urban.

Local Identity

Although the West Midlands is almost continuously built up, there are clear and separate identities within the area. Birmingham is the largest city, centrally placed with a population approaching one million. Birmingham City Council is the largest local authority in the UK in terms of population served and budget. Coventry has a very strong city identity and is separated to some extent by the only significant tract of green belt within the area. Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Solihull have equally strong local identities and the Borough of Sandwell comprises six 'towns' with a strong Black Country tradition.

Map of West Midlands showing the locations of the local authority areas





Targeting fire safety to key areas of the public

Population

- The population of the West Midlands Brigade area is 2,575,800.
- The density of the population is 28.2 people per hectare compared with an average of 3.4 in England and Wales.
- 22% of the population are aged between 0 and 15, 71% are aged 16 to 74 and 7% are aged 75 plus. The proportion of older people is increasing in line with the national trend.
- 80% of the population are white, 13.4% are Asian, 3.7% are Black, 2.1% mixed and 0.8% Chinese or other.
- The largest minority ethnic groups in the West Midlands are Indians (6.2%), Pakistani (5.4%) and Black Caribbean (3%).
- 20% of the population have a limiting long-term illness.
- 11% of the population state that their general health is "not good."
- 11% of the population are providing unpaid care.
- 55.4% of the population are employed; this is lower than the national average of 61%.
- 6.6% of the population are unemployed; this is higher than the national average of 4.4%.

The figures above reflect the urban deprivation of significant parts of the brigade's area. Risk in the community tends to follow the same geographical pattern.



Fitting smoke alarms

Business

Historically, the West Midlands has been an engineering economy and, although greatly reduced in magnitude, there are still a wide range of manufacturers including motor companies and those that support them. This economy is accompanied by an ever increasing range of commercial, high technology, retail and service industries.

Transport

The West Midlands has an extremely busy road network including the M6, M5, M42, and A38M forming the Midlands Links Motorway Network. The rail network is extensive including the West Coast Main Line and many other national and local routes. Birmingham International Airport is within the area and Coventry Airport, now seeing an increase in international traffic, is on the boundary in Warwickshire.

West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority (WMFCDA)

WMFCDA comprises 27 elected Members nominated from the seven constituent local authorities. Nominations are agreed on the basis of maintaining political proportionality. The table below shows the composition of the Authority.

Local Authority	Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Total
Wolverhampton	2	1		3
Walsall	1	2		3
Sandwell	2	1		3
Dudley	1	2		3
Birmingham	5	3	2	10
Solihull		2		2
Coventry	1	2		3
Totals	12	13	2	27



West Midlands Fire Service
Headquarters

Lead Members:

- Chair: Councillor David Hinton (Sandwell)
- Vice Chair: Councillor Peter Hogarth (Solihull)
- Performance Management:
Councillor Les Lawrence (Birmingham)
- Equality & Diversity:
Councillor Mohammed Kazi (Birmingham)
- Standards Committee:
Mr Martin Chambers and Mr Colin Topliss
(Independent Members)

The lead Authority for the WMFCDA is Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, whose Chief Executive is Clerk to the Authority. Sandwell also provide the Authority's Treasurer and the following services:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| ■ Property Services | ■ Related Professional |
| ■ Legal Services | Services |
| ■ Risk Management | ■ Printing Services |
| Services | ■ Democratic Services |

The West Midlands Fire Service

People

- 2,514 people
- 2,062 uniformed staff
- 417 non-uniformed staff
- 1,744 operational staff
- 12 retained staff
- 176 day duty staff including fire safety officers
- 65 fire control room staff
- 67 uniformed senior officers

The roles of Corporate Board members reflect the departmental structure which supports and directs service delivery. The management structure is functional, with no additional tiers of line management between departments and individual Station Commanders, who currently manage each station and Fire Safety Centre. This structure will be changing during 2005 to reflect the needs of modernisation.



Young Firefighters' Association

Locations

The service has one retained and 40 wholetime fire stations as shown on the map on the following page.

Equipment

The service operates 62 pumping/rescue appliances, five aerial appliances, three Incident Response Units, one Urban Search and Rescue Unit, and a wide range of specialist equipment deployed using demountable units and 'prime movers'. A fleet of reserve appliances is maintained to ensure operational resilience.

Finance

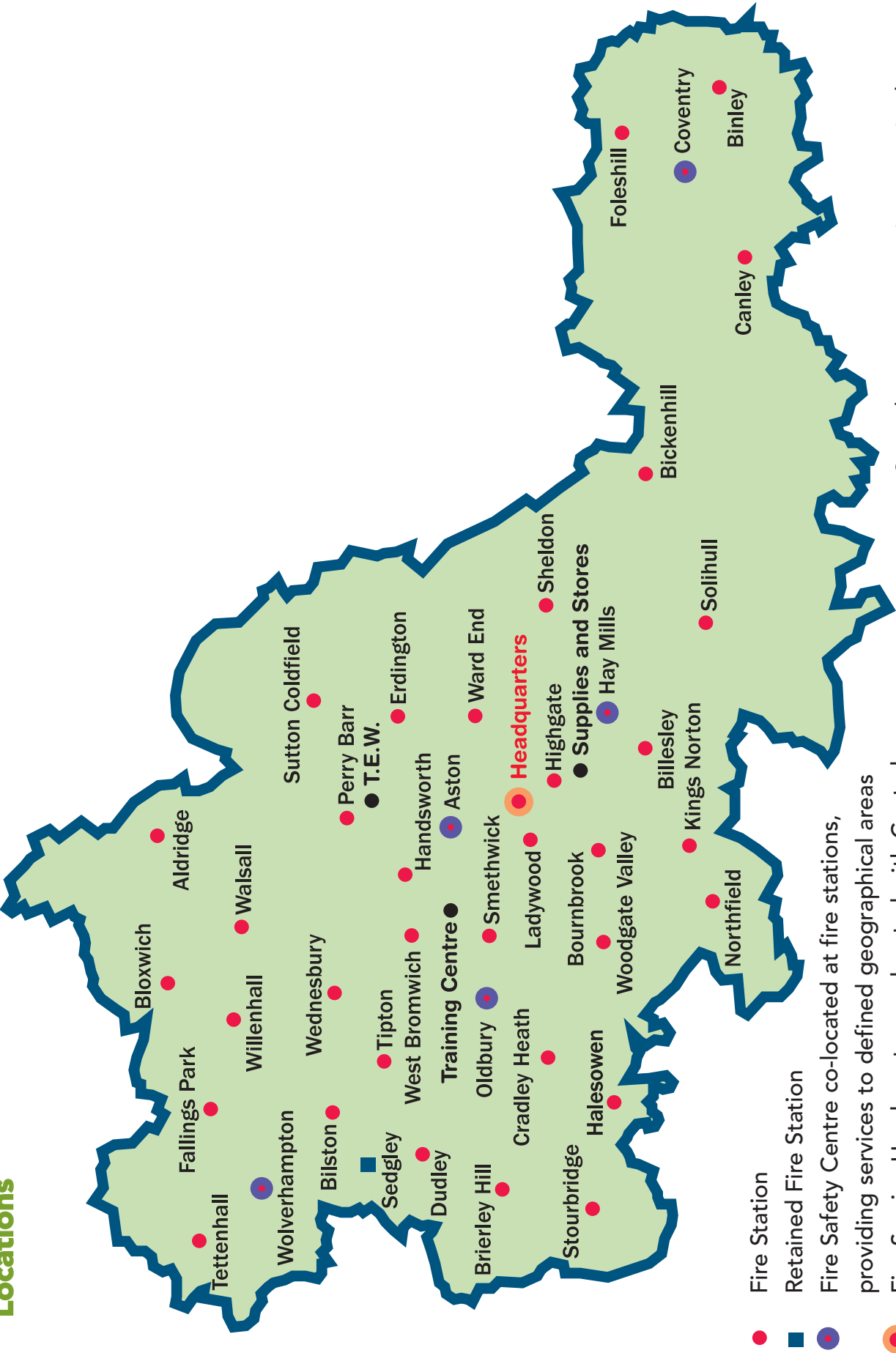
The Authority's 2005/06 budget is approximately £114 million. The Band D Council Tax precept for 2004/05 was the lowest in the Family Group.

Emergency Incidents

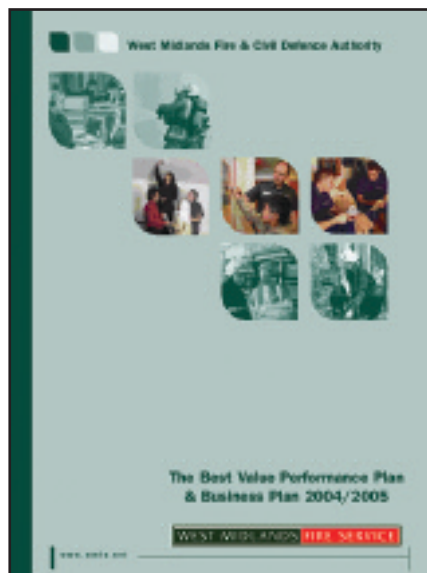
The figures in the table below summarise emergency response during the year 2003/04. The latest available figures for the current year all show a downward trend with the exception of false alarms caused by automatic fire alarm systems.

Incident Type	Number of Incidents
Fires	32,709
■ Property and Vehicle Fires	(11,175)
■ Accidental Fires in Dwellings	(2,647)
Other emergencies	8,440
False Alarms - Good Intent	8,555
False Alarms - Malicious	4,069
False Alarms due to Automatic Fire Alarm Systems	11,861
Total Incidents	65,634
Road Traffic Collisions Attended	2,570

Locations



Some key support sections are sited at other locations e.g. ICT have premises at both Training Centre and at Solihull Fire Station



Best Value Performance Plan
and Business Plan 2004/2005

A What is the Fire Authority Trying to Achieve?

1. Leadership and Priorities

1.1 How well has the Fire Authority demonstrated a clear vision of what it is trying to achieve?

Vision Statement:

"Making West Midlands Safer"

Mission Statement:

"We will provide a quality service to reduce risk by:-

- Preventing,
- Protecting,
- Responding."

WMFCDA has clear and succinct Vision and Mission statements, which are reviewed annually to ensure their continued relevance in a national, regional and local context. This process includes a ten year scan of issues which may impact on the Authority. There are 15 high level Corporate Aims. Organisational objectives that support our Corporate Aims are clearly identified and prioritised¹.

The Vision, Aims and Objectives are reinforced at every opportunity using a variety of media. Examples include the Best Value Performance Plan and Business Plan (BVPP/BP), the Authority's website², publicity materials displayed in workplaces, press releases and our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)³.

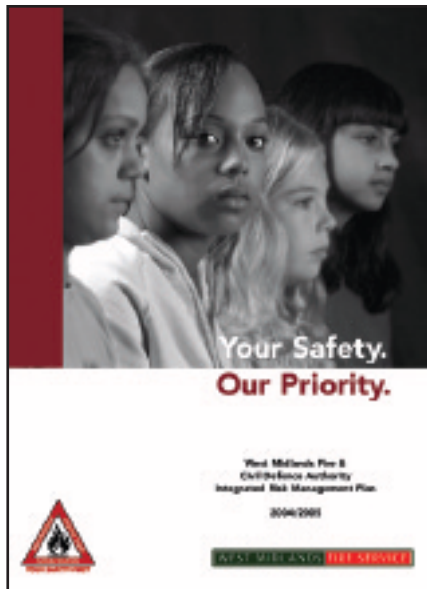
The Business Plan reflects local and national priorities, ensuring the Authority has a balance between prevention, protection and intervention activity. The Government's key objectives, as detailed in the Fire and Rescue National Framework, are addressed.

The Business Plan identifies IPDS as a priority and thereby makes the links between service planning and workforce development.

¹ BVPP/BP

² www.wmfs.net

³ IRMP 1&2



Integrated Risk Management Plan 2004/2005

- ⁴ IRMP supporting data and analysis
- ⁵ Organisation chart
- ⁶ Integrated Planning Process (Standing Order 22/06)
- ⁷ PRINCE2 guidance for managers and PRINCE2 training programme
- ⁸ IRMP1 Consultation Strategy and outcome report to Authority

The Fire Authority's IRMP is at the heart of change and our plans are based on sound research that has been complimented and quoted as good practice by The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI). The robustness of our analysis provides solid ground upon which we can take forward change confidently. We have the data that allows us to make the tough decisions required as part of modernisation⁴.

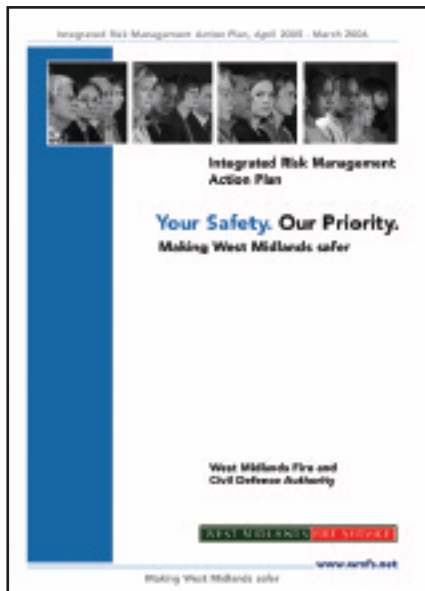
The Community Protection Department has the overarching reference of service delivery. This department includes three sections; Protection, Prevention and Intervention to reflect the Authority's Vision and Mission statements⁵.

The Directed Action Planning (DAP) process involves consultation between the Community Protection Department and Station Managers to agree proposals and strategies for community safety activity⁶. This ensures that stations work collaboratively to meet strategic objectives and target areas of high risk.

The Authority uses PRINCE2 project management. A Programme Support Office has been established to support modernisation priorities and ensure that projects are managed effectively⁷.

1.2 How well has the Fire Authority engaged with partners and communities in developing its ambition, and to determine its priorities?

Consultation forms a considerable element of the IRM process. The consultation process in 2003/4 included staff, partners, community groups, the business sector and the general public. As a result, amendments were made to proposed changes of response to automatic fire alarm calls to hospitals. In addition, the proposed reduction and changes of location of aerial appliances were amended in response to consultation⁸.



Integrated Risk Management Action Plan 2005

The IRMP Year 2 Action Plan included proposals to reduce the number of fire engines available between midnight and 0800 hours from 62 to 47. We responded receptively to consultation, modifying the final proposals to be agreed by the Executive Committee of the Authority on 21st March 2005⁹. The IRM communication strategy identified hard to influence groups and measures to improve communication were implemented¹⁰.

Other examples of consultation include:

- a three-yearly Quality of Service questionnaire,
- "After the Fire" survey¹¹.

Strong links are being made by the Fire Authority with its partners and diverse communities. Seven community strategies exist in the seven districts of the West Midlands. Directors provide high level liaison with Local Authorities representing the fire service on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) or both. Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALOs) form a strong link between the Authority and the seven districts of the West Midlands. These posts identify opportunities for the maximisation of partnership working¹² and are centrally co-ordinated to ensure shared priorities and a consistent approach to community safety.

LALOs also sit on various CSPs/Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and implementation groups. Involvement in CDRPs has been monitored and audited by the Community Protection Department to ensure corporate objectives continue to be met¹³.

Examples of agencies we are in partnership with include:

- West Midlands Police,
- Probationary Service,
- Social Services,
- Youth Offending Teams.

⁹ IRMP Year 2 Action Plan responses

¹⁰ IRM Communication Strategy

¹¹ Opinion Research Services (ORS) reports

¹² "Making Walsall Safer"

¹³ Report on the outcomes of Crime and Disorder Audit



The West Midlands Arson Task Force (WMATF) is a successful partnership between West Midlands Police and the Fire Authority. The aim of the WMATF is to reduce by 10% the number of deliberate fires by 31 March 2010 from the 2001/02 baseline¹⁴.

1.3 How well has the Fire Authority engaged with staff in developing its ambition, and to determine its priorities?

As a direct result of a communications audit, an Internal Communications Manager has been appointed. A structured process is now in place for engaging and communicating with all staff¹⁵. For strategic and key messages, face to face communication is preferred and the Authority uses management briefings, reinforced with frequent station visits by Directors and Senior Divisional Officers. These allow for informal "round table" discussions with staff who are able to raise any issue of concern. Feedback on issues raised is delivered promptly.

Other communication tools include individual letters and the Authority's Internet and Intranet sites. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) and electronic forums have been developed for the majority of functional departments. Other forms of written communication include formal Standing Orders and Routine Notices, departmental newsletters, 'Firepower' (our internal magazine), and the publication of key documents via email including minutes of all strategic meetings¹⁶.

Some methods of communication with staff rely on information being cascaded. This may result in the corporate message not always reaching everyone. Another recognised risk is information overload. Both of these issues have been identified as a corporate strategic risk with an associated action plan¹⁷.

¹⁴ Removal of abandoned vehicles, "You Are Your City – Clean and Safe"

¹⁵ Communications Audit/ Communications Strategy

¹⁶ Standing Orders, Routine Notices, Management Briefing notes and presentations, Firepower, CB minutes, PMG minutes, Department newsletters

¹⁷ Corporate Risk Action Plan – "Information not targeted to those who need it"



FirePower - Spring Edition
2005

We recognise this is an area for improvement and plan a survey of information requirements in the coming year.

Where appropriate, communication is two-way, receiving feedback with a view to influencing future decisions. A recent example of this has been the communication process during our management restructure review¹⁸.

The Representative Bodies (RB) form an essential part of the consultation process and they are involved in all major proposals through direct consultation and via a Joint Consultative Panel (JCP)¹⁹. Employee surveys, focus groups and meetings are regularly used as further methods of checking whether engagement with staff is effective.

1.4 How well has the Fire Authority made its priorities clear, including the criteria used to shape these priorities?

Following a Political, Environmental, Societal and Technological (PEST) analysis, the Brigade's senior managers have identified a prioritised ten year scan of issues which may impact on the Authority. These are fed into the corporate business and operational planning process.

There is a further stage of prioritisation during departmental planning and the DAP process. This is illustrated in the diagram on the following page.

In terms of external communication with key stakeholders, recent developments have included parliamentary and Ministerial briefings. The Chair of the Authority and Chief Fire Officer initiated discussion with West Midlands Members of Parliament at Westminster²⁰.

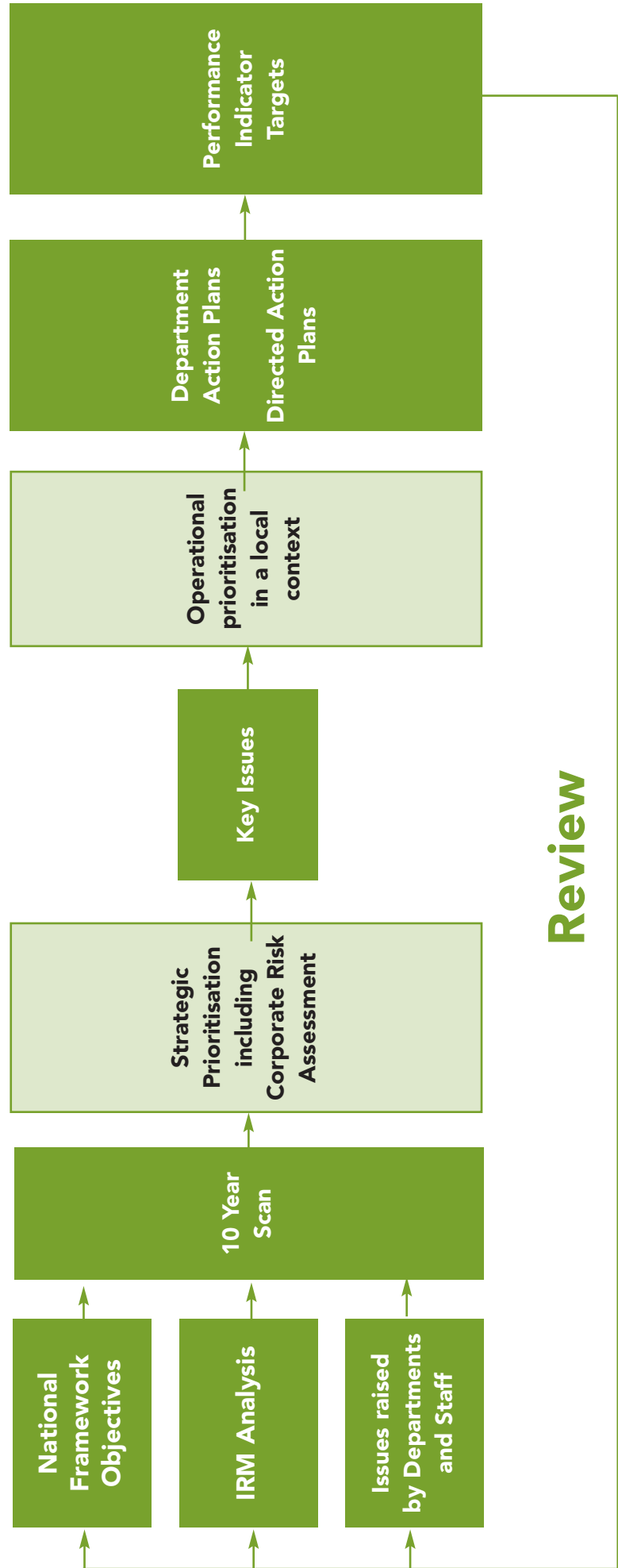
The Internal Communications Manager has helped ensure that messages are in a meaningful and appropriate format, acknowledging the needs of different recipients of this information.

¹⁸ Consultation outcomes – restructure project

¹⁹ Consultation invitations, RB responses and JCP Minutes

²⁰ Westminster presentations

Overview of Planning Process - inputs and prioritisation





HFRA promotional campaign 2004 / 2005

Recognition has been received from external sources of our success in this area.

The lead officer for this process is the Director (Administration), working with other members of Corporate Board.

2. A Balanced Strategy

2.1 How well has the Fire Authority developed a strategy to balance competing demands for resources between prevention and protection and meeting its targets for responding to fires and other emergencies?

The Fire Authority has developed a realistic vision for a safer community by defining the concepts of prevention, protection and intervention, now commonly accepted in the UK fire service. This vision has evolved over time since the Fire Authority first started to shift its focus to prevention in the early 1990s. Since this time, consultation with the community has been an important factor in developing our Vision and Mission. This is evidenced by the IRMP consultation process, Quality of Service questionnaire and our "After the Fire" survey.

Our IRMP identifies a number of main strands to our prevention work. These are:

- Home Fire Risk Assessment
- Children's Community Safety Education
- Youth Work
- Media Campaigns
- Campaigning for Residential Sprinklers
- Partnerships

These main strands inform central and local action plans that target Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs).



Educational tours around the Red Hot Education Station, Handsworth Community Fire Station

One of the recommendations of IRMP1 was to increase the time staff spend on prevention based activities. It was recognised that a more effective use of resources was required to deal with the fluctuating demand. We have addressed this issue by creating a 'Strategic Reserve' which balances the delivery of prevention work with intervention and provides flexibility for training²¹.

The Training Readiness and Community Safety (TRACS) Intranet application has been developed in response to the above recommendation and it allows staff to record and schedule activities. TRACS has been biased toward priorities, allowing prevention based activities during the daytime and training in the evenings and at weekends. The system is being further developed to provide more detailed monitoring tools²².

The Fire Authority recognises the need to maintain a high standard of emergency response supporting a balanced strategy. The Authority has made a commitment to the public to maintain our speed of response and enhance effectiveness in dealing with an increasingly wide range of emergency incidents²³.

The Fire Authority controls its commitment of resources to training and development by using its Global Training Courses system (GTC). The GTC system supports the IRMP and operational and business planning processes.

The DAP process ensures that stations work collaboratively within local groups to ensure prevention activity addresses 'hot spot' areas of high risk and sets realistic targets for improvements. To ensure that we reach the most 'at risk' groups, the demographic profile of each area, including deprivation data, is used in this process²⁴.

Initiatives similar to Home Fire Risk Assessment (HFRA) have formed part of our strategy for many years. HFRA in modern guise is now a major initiative, launched in April 2004, with new support and management arrangements²⁵.

²¹ Strategic Reserve business rules and TRACS Intranet application

²² TRACS Intranet application

²³ IRMP

²⁴ DAP process and data

²⁵ HFRA Standing Order 17/04. HFRA Intranet System



WMATF "Play it Safe"
booklet

- ²⁶ Devolved budgets.
Revenue budgets for
training, equipment.
Vehicle Replacement
Programme
- ²⁷ Fire Precautions Act Circular
No. 29, IRMP Guidance
Note 4. Fire Service Circular
1/2004, RBIP ICT
Application
- ²⁸ LPSAs (2001/4 and 2005/7),
Performance Reward Grant,
Post details - Fire Service
PSA Manager
- ²⁹ WMATF "Play it Safe"
booklet,
WMATF – Arson Control
Forum December 2004
report,
www.wmarsontaskforce.gov.uk

Investment in prevention and protection strategies has not been to the detriment of intervention. The Authority continues to invest heavily in training, specialist equipment and vehicle replacement²⁶.

The Fire Authority uses a risk based inspection programme (RBIP) to prioritise its enforcement and advisory work in business, commercial and public premises. Analysis determines the frequency and priority of future inspections. The system also provides an accurate measurement of effectiveness²⁷.

2.2 How effectively has the Fire Authority contributed to the wider agenda of social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and the reduction of crime?

Social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and the reduction of crime are all considered key to the work of the Fire Authority. As previously stated, we are now represented on all CDRPs. West Midlands Fire Service was also a part of Birmingham City Council's 2001-2004 Local Public Service Agreement²⁸.

The Authority is committed to the City of Birmingham's 'Going Local' initiative which is the City's response to the Government's drive for devolved decision making.

In addition, WMATF initiatives include:

- The Matrix Project
- Red Hot Education Station
- Firefighting methods project 'Code Red'
- Data sharing
- Specialist camera equipment
- Vehicle recovery schemes
- 'Keep Your Business in Business' Project
- Key Stage 2 Arson Awareness Pack
- Youth Theatre Arson Production
- 'Play it Safe' booklet²⁹



Young Firefighters' Association

The Fire Research and Investigation Section provides a 24-hour service which includes a dog handler and hydrocarbon detector dog, providing arson detection searches at fires³⁰.

The Fire Authority continues to expand its wider role in promoting community safety. Examples of this include the 'Dying to Drive' campaign; a multi-agency initiative created to reduce Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)³¹.

The Fire Authority has a dedicated Youth Services Section within its Community Protection Department. Work with young people includes:

- The Young Firefighters' Association
- Princes Trust Volunteers
- Working with Youth Offending Teams
- Fire safety education to young offenders
- Reparation work³²

Other examples of initiatives where the Fire Authority are targeting specific community groups to help promote community safety include our partnership with SAGA radio station. Strategic links are also maintained with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi Consuls or High Commissioners and the Fire Authority has donated fire appliances to these countries, helping to foster good relations.

The Fire Authority has a Local Agenda 21 strategy³³. This is incorporated in a Standing Order which includes:

- Partnership and collaboration
- Prevention
- Procurement
- Waste management
- Energy conservation
- Environmental protection
- Promoting good health

³⁰ Fire Research and Investigation reports

³¹ "Dying to Drive" reports

³² Juvenile Firesetter Counselling Scheme, Young Firefighters' Association records, Prince's Trust Volunteers records

³³ Environmental Policy Standing Order 01/14



Handsworth Community
Fire Station

Handsworth Community Fire Station incorporates a range of facilities available for use by local community groups. Examples include a 12-week Punjabi class, run for fire service officers, English as a second language courses, run by local college tutors, the Sikh Youth Forum, the Sikh Women's Forum and arranging for the Sikh community to distribute 18,500 copies of literature provided by ODPM.

2.3 How well does the Fire Authority communicate with and access all sections of the community?

The Fire Authority strives to communicate with and access all sections of our diverse communities. Our key strategic documents, including the BVPP/BP, IRMP and Council Tax leaflet can be made available in a variety of languages and formats including large print, Braille and audiotape. This is clearly stated, including how to contact us, in these documents.

Although the Fire Authority provides a uniform standard of service to a diverse community, we acknowledge that an area for development is measuring how effective these communities perceive our service to be. Currently, our services are provided on the basis of risk, not race or any cultural criterion.

In recognition of the need to raise staff awareness, the Equality and Diversity Section delivered a structured programme of discussions at stations and sections on equality and diversity issues. During this two-year programme, all stations were visited giving them an opportunity to have any questions and queries answered with a view to increasing awareness in this area.

The need for further improvement in equality and diversity awareness has been identified and a structured training programme commenced in December 2004 and will be completed by November 2005. Three levels of training are being delivered depending on the management responsibility of staff³⁴.

³⁴ Equality and Diversity
Training Programme



New Dimension exercise

2.4 How agile is the Fire Authority's response, at the strategic level, to changing circumstances and national priorities?

The Fire Authority has been capable of responding to the changing circumstances and demands placed upon it in recent months and years.

Examples include:

- **The creation of a strategic Contingency Planning Group in response to the national Firefighters' strike in 2003**

Achievement:

Increased risk to the public was minimised

Comprehensive guidance, procedures and protocols

- **Management Restructure 2001**

Achievement:

Closer links to the community

- **New Dimension Contingency Planning Team**

Achievement:

Improved capability through regional working to deal with incidents of a catastrophic nature

- **Refocusing Member structure**

Achievement:

Increased Member ownership and more responsive decision-making as modernisation progresses

- **Review of specialist training in response to emerging risks**

Achievement:

Improved training and preparedness, for example, in command, mass decontamination, water rescue and urban search and rescue



HFRA and smoke alarm visit

B What is the capacity of the Fire Authority to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

3. Capacity – Governance and Management

3.1 How clear are the governance arrangements?

In line with its commitment to the principles of the Government's modernisation agenda, the Authority has adopted numerous changes to its committee structure and political governance arrangements in recent years. Revised arrangements are resulting in improved Member involvement and decision making.

Changes have included the formation of an Executive Committee and the adoption of improved ways of working through a Policy Planning Forum. The Authority has continued to review and consolidate its management and reporting arrangements to ensure its approach to corporate governance is effective and reflects good practice and ethical guidance.

The former Equality and Diversity and Best Value Performance Review Committees have been replaced by Lead Members for Equality and Diversity and Performance Management. Each has a permanent place on the Executive Committee³⁵.

The delegated powers of the Fire Authority to Executive Committee are considered to contribute to speed of decision-making in the most effective manner. The Authority sets direction through the BVPP/BP³⁶ thus enabling organisational objectives to be cascaded and implemented, establishing shared and unambiguous priorities.

Regular meetings of the Policy Planning Forum provide the bridge between high-level strategy and business

³⁵ WMFCDA Report AGM 26th July 2004; Constitution of Committees, Panels and Fora, Terms of Reference and Member Portfolios 2004/2005

³⁶ BVPP/BP 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005



planning and involve all Members of the Fire Authority and Corporate Board. All Members are entitled to attend the Executive Committee in an observer capacity and may speak on any items of business at the discretion of the Chair of the meeting. The Appointments, Appeals, and Standards Committees meet, as and when they are required, to transact business.

The diagram on the left shows the cycle of policy implementation and review (extract from BVPP/BP).

Policy Implementation Cycle and Review

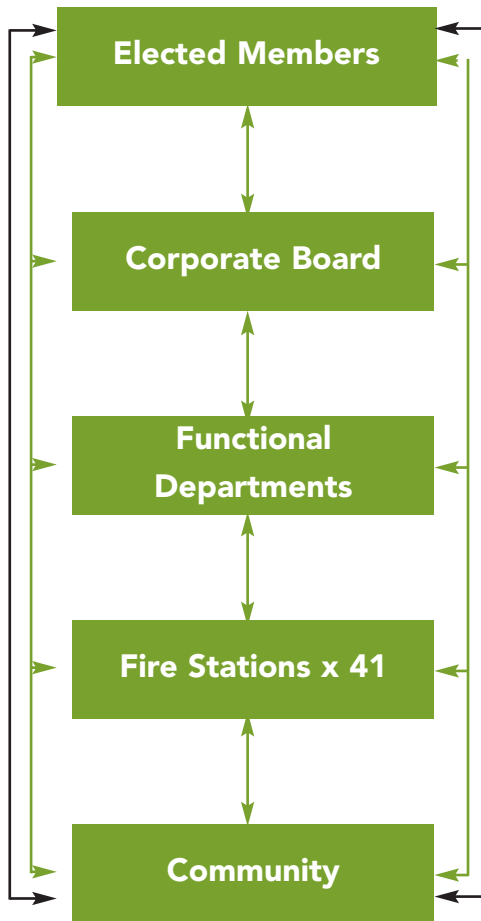
The Authority's overall performance and progress towards the modernisation agenda demonstrate that governance arrangements are effective³⁷. Good governance leads to well informed and involved elected Members who understand the issues and take on a leading role in driving change. The better use of stakeholder input to help set targets and devise strategy is a particular area for development. Through working with LSPs the issues requiring priority action are being identified, managing the expectations of partner agencies to ensure that an equitable approach to problem solving is achieved.

The Programme Management Group (PMG) is scheduled to meet every two weeks to monitor the progress of key projects.

Management Structure

As part of ongoing organisational review it was identified, in July 2004, that there would be some benefit in undertaking a management restructure to reflect the priorities of IRMP and modernisation. In order to set the right strategic direction, it was decided to address management of fire stations as a priority. The flat structure that has delivered so many benefits in terms of

³⁷ ODPM performance tables



Current Management Structure

devolved station management was considered to be inadequate to support the increasing pace of change. The needs of integrated personal development were also a key factor.

In November the Authority approved a proposal to create a Borough and City based structure³⁸ which provides a better span of control, achieves political synergy, better serves the needs of partnership working and provides a focus on communities. Staff and Representative Bodies have made a full contribution to the proposals. The implementation period is between January and September 2005³⁹.

Regional Management Board

WMFCDA is an active member of West Midlands Regional Management Board (RMB)⁴⁰.

The structure of the Board is illustrated on the following page.

We make a substantial contribution to the RMB Modernisation Programme providing project management and taking the lead on 10 of the 23 projects. Our elected Members act as Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) of a further 5 projects and we have team members involved in the majority of the remaining 8 projects⁴¹.

3.2 How aware are members and management of the matters for which they are responsible and accountable?

The Authority has effective decision-making processes and decisions are facilitated and implemented through formal reports that are submitted to Corporate Board, Committees of the Authority and the full Authority.

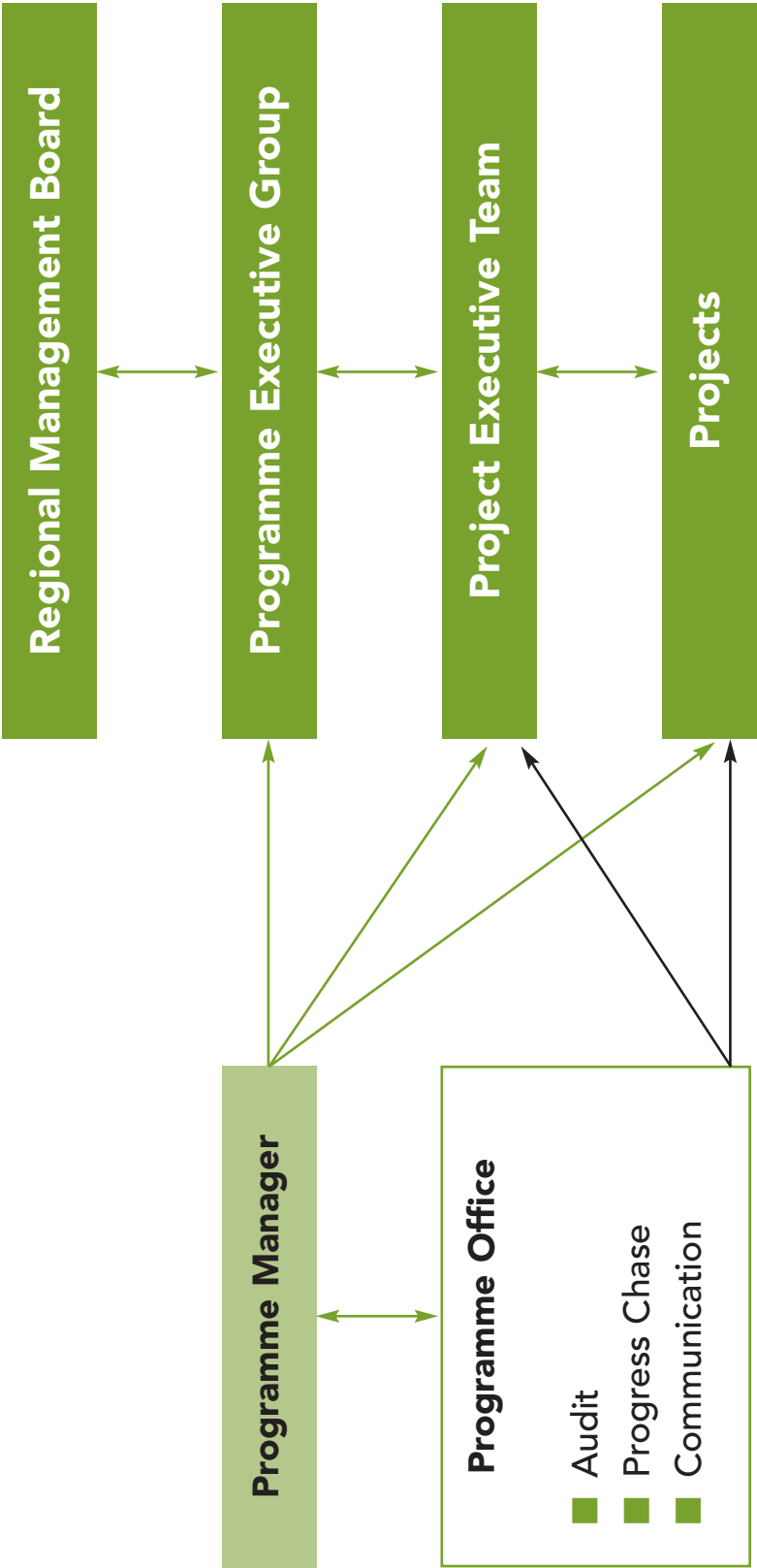
³⁸ Authority report, Restructure of Station Management – 22.11.04

³⁹ Project Implementation Plan

⁴⁰ RMB Project Management Methodology Document & Lead Officers, RMB papers

⁴¹ RMB Programme records

Regional Management Board Structure





Dudley Fire Station

The adoption of elected Members' role descriptions or 'portfolios' is consistent with the approach taken in local authorities in general, under the modernisation of decision-making structures, as required by the Local Government Act 2000. Individual Members may not have delegated powers to act on behalf of the Authority; however, Member portfolios help to define the role of key positions⁴².

The Authority is responsible for consideration and approval of overarching policy. Officers act as professional advisers and manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation. The roles and responsibilities of officers are described in job descriptions and in the National Occupation Standards for generic roles.

The general public are certainly aware of our emergency response role. However, the level of awareness with regard to our specific management structure may vary. IRM Plans are circulated internally and externally as consultation documents and as final documents. Information is available via the Authority's website. However, knowledge within the community may be based on level of interest.

3.3 How effective is management?

West Midlands Fire Service was comprehensively restructured in 2001. Key changes included the removal of geographic Divisions and the establishment of Station Commanders at each whole time station. Since that time there has been minor realignment of stations into staffing groups, some of which are related to district areas. There are effective management meeting structures dealing with issues that affect all stations within a group and key functional issues such as training and health and safety.

⁴² Member portfolio role descriptions



Road Traffic Collision training

The current management structure is effective in delivering closer contact with community groups through the appointment of individual Station Commanders with community liaison at the heart of their role. This structure has had a positive impact on performance indicators since its inception. Managers have identified some disadvantages including an excessively wide span of control. In early 2004 a review identified potential improvements to the structure leading to the commencement of a restructure project in July 2004.

The benefits of the new management structure, currently in the process of implementation, will include:

- improved performance management,
- The ability of the organisation to operate within the constitutional framework of wards and constituencies to better deliver wider social safety agendas,
- Improved communication both vertically and horizontally⁴³.

The Management Restructure Project provides evidence that the Authority act to change organisation structure when appropriate. The current stage of this project specifically addresses station management and excludes headquarters and specialist functions. The latter is to become the next stage in Spring 2005 and this is documented in the original Project Brief⁴⁴.

Succession planning is carried out using data from Human Resource systems, assessment centre outcomes, information on the strategic direction of the Brigade and taking account of business needs as expressed in the BVPP and IRMP. The numbers of staff being developed through a range of programmes are derived from this succession planning.

Individual Personal Development Review (IPDR) is already in place for access to some development programmes. Brigade-wide implementation will occur between April 2005 and March 2006.

⁴³ Fire Authority AGM papers July 2004

⁴⁴ Project Brief – Management Restructure Project



Corporate website:
www.wmfs.net

3.4 Does the Fire Authority have effective corporate management/support services?

Policy development and strategic planning is a joint effort between Members and officers. Members are fully involved at three levels. Face to face discussions, the Policy Planning Forum and the decision making committees all play their role. Members have created a number of initiatives, including the quarterly reporting of progress towards strategic action plans⁴⁵.

The Authority has provided research and development capacity, for example, in the form of its IRMP team.

Information technology facilities are comprehensive. These are aimed at supporting service delivery, for example, in mobilising systems or HFRA. All Fire Authority reports are Internet accessible to Members. Administrative and technical services for this facility are provided partly internally and partly by Sandwell MBC. Over the last 5 years all of these services have been the subject of Best Value Reviews to ensure the most efficient provision is obtained.

Good progress has been made in implementing e-government initiatives.

Examples include:

- Transactional Brigade website,
- Recruitment applications on-line,
- Freephone fire safety helpline,
- E-mail IRMP consultation facility,
- Access to information about Fire Authority Committee meetings.

Services provided by Sandwell MBC are on a contracted Service Level Agreement basis which are subject to regular review. The Director (Administration) is responsible for the management of Service Level Agreements in collaboration with the Corporate Board.

⁴⁵ Executive Committee report – 06.12.04



Children at the Red Hot Education Station, Handsworth Community Fire Station

4. Capacity: Resources and Value for Money

4.1 How sound are the financial management arrangements of the Fire Authority?

Extracts from KPMG Annual Audit Letter, dated November 2004:

"It has robust arrangements in place for monitoring its financial position and has taken positive steps to identify the impact of its modernisation proposals on its budget in the short and medium term."

"The Authority has formalised performance management arrangements in place at a corporate and station level which, with continued refinement and development should deliver continued performance improvement."

"West Midlands will face continued pressure on resources and significant demands on its staff in the future. It has recognised these challenges and is well placed to address them."

The Fire Authority continues to provide a value for money service to its communities. All statutory requirements are satisfied, ensuring appropriate levels of reserves are maintained and Corporate Aims and Objectives are met.

The approved report to the Authority detailing the budget and precept for 2005/6⁴⁶ provides comprehensive background information, that supports the previous statement.

Devolved budgets, supported by a Devolved Budget Steering Group, allow monitoring at a local level. Each budget holder has a nominated Finance Liaison Officer who provides technical advice and support when required. Training is provided by the Finance Department to staff responsible for managing/monitoring

⁴⁶ Fire Authority Budget report – 14.02.05



Multi-agency Firework campaign, LPSA Funded

budgets. This training has been provided for approximately five years. A financial management handbook has been developed for all budget holders.

The Fire Authority has a strategic and pro-active approach to increasing financial capacity through external funding. An External Partnerships Officer was appointed in 2001 and part of the remit of this role is to identify external funding opportunities. Alternative funding opportunities include the Birmingham LPSA highlighted in section 2.2 of this report (A Balanced Strategy), the Community Safety Innovation Fund, ODPM Home Fire Safety Check Funding and various community safety funds.

The Authority has identified the review and monitoring of efficiency savings as an area of development. The Finance Department presented a paper to Corporate Board in February 2005, outlining the savings made to date against forecast savings in areas such as IRMP. Efficiencies are reflected, as appropriate, in reports to Corporate Board and the Authority. In addition, Members are advised of efficiencies achieved during Policy Planning Forum presentations throughout the year, which are summarised in the Authority's Annual Budget Report.

4.2 How successfully has management integrated financial and service planning?

The Authority's three year financial strategy is updated annually to reflect changing demands over the medium term. It reflects the priorities outlined in the Business Plan and identifies the medium term impact of key decisions. The following is an extract from the annual audit letter from KPMG dated November 2004:

"The Authority has fully costed and resourced action plans developed through modernisation proposals and incorporated them into the budget. It has also demonstrated best practice in the development of a strategic reserve to deliver against priorities."



Council Tax Budget Leaflet 2005

Standing Order 22/06 – Integrated Planning Process, highlights linkages between the Authority's corporate planning cycles, to assist all staff in the planning of their activities to achieve the Authority's Vision. The Standing Order provides information about how the IRMP, Corporate Risk Management Plan, DAPs, BVPP/BP and the budget cycle all integrate. We link developments directly to business and project planning and the planning flow is designed to fit the financial planning cycle. These changes were communicated to managers at a management briefing in October 2004.

The cycle of control is affected by the intangibility of what we produce, our core business and the fluctuations and unpredictability of demand. This is something over which we have limited control however our risk management process for planning for fluctuations in demand, in order to operate within those constraints, is a strength⁴⁷.

An identified area for development is the need to improve the links between overall planning and the ICT strategy. More effective prioritisation and programming is being developed, along with an increase in capacity to deal with priorities already identified.

4.3 How well does the Fire Authority consider and deliver value for money?

We provide a value for money (VFM) service, as evidenced by our per capita costs and council tax levels at Band D compared with the Metropolitan Family Group. The innovative approach of our IRMP planning and decision making processes enhance both service delivery and VFM.

The Training and Development section use the GTC system to ensure that spending on training supports the business priorities in the BVPP, IRMP and department/section/station action plans. The move from traditional

⁴⁷ KPMG Annual Management Letter, Regional Procurement Project, Procurement Strategy, External Partnerships Database, Best Value Reviews, Fire Authority AGM minutes 26.07.04



New Personal Protective Equipment

Fire Service College and other residential courses to a range of local colleges, private training businesses, e-learning and innovative local and regional solutions is evidence of the pursuit of VFM.

In terms of procurement, our former Supplies and Stores Section has been restructured introducing supply chain management. We have adopted innovative approaches to procurement, letting a contract for a fully managed service for Personal Protective Equipment⁴⁸. This strategy has delivered improved equipment and clothing tailored specifically for both male and female Firefighters.

We have a structured vehicle replacement programme designed to spread anticipated costs evenly over time. Other initiatives include outsourcing of Breathing Apparatus Maintenance Services⁴⁹ and the introduction of direct deliveries to users⁵⁰. We are part of purchasing consortia for heating and diesel oil and smoke alarms. We also use the OGC G-Cat and S-cat purchasing call-off contract facilities.

The initiatives outlined above have all delivered improvements in VFM by reducing stocklines and providing better quality for equivalent cost.

Turnaround times have shortened and administrative processing has become more efficient.

⁴⁸ PPE Contract documents

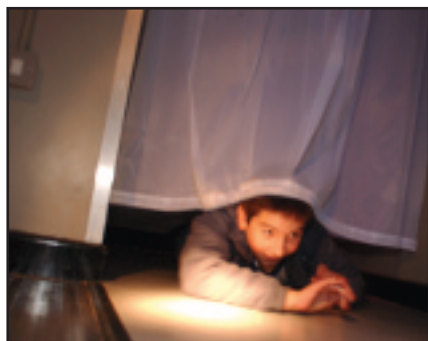
⁴⁹ Fire Authority report – Breathing Apparatus maintenance

⁵⁰ Direct delivery pilot and quickforms intranet application

⁵¹ Standing Order 22/06

4.4 How effective is the fire authority in its use of partnerships and other modes of co-operative working, to help deliver its objectives?

The Authority has a clear partnerships policy and strategy⁵¹. It targets partnerships at a strategic and local level, for example through LSPs or through ward committees and local community groups. The need to focus on partnerships that either directly or indirectly contribute to overall aims is clearly set out.



Learning to stay safe from fire at the Red Hot Education Station, Handsworth Community Fire Station

Procedures are in place to ensure accountability and responsibilities are agreed and understood. More evidence of the success of partnership work is detailed in section 7.2 in 'Achievement of Objectives.'

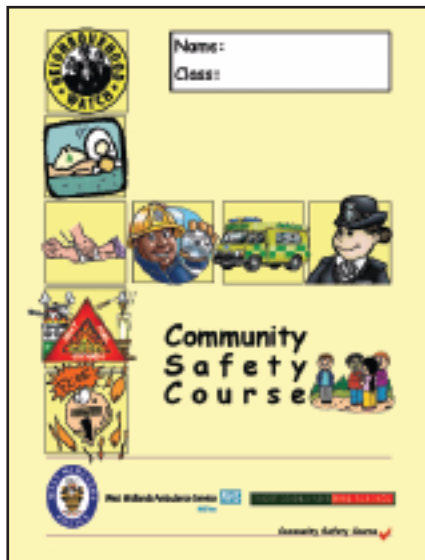
In terms of co-operative working with other emergency services there are formal arrangements for cross-border co-operation with all surrounding fire authorities, which include arrangements for inter-operability at emergency incidents. Similarly there are structured arrangements with West Midlands Police regarding issues such as arson reduction and fire investigation. The Authority has agreements and work with local authority emergency planners, both on district related issues and increasingly on New Dimension work. As a level 1 responder for New Dimension, the Authority contributes positively to regional groups.

A good example of partnership and community consultation is a project to carry out research into the feasibility of a community safety centre in the Kings Norton 3 Estates New Deal for Communities area. A New Deal for Communities grant of £50,000 has been awarded for this project which will be awarded in March 2005.

This project was initiated in recognition of the good practice of Handsworth Community Fire Safety Centre and the following partners have been actively involved in producing the project brief and planning of how facilities should be provided and shared once the outcomes of the feasibility study are realised⁵²:

- Kings Norton 3 Estates New Deal for Communities
- The Youth Service
- Youth Offending Team
- West Midlands Police
- West Midlands Ambulance Service
- Birmingham City Council

⁵² Kings Norton 3 Estates New Deal Project Brief



Multi-agency Educational book

It is intended that any facility provided as an outcome of this feasibility study would provide 24-hour presence of fire, police and ambulance services and also provide opportunities for innovative cross working between the agencies detailed previously.

4.5 How well does the Fire Authority manage its partnership working?

A key component of our success is partnership working and 'can do' culture which has placed us at the forefront of major national and local initiatives.

Senior managers and LALOs are able to influence the community safety strategies of the Metropolitan Boroughs. Several officers chair or act as vice chair of various theme groups with extensive budgets⁵³.

We have comprehensive procedures for managing partnerships⁵⁴. The Authority maintains a central register of partnerships and offers support through the role of our External Partnerships Officer. This central support and monitoring is designed to allow local initiatives to develop following good practice guidelines and ensures that probity and the Authority's reputation are maintained. These processes will provide support to managers without stifling local innovation.

A key element of the review of the Performance Management Framework, carried out in 2004, was an audit of all partnership activity. Although this audit provided valuable information, the newly appointed External Partnerships Officer believed that it fell short in determining the success and rationale behind most established partnerships. We learned from this recognition and this led to the development of the current procedures.

⁵³ Birmingham CSP and SRB4 papers, Birmingham "Safe and Clean Partnership" and Coventry LSP and Environmental Theme Group

⁵⁴ Standing Order 22/06 Partnership Working, Partnership Audit Plan



Firefighting undertaking
a HFRA visit

We are currently reviewing key partnerships in order to ensure their compliance with our revised procedures. This will ensure our future ability to determine:

- How much funding partnerships raise
- The success rate
- Lessons learnt
- The accuracy of our partnerships database

Further enhancements are planned to better enable the Authority to monitor and evaluate the success of partnership work. In the future, partnerships are to be formalised through Service Level Agreements, which incorporate measurable outcomes and expectations.

5. Capacity: People

5.1 To what extent does the Fire Authority have the people and skills it needs to achieve its vision?

The Fire Authority's workforce development policies conform to IPDS principles and are targeted at satisfying our strategic and operational planning. IPDS has been developed in a partnership between the five authorities within our region.

The Training and Development section uses a range of other partnerships to deliver high quality services including;

- The public sector compact to support middle manager development
- A partnership with a private company to develop e-learning support for management development
- A partnership with Cranfield University to develop a driver behaviour index designed specifically for the fire service

The IPDS project is targeted at both uniformed and non-uniformed staff and it is the Fire Authority's intention to develop a single set of IPDS compliant processes to support the training and development of both groups.



Flat Fire

At present we have implemented:

- An assessment and development centre process,
- Applications for development rather than appointment,
- IPDS compliant development programmes at Firefighter (NVQ) and Supervisory Manager (SMDP) level,
- Integrated Personal Development Review (IPDR) used as part of the application process for our management development programmes,
- Workplace Assessment (WPA) is in place up to Qualified Firefighter level.

Outcomes include:

- Training needs (and any over provision) identified through Global Training Courses (GTC),
- A business focused approach to training and development to ensure VFM.

Training and development requirements as a response to changing national legislation and regulations are identified at corporate and operational level. Appropriate business processes exist to put training and development programmes in place.

Recent examples to meet such requirements include:

- Improved command skills,
- Equality and Diversity,
- Discipline procedures,
- Equality impact assessment,
- Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear (CBRN) and specialist operational training.

Other initiatives that assist us to meet our skills needs are:

- Job Evaluation, as part of the Single Status initiative,
- A skills grid process to identify staff that would benefit from development for temporary postings and secondments,
- A new policy for the re-employment of skilled and experienced uniformed personnel following retirement⁵⁵,
- Elected Members' training events and workshops⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Standing Order 2/31
Re-employment of
Uniformed Personnel
following Retirement

⁵⁶ Members Corporate Risk
Workshop - October 2004



Equipment, Maintenance and Repair service

The Authority has a range of audit and monitoring processes in place to test the delivery of workforce development and the maintenance of skill levels.

These include:

- External audits (e.g. Edexcel, OCR),
- Performance and Planning audits,
- Performance Review of Station Management (PRSM),
- Review of trainee attitudes,
- Training and Development section validation and quality assurance processes,
- Regular monitoring of staff turnover⁵⁷.

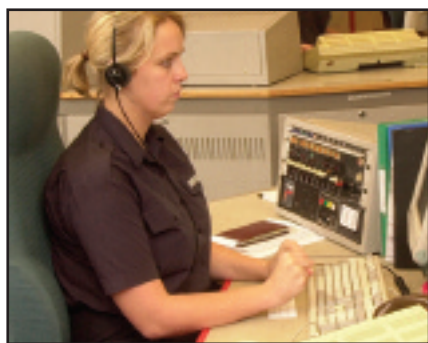
5.2 How well does the Fire Authority make use of the different types of staff and conditions of service?

The proposals contained in our IRMP year 2 Action Plan require changes to working patterns. In January 2005 we commenced staff consultation on proposals for alternative shift patterns that matched those requirements. The proposals are tailored to provide a core of continuous crewing for emergency response, combined with a flexible staff resource to make up our 'Strategic Reserve'. These staff will be engaged on community safety and training activities on a rotation basis⁵⁸.

There are five different working patterns for uniformed staff tailored to specific roles. The variety of conditions of service for both uniformed and non-uniformed staff, provide flexibility but can also lead to tensions and some perceived inequalities. The differences do allow a flexible working pattern for non-uniformed staff, giving coverage appropriate to demand and this is particularly conducive to support roles. There is a definite move towards more 'family friendly' conditions and policies, which recognise these differences. Job share and part time working are widely used for non-uniformed posts. Although available to uniformed staff, take-up is low, and the requirement to maintain competence is an issue.

⁵⁷ Analysis of staff turnover

⁵⁸ See alternative shift pattern proposals



Fire Control

Most of our uniformed staff, including control room personnel, play an active role in prevention work. Many non-uniformed staff are engaged in similar work, including children's education, media relations, prevention support and smoke alarm fitting. The Authority has also recently introduced a policy enabling the appointment of non-uniformed specialists for statutory fire safety work⁵⁹.

5.3 How effective are the Fire Authority's human resources policies?

Human Resource policy and practice is in place for recruitment, selection and development of staff.

Recruitment requirements are constantly under review and are linked to forecasts of likely retirements and discharges. Prudent management of recruitment allows us to anticipate shortfalls that may affect service delivery.

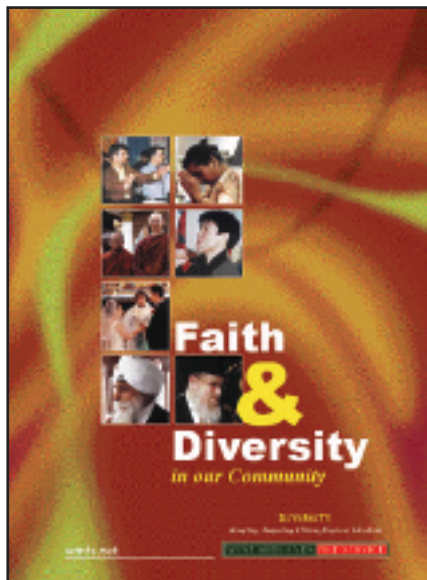
There are policies for a wide range of other HR issues, for example managing vacancies, absence management, and many others⁶⁰. Absence management policy follows good practice with a staged escalating approach to driving down sickness absence.

We consult and work with Representative Bodies and current policies make reference to them. Dispute, consultation and negotiation arrangements are in place. The need to work with Representative Bodies to enhance our ability to change has been identified through our Corporate Risk Management process and an action plan is addressing this area for development. Consultation protocols are being reviewed in order to provide a consistent approach.

The new national discipline and grievance procedures have been adopted and we have produced précis guidance for local managers and launched a comprehensive training programme.

⁵⁹ Policy - Employment of Non-uniformed Fire Safety Officers

⁶⁰ Standing Orders - Section 2



Diversity Book

5.4 How effective is management's contribution to the diversity agenda, having regard to local prerogatives, culture change and other relevant needs of the service?

The West Midlands is made up of many diverse and culturally rich communities. This increases our focus on the need for effectively addressing equality and diversity issues.

We have produced and published a Race Equality Scheme (RES). This shows we are meeting our obligations to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different social groups⁶¹.

We have an extensive suite of policies and guidance covering the key areas of bullying, harassment and discrimination. The moral, statutory and business imperatives for treating each other with respect and valuing diversity are clearly set out. There is awareness of these basic policies and procedures among staff as a result of past training programmes.

We have produced a booklet, in consultation with members of local communities, to help develop the knowledge and understanding among our staff of some of the faiths and cultures within those communities. A communications strategy has supported the publication of this document with the aim to prepare the organisation and engage employees in the whole process.

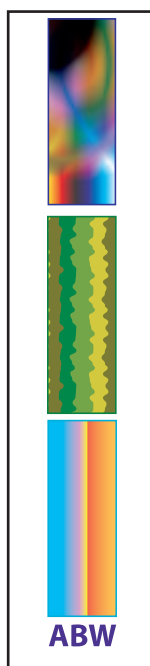
Our equalities and diversity work has the full commitment of Members, (including lead Members for Equality and Diversity), Directors and senior managers.

The ABW ('All Backgrounds Welcome') Conference in December 2004⁶² was successful and well attended by a cross section of staff and has re-energised an interest in the Equality and Diversity agenda. Furthermore, the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessor Training

⁶¹ Race Equality Scheme

⁶² ABW Conference Pack - December 2004

ABW conference
promotion



Programme⁶³ is ensuring that, following further training in March 2005, there will be 45 members of staff trained as Equality and Diversity Impact Assessors.

We have commissioned an external provider⁶⁴ to deliver equalities and diversity training across the organisation. This training has been piloted, tested and evaluated⁶⁵ at various levels across the organisation and a booklet⁶⁶ has been developed to support the programme of training scheduled for this year⁶⁷.

Progress has been made in moving towards a more representative workforce. Our community is approximately 20% black and Asian and representation of these groups within the uniformed workforce has risen to 6% with an upward trend in evidence. Recruitment of women Firefighters has proved more challenging. However we continue our efforts to target both groups of potential recruits.

Our track record in handling harassment and discrimination cases is good, with our management in practice having drawn praise from Employment Tribunals.

6. Performance Management

6.1 How well does the Fire Authority manage its business risks?

The Authority has comprehensive arrangements for the management of organisational risk at both corporate and operational levels. Partnership with Sandwell MBC and Zurich Municipal Management Services⁶⁸ resulted in the development of the strategy in mid 2004. Risk management happens systematically as part of the business planning cycle and is linked to other streams of business planning including IRMP and the financial cycle⁶⁹.

⁶³ Corporate Board report

⁶⁴ IODA company profile

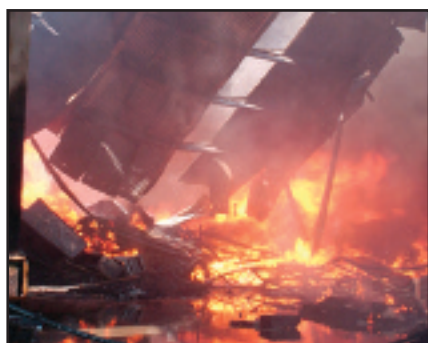
⁶⁵ IODA evaluation of pilot

⁶⁶ E&D training guidance booklet

⁶⁷ IODA lessons plan

⁶⁸ ZMMR Consultancy report

⁶⁹ Corporate Risk Log and Action Plans, Authority and Corporate Board Reports



Factory Fire

⁷⁰ Corporate Board regular agenda item

⁷¹ CRM Workshop outcomes with middle managers

⁷² OPN Dynamic Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Portfolio

⁷³ Minutes of Risk Management Group meetings

⁷⁴ Minutes of Insurance Risk Management Group

⁷⁵ Minutes of meetings with Performance Management Lead Members and record of Members Corporate Risk Workshop

⁷⁶ Minutes of Strategic Risk Group

Corporate Board regularly review existing and emerging risks and internal communication routes allow escalation of risk issues that emerge at a local level⁷⁰.

The risk management process includes risk identification in consultation with a representative range of middle managers. Risks are prioritised and scored against a tolerance matrix⁷¹.

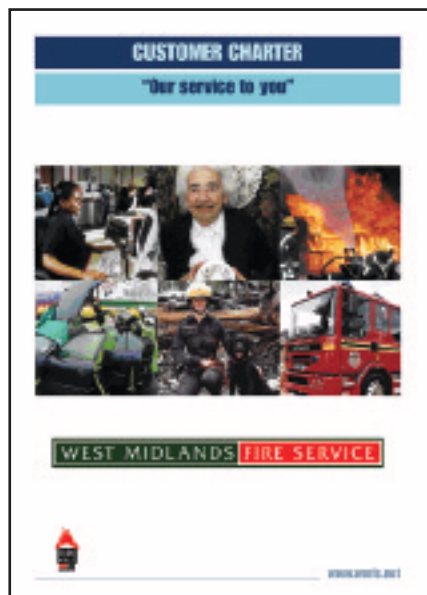
Operational risks are considered both in terms of business and project planning and in the field of emergency response by a system of strategic, systematic and dynamic risk assessment⁷².

The Authority also manages insurance related risks including the risk of litigation in partnership with Sandwell MBC Risk Management section⁷³. The minutes of our Insurance Risk Management Group are reported to, and discussed at, Corporate Board on a regular basis⁷⁴.

Member involvement in Corporate Risk includes regular formal updates and has also included a discussion workshop on Corporate Risk and discussions with the Lead Members for performance management⁷⁵.

The Director of Performance and Planning is responsible as the nominated 'Risk Champion' for the organisation. The postholder chairs the Strategic Risk Group of senior managers and representatives from Sandwell MBC, including Internal Audit⁷⁶.

There is a written corporate risk strategy, shortly to become available on the Intranet and Corporate Risk action plans are being incorporated into departmental plans with either a Director or Member taking responsibility for risk ownership.



Our Customer Charter

6.2 Is the Fire Authority's performance management system systematic, robust and sustainable throughout the organisation?

The Authority's Performance Management Framework follows the principles of our overall business planning strategy of 'Plan, Do, Review'. Our business planning processes have been aligned to provide a logical flow. The Vision and Mission of the Authority are translated into a series of prioritised objectives. Corporate Risk Assessment is applied to the achievement of these objectives. The IRMP is the main driving force behind business planning and the outcomes are considered alongside internal and external drivers of change. The business planning and IRMP processes lead to the development of Local Indicators that are predominantly outcome based⁷⁷.

Planning of service delivery is devolved in that overall objectives are set, then groups of stations and departments translate these into service plans in the form of either departmental plans or DAPs. Station management teams are involved in the formulation of these local plans, often incorporating initiatives developed by Firefighters. DAPs are the subject of periodic scrutiny resulting in modification in plans and dissemination of good practice⁷⁸.

Members are involved in the process through discussion at Policy Planning Forums. Further involvement occurs both systematically, by means of progress reports against objectives and indicators, and through monitoring by Lead Members for Performance Management, who also monitor the Best Value process⁷⁹.

A Compliments, Comments and Complaints (CCC) system ensures that we are responsive to public concerns. We commission three yearly Public Opinion Surveys testing community satisfaction levels and use an 'After the Fire' survey to monitor the public's view of our emergency response⁸⁰.

⁷⁷ BVPP/BP and IRMP

⁷⁸ DAP Process and DAP Scrutiny Day outcomes CB Report.

⁷⁹ Minutes of meetings with Lead Members for performance management

⁸⁰ CCC records and "After the Fire" survey reports from ORS



HFRA handbook for the public

The introduction of Active Intervention Monitoring (AIM) has expanded our review of safety critical performance at incidents⁸¹. As we increase resources allocated to prevention work, AIM is designed to ensure that performance in emergency response is maintained at a high level, to ensure public confidence.

Senior managers constantly monitor standards and performance both formally through structured briefings and informally using readily available monitoring systems. Middle managers monitor the performance of their business units and staff centres using the available statistical performance tools for performance indicators, staffing levels, appliance availability and individual personal development records⁸².

Standards and targets are accessible. Much of the information is available on the intranet through performance data and Standing Orders.

Resources are prioritised for key objectives throughout the business planning process. For example, when considering development bids and the investment in ICT systems. Approval is based on the contribution that proposals make to service priorities.

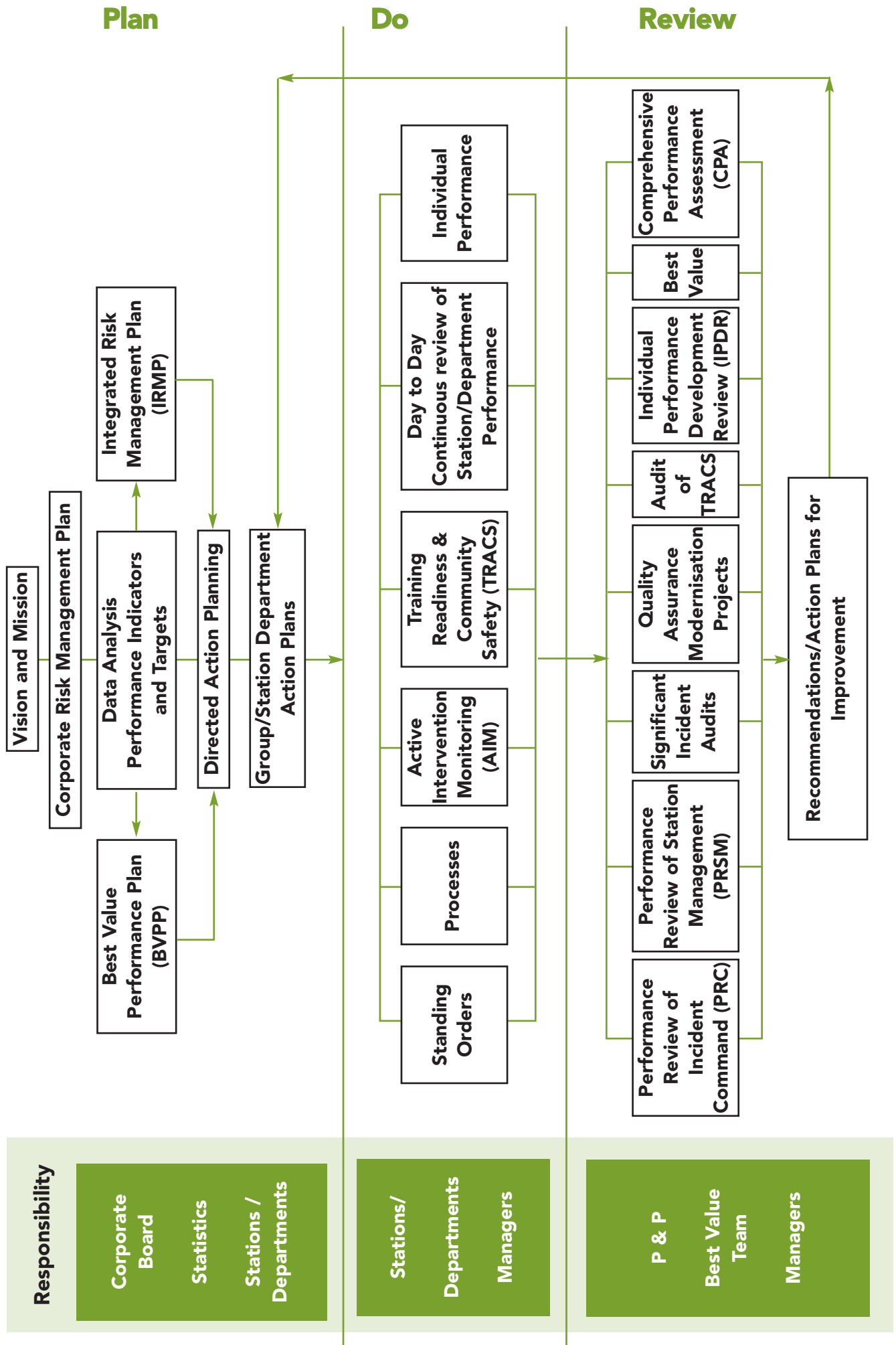
A review of our performance management framework last year identified gaps and areas for development which have now been addressed. Improved procedures have been implemented, leading to a much clearer framework⁸³ as shown in the diagram on the following page.

⁸¹ AIM Corporate Board Report January 2005

⁸² Intranet applications for:
staffing,
appliance availability,
incidents in progress,
HFRA,
TRACS

⁸³ Standing Order 23/01

Performance Management Framework





Learning about the dangers of fire

6.3 Does the Fire Authority know how well it is performing against planned outcomes?

Performance against BVPIs and LIs is regularly reported to and discussed by the Authority and its Lead Members. Policy Planning Forum allows open discussion and examination of the underlying reasons for any anomalies and successes⁸⁴. In terms of priority projects, a Programme Management Group of Directors and project officers monitors progress supported by a Programme Support Office⁸⁵. Financial updates are a regular feature of Authority meetings. Internal Audit is provided by Sandwell MBC and external auditors include KPMG and ISO 9000 auditors. Outcomes lead to actions incorporated into the planning process⁸⁶.

Robust targets are set as part of the IRMP, business planning and Best Value cycle. Identified under-performance is frequently the subject of more detailed analysis in order to identify causal factors that can be addressed⁸⁷.

Accountability rests with lead Members and the relevant Director, depending on the performance issue. Responsibility for all action plan objectives and projects is allocated to named individuals at the appropriate level in the organisation⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ PPF presentation on quarterly performance indicator analysis

⁸⁵ See PMG and Programme Support Office records

⁸⁶ Internal Audit reports, KPMG Management Letter

⁸⁷ See Corporate Board and Performance Management Lead Members requests for further statistical analysis

⁸⁸ Sample action plans



WMATF Poster

C. What has the Fire Authority achieved and in light of that, what does it plan to do next?

7. Achievement of Objectives

7.1 Is the level of performance being achieved by the Fire Authority in line with its Vision and priorities?

The Authority continues to perform consistently well in line with its Vision. The Audit Commission Verification Report identified a “green light” for overall progress against the modernisation agenda. Of the eight areas, the following were given a green light:

- Delivering an effective IRMP,
- Introducing IPDS,
- Delivering the modernisation agenda,
- Dealing with the costs of modernisation (Financial Diagnostic).

We have also achieved good progress against our high level priorities:

■ IRMP

We have prepared a groundbreaking year two action plan. We have consulted widely and the Fire Authority have agreed implementation of a revised plan, having regard for consultation responses.

■ Audit of IRMP

We have completed quality assurance of the IRMP year two action plan and proposed further enhancements to our process in the future.

■ IPDS

We continue to make good progress in implementing IPDS in line with projects plans.



HFRA visit

■ White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service"

This document was current when our 2004/5 Business Plan was prepared. However it has been replaced by the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework. We have made good progress, building on our "green light" from the pay verification study. We monitor this through our PMG.

■ Cultural Change

This objective was targeted at equality and diversity issues. Good progress has been made as detailed in section 5.4 of this document.

7.2 How effective and proactive is the Fire Authority's approach to prevention of fires and other emergencies?

This section describes some of quantifiable outcomes of proactive prevention work. As previously highlighted earlier in this document, the Authority has established LALOs and is involved in LSPs and the Birmingham LPSA.

LPSA stretch targets were set in two areas:

- To reduce the incidence of accidental fires in the home, measured by BVPI 142(iii),
- To reduce fire related deaths and injuries in the home, measured by BVPI 143(ii) and (iii).

These targets have been achieved.

Achieving the fire reduction targets together with targets for crime reduction has resulted in a performance reward grant of £4.6m⁹⁰. We have secured a proportion of the grant specifically for fire reduction activity; £30k to each of the 11 Districts within the City and £416k for targeted activity, of which a proportion has been used to appoint a senior Fire Service manager to manage the grant. This manager is now in post within the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership⁹⁰.

⁹⁰ LPSA Performance Indicators

⁹¹ Birmingham LPSA reports



Focussing on commercial and residential sprinkler systems

We are now a partner in Birmingham City Council's 2005-2007 LPSA which is currently at the refinement stage of negotiations with the Government.

The City's 'Going Local' initiative has resulted in the creation of District Strategic Partnerships (DSP) and Local Delivery Groups (LDG). The LDGs are responsible for the delivery of community safety in the Districts and although the LDGs are at various stages of development, officers are already playing a key role in several of these groups⁹¹.

In Wolverhampton the Authority employs smoke alarm fitters delivering a contract to fit alarms in 25,000 social housing properties. The work is funded by Wolverhampton City Council.

In Sandwell one of the Authority's officers is seconded to the Council to improve safety in schools, focussing on sprinklers as one method of protection.

Using the Community Safety Innovation Fund we have committed to support the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership in implementing joint community safety work⁹².

Measurement of the impact of community safety campaigns is extremely challenging. However, the Authority is confident that it has a sound strategy. There is sufficient evidence, for example, that smoke alarm ownership is directly related to risk and that HFRA is effective.

The WMATF has achieved a significant reduction in arson fires and the Authority has already met the ten year targets set nationally by the Arson Control Forum. As a result, the WMATF have been successful in gaining funding for two posts and the development of literature and other media⁹³.

⁹¹ Minutes of LDG meetings

⁹² NCFSC Toolkits and Prevention Strategy Document

⁹³ WMATF Reports



Water Rescue

For all non-fire emergencies, excluding RTCs, the service has made good progress against its targets and is well on target to achieve a positive outcome. However, the Authority is aware of the increasing trend of RTCs and is working with other partners to address this area, for example, our 'Dying to Drive' initiative. In addition, the Authority is working with local authorities and other emergency services in an effort to address this upward trend.

7.3 How effective are the Fire Authority's measures for intervention, to limit the impact on human life, property and the environment, and to do so safely?

The Authority has set an emergency response performance standard of, an average of 5 minutes for the attendance of our first appliance and an average of 7 minutes for the second appliance. In addition, a standard has been set for an average attendance time for aerial appliances of 17 minutes. These times are consistently being met⁹⁴.

The new standards do not require the amendment of existing risk assessments and safe systems of work. The speed and levels of response provided within the IRMP have been the subject of ongoing assessment in that they remain sufficient to maintain and improve service delivery.

AIM and PRC validate the quality of our emergency response. "After The Fire" surveys and CCC compliments confirm that our services are meeting the community's expectations⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ Report to Corporate Board on attendance time performance

⁹⁵ AIM, PRC and CCC reports



Commercial and Industrial Training Unit

7.4 How well can the Fire Authority demonstrate that it delivers value for money?

This section complements the evidence given in Section 4, Capacity – Resources and Value for Money.

Following a Best Value Review in January 2004 relating to financial, legal and external audit, the Authority identified cost savings in bringing the financial services in-house⁹⁶. External local factors have also been taken into account in delivering the IRMP.

BVPI 150 details the expenditure per head of population on the provision of Fire and Rescue Services.

The Authority is the third lowest spending Authority within its family group with a net expenditure in 2002/03 of £35.50p per head of population (2002/3) and with the lowest Band D Council Tax. Initiatives within the IRMP have addressed value for money issues. The use of 'Strategic Reserve' has resulted in productivity gains and the new levels of response have seen a reduction in unnecessary vehicle movements.

Best Value Reviews have led to some tangible improvements in services including:

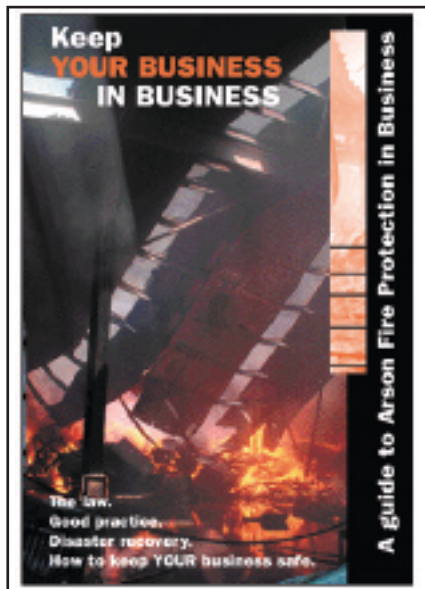
Statistics Review:

- An increase in posts provides increased resilience and continuity of service,
- The section has been influential in the development of and provision of support for DAP.

Income Generation:

- Introduction of charging for a number of special services (e.g. some lockouts) has helped the Authority refocus its service delivery activities towards its Vision and Mission.

⁹⁶ BVR of Finance, Legal and External Audit Services



WMATF "Keep Your Business in Business" Pack

ICT:

- Production of an ICT strategy,
- Prioritisation of future projects,
- Improved communication and customer focus by the removal of the client/contractor split,
- Strategic Head of ICT post established,
- Project ongoing for implementation of an integrated IT system, providing a more effective IT provision.

Employment Services:

- Empowerment of all HR staff to enable more efficient and effective decision making.

Procurement:

- Alternative, cost effective methods of procurement have been introduced including call-off contracts and direct deliveries,
- The Supplies and Stores section has been restructured to enable a more efficient and effective service provision.

Further progress is being made in implementing the outcomes of Reviews.

A significant area for improvement is BVPI 149 - The number of false alarms due to automatic fire alarms, per 1,000 non-domestic properties.

To help address this area of poor performance, an Officer has been seconded into the Community Protection Department with the remit of:

- The development of policy and guidance to reduce the number of automatic fire alarm calls,
- To undertake an analysis of calls generated to identify, prioritise and co-ordinate work on the number of automatic fire alarm calls,
- To identify and develop internal and external protocols, partnerships and Service Level Agreements to support the false alarm reduction initiatives,



Attending a Road Traffic Collision

- To review and consider the introduction of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) modern license agreement regarding automatic fire alarms,
- To liaise with Fire Control on opportunities for the introduction of call challenge initiatives,
- To liaise with the IRM team on response options linked to calls received from automatic fire detection systems.

8. Achievement of Improvement

8.1 Has the Fire Authority improved its performance, in its key areas, over time?

The progress of the Authority against 2004/5 Fire Service specific Indicators is detailed below:

On Target

- Accidental and arson dwelling fires
- Deaths in accidental dwelling fires
- Injuries in accidental dwelling fires
- Arson in buildings other than dwellings
- Arson vehicle fires
- Secondary fires
- Malicious false alarms received and attended

Nearly on Target

- Accidental fires in buildings other than dwellings
- Accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin

Requiring an Improvement

- False alarms due to defective equipment

This is the most positive record of achievement on fire-related Indicators for many years. There is also evidence of good progress on modernisation issues and high level objectives prioritised in the Business Plan^{97 98}.

⁹⁷ PMG progress matrix, Executive Committee update on progress against action plans

⁹⁸ Performance Indicator Analysis Report 2005



WMATF Poster

8.2 What is improving, what is not, and how consistent are these changes with the Fire Authority's vision and objectives?

The Authority has successfully improved performance in priority areas including a significant reduction in accidental fire deaths in dwellings and an overall reduction in fires. This reflects achievement against the Authority's primary mission, to reduce risk by prevention. We have clearly identified those areas where there is a degree of under-performance, with the increase in automatic fire detection false alarms giving rise to the greatest concern. The reasons for the failure to remain on target are complex and may be influenced by the increase in ownership of automatic fire detection and pressure brought by the Brigade to maintain systems.

The risk appropriate reduction in the level of response to automatic fire alarms has reduced the negative impact. As a consequence of the continuing rising trend, the Authority has appointed a specific postholder to deal with this issue. The impact of this post on the performance indicators will continue to be evaluated over time⁹⁹.

8.3 What is improving in the perception of communities and users about the level of quality being delivered? Do communities and users recognise these changes as improvements?

The Authority were one of 22 who submitted evidence for the Fire Services Consultation Association (FSCA) which formed part of a benchmarking data report on 'After the Incident Surveys'. The Brigade received favourable results and it is clear the community were broadly happy with the service delivered¹⁰⁰.

In 2004 approximately 660 CCCs were received of which 21% were complaints. The handling of all complaints received in 2004 met our internal performance criteria¹⁰¹.

⁹⁹- Levels of Response report

¹⁰⁰WMATF reports

¹⁰¹CCC reports



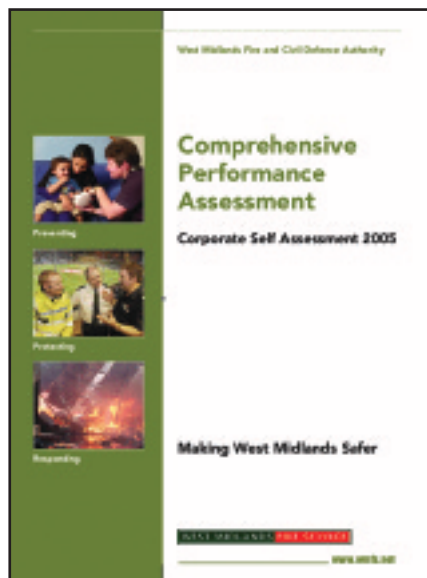
Fire appliances at a New Dimension exercise

8.4 How much improvement has there been, within existing and likely short term future constraints?

Our good performance, previously outlined has been achieved in an environment of significant constraints. Some projects are being hampered by external factors beyond the direct control of the Authority. These include the absence of timely advice, guidance and policy from the ODPM in some areas.

Financial restrictions also affect the Authority and minimal development bids have been approved for the financial year. There are also political constraints that impact on the change agenda. However, the good relationship and communications between Members and officers mitigate this factor. Members of the Fire Authority meet regularly with principal managers to enable clear mutual understanding of what is achievable.

Despite the constraints detailed above, our performance continues to improve in key areas. This is supported in the results of external scrutiny, for example, the Audit Commission Verification Study and in our most recent Performance Indicator Analysis Reports.



Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2005

9. Future Plans

9.1 Does the Fire Authority have robust future plans and strategies?

The priorities outlined in the National Framework will continue to drive future plans. The top priority business plan objectives for 2005/6 are shown below with a brief indication of their focus¹⁰²:

2005/2006 Main Business Plan Objectives

1. **RMB**
Monitoring to ensure achievement of objectives
2. **IRMP**
Implement 2005/6 Action Plan, development of 2006/7 Action Plan
3. **IPDS**
Complete implementation
4. **CPA and Performance Management**
Delivery of CPA improvement work
5. **Health and Safety**
Revitalising Health and Safety implementation/ RIDDOR injury reduction
6. **Cultural Change**
Change Culture, Equality, Diversity, Values
7. **New Duty Systems**
Implement revised shift patterns

It can be seen that the revised priorities address issues in the National Framework. New IRMP work packages are being developed to deliver future improvements in service delivery. An example of this is research into post event analysis that will assist the long term planning process¹⁰³.

¹⁰²2005/6 ten year scan

¹⁰³IRM work packages



9.2 Does the Fire Authority regularly reassess its future plans and capacity in line with changing national, regional and community priorities?

Directors hold business planning away days, of which horizon scanning is a key element and the Authority utilises a political and legislative monitoring service. We use the Local Government Information Bureau (LGIB) European Union Update facility in order to keep abreast of new European developments¹⁰⁴.

In addition to work on the RMB, we have good links with the Government Office of the West Midlands, Advantage West Midlands (the Regional Development Agency) and other regional networks.

The Clerk to the Authority, as Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC, provides a link to West Midlands Local Government Association, the existing Regional Assembly and takes the lead on a number of joint Chief Executive Officers forums.

The Authority is actively involved in a number of subject area working groups, for example, on shift and working patterns. The outcomes of this joint working inform reviews of policy and strategy in order to plan for the future.

9.3 How good is the Fire Authority's track record of being open to internal and external challenge?

We respond well to external challenge. An example of this is our response to consultation on IRMP. Amendments were made in 2004 reflecting public opinion¹⁰⁵. We have also positively responded to improvements recommended by the Health and Safety Executive and the Audit Commission verification report¹⁰⁶. In our IRMP Action Plan 2005/06 we listened to the views of all stakeholders and realigned our proposals accordingly.

¹⁰⁴Keene's and European Monitoring reports

¹⁰⁵IRMP Consultation outcomes Authority Report

¹⁰⁶Verification Report Action Plan



Educational packs for schools

Managers are enthusiastic about engaging openly with staff and processes exist which enable meaningful debate at all levels.

Significant progress has been made in response to internal challenge by the Best Value Team and Performance and Planning department. However, there is potential for further improvement as we embed a performance management culture within the organisation.

Significant progress has also been made in response to external challenge. Examples include:

- The pay verification study
- CPA peer challenge process
- RMB working

9.4 To what extent is this Fire Authority a learning organisation?

The Authority has learned from recent work on Corporate Risk Management, CPA Self Assessment and Peer Review. There is a clear commitment to continuous improvement. Lessons learned have been openly acknowledged. Planning and implementation is being moved forward involving staff in the development of improvement work.

The Authority's commitment to the Remote Intelligent Management Support and Training (RIMSAT) project¹⁰⁷ is an excellent example of the proactive learning from others.

Varying management styles are used, appropriate to the circumstances. Uniformed staff adopt a 'command and control' style on the incident ground and a more informal style in the day to day workplace.

¹⁰⁸ RIMSAT Project



CITU training

Good practice is highlighted and published on the Performance and Planning Intranet site following internal reviews and audits. However, we recognise that this process could be improved to include inter-departmental sharing of good practice. The DA process, co-ordinated by the Performance and Planning and Community Protection departments, is a recent example of how good practice can be effectively shared.

In terms of joint learning between ourselves and our partners, we regularly share areas of our good practice, such as IRMP, with others. Conversely, we seek information about successful initiatives with a view to implementing ourselves. For example, we have learnt from other Brigades' implementation of HFRA in developing our approach¹⁰⁸.

The Authority is cognisant of its strengths and weaknesses. Our approach to CPA has been highly inclusive and fully supports this view¹⁰⁹.

Senior management are determined to implement the change agenda and their robust approach can draw some criticism in that they are sometimes perceived to be insensitive to softer people issues and are not considered receptive to 'bad news'. Awareness of these perceptions have led to debate at Corporate Board on the topic of morale. This is recognised as a key factor in the delivery of genuine long term improvement. We have learned from staff at grass roots level that their overwhelming wish is to be proud of the organisation and feel valued.

9.5 How well does the Fire Authority use innovation to achieve higher quality services?

Many of our innovations have already been evidenced in preceding sections. This section aims to explain how we foster and manage innovation.

¹⁰⁹Notes of visit to Merseyside.

¹¹⁰Managers' CPA workshops, Firepower articles, CPA newsletter



Aerial appliance at fire

The Authority has pride in leading new developments at both strategic and local level. Our work on community risk management prior to 2003 laid many of the foundations for what is now known as IRM¹¹⁰.

Historically we have been the first to build a Community Fire Station, the first to develop a real fire community safety education facility¹¹¹ and were among the first authorities to utilise demountable units, Positive Pressure Ventilation, Cobra cutting and extinguishing equipment and many other operational innovations.

Our culture fosters innovation and our devolved structure has allowed this, leading to many examples of community safety innovation, some of which have been evidenced in this assessment. We encourage new ideas through our staff suggestion scheme offering recognition and gaining service benefits¹¹².

Senior managers are receptive to ideas from stations and support Station Commanders in innovation both with informal advice and by directing staff to policies and procedures that will help staff overcome barriers that they may face.

Innovation can be very challenging to manage, particularly with issues like our currently proposed shift system changes. We find that genuine consultation can overcome resistance and we have a track record of listening to and accommodating feedback on controversial issues.

The Best Value process has provided us with external challenge bringing benefits resulting, for example, from innovative outsourcing opportunities.

We continue to research new ways of doing things, testing innovations to ensure that they deliver real improvements in service.

¹¹²Red Hot Education Station, Handsworth Community Fire Station

¹¹³Suggestion scheme records

¹¹⁶Rimsat Project documents

Summary of Strengths and Areas for Development

Strengths	Areas for development
Clear Vision, Mission, Aims and prioritised objectives	Priorities not always understood at local level
Effective governance and Member involvement	
Good Member/Officer relationships	
Robust and synchronised business planning processes including IRMP	
Effective strategies and tools for delivering prevention work	Need to evaluate prevention work more effectively
Good performance against indicators	
Receptive to external consultation (IRMP)	Need to evaluate community perception of our service more effectively
Engaged in wider safety agenda	
Comprehensive internal communications strategy	Information overload/information not targeted to those who need it
Good equality and diversity framework	Awareness of equality and diversity issues remains a concern
Extensive partnership working	Partnership working needs better co-ordination
Effectively devolved local management	Span of control too wide in times of dynamic change
Effective programme management of modernisation projects	All improvement projects should be managed and monitored consistently

...continued overleaf

Summary of Strengths and Areas for Development

Strengths	Areas for development
RMB work well structured	Political resistance from partners to some areas of regional collaboration
Effective ICT support and applications	Management of ICT capacity requires development
Robust and effective financial management	Review and monitoring of efficiency savings requires strengthening
Good value for money	
Some effective components of IPDS implemented	IPDS requires completion to link performance of people to service needs
Evaluation of training delivery	Evaluation of training outcomes
Variety of conditions of service	Perceived inequality of conditions of service
Comprehensive procedures for RB consultation	Need to work more effectively with RBs to enhance ability to change
Robust management of Corporate Risk	
Generally effective performance management	Performance management requires commitment from all managers
Effective Best Value Review process	Recommendations not always implemented
Determination to effect change	Staff satisfaction levels require improvement

High Level Summary Action Plan

Background

This summary action plan is based on lessons learned from Self Assessment and Peer Review of the WMFCDA. It is supported by the findings of our previous corporate risk assessment and work completed since the pay verification audits. Six key priorities have been identified that can make the greatest contribution to improvement. Some of these are relative strengths that we intend to build upon. Each priority is intended to lead to improvement in several areas.

The Self Assessment and Peer Review confirmed, enhanced and emphasised earlier findings derived from our business planning and corporate risk management processes. It gave us a better impression of the way our staff view the organisation and it enabled us to more clearly prioritise our work.

The plan covers a number of priorities that are already incorporated in existing plans and are at various stages of implementation. However, the lessons learned tell us that we should be placing more emphasis on some areas and need additional work in others. We wish to avoid two pitfalls:

- We do not intend to create another layer of planning complexity or duplication and are determined that the priorities described in the high level plan will be incorporated in mainstream work. This plan will be used initially as a focal point for action. In due course the work will be assimilated as a series of high level priorities within our overall Business Plan.
- We intend to further encourage involvement and ownership of staff in the detail and delivery of the plan. For this reason we will drive the work with commitment but will also take the necessary time to embed ownership of change.

We have chosen our first five key priorities because each of them addresses several issues arising from our analysis and peer challenge. For example, management restructure can improve communications, performance management and staff involvement. The sixth priority is intended to ensure effective co-ordination and implementation of improvement work. Other findings from our Self Assessment are important but lower priority, intended to be incorporated in general business planning.

The summary table is underpinned by a more detailed plan that details ownership by Members and officers, measurable outcomes, resource implications and further context¹¹³.

¹¹³Underpinning Summary Improvement Plan

High Level Summary Action Plan

Key Priority	Timescale	Actions	What the benefits will be
1. Management Restructure	1st September 2005 to 1st April 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will complete the current restructure of station management. ■ We will review Headquarters management structure to meet functional requirements of modernisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Measurable improvements in performance, communications, staff satisfaction and staff ownership of objectives.
2. Partnership Working	1st September 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will build on our new partnership management arrangements by completing our partnership audit. ■ We will gather data on existing partnerships and manage new ones in line with new arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improved outcomes for the public from our partnership work.
3. Integrated Risk Management Ownership	1st August 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will involve a broader range of staff and representative bodies in developing the IRMP and its action plans. ■ We will publicise the benefits of prevention work as a preferred option for reducing risk while giving reassurance about effective response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Measurable increase in positive responses and reduction in negative responses to the IRM from the public and our staff. ■ More effective implementation of IRM work, borne of improved staff ownership.
4. Business and Operational Planning	Between now and July 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will provide better definition and clarity of our business planning process. ■ We will enhance our current methods of prioritisation for both strategic and operational planning. ■ We will assess ourselves annually to help with prioritisation and continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clearer explicit understanding by staff of links between planning processes. ■ Measurable increase in the proportion of milestones achieved on target. ■ Improved prioritisation using our capacity more effectively.

High Level Summary Action Plan (continued)

Key Priority	Timescale	Actions	What the benefits will be
5. Leadership and Change Management	Between now and October 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will develop change management capacity as a key leadership factor. ■ We will involve and communicate with staff on all major change, listening and having regard to their views. ■ We will review our engagement protocols and relationships with representative bodies. ■ We will review and improve the ways in which we recognise the achievements of our staff. ■ We will conduct a staff survey after 6 months to test and publicise any changes in perceptions and satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Our staff will feel that they are involved and engaged in beneficial change increasing the likelihood of effective outcomes. ■ Perceptions of our communications will improve.
6. Programme Management of Improvement Plans	2005 to 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will effectively manage and monitor this improvement plan and the more complex interrelated plans that underpin it and flow from it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Effective implementation to meet planned milestones.

Table of Abbreviations

ABW	All Backgrounds Welcome
AFA	Automatic Fire Alarm
AFD	Automatic Fire Detection
ACF	Arson Control Forum
AIM	Active Intervention Monitoring
BA	Breathing Apparatus
BVPIs	Best Value Performance Indicators
BVPP/BP	Best Value Performance Plan and Business Plan
BVRs	Best Value Reviews
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Nuclear, Radioactive
CCC	Compliments, Comments and Complaints
CDRPs	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
CEOs	Chief Executive Officer
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers' Association
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CSPs	Community Safety Partnerships
DAP	Directed Action Planning
DSP	District Strategic Partnerships
FAQs	Frequently asked questions
FSC	Fire Service College
FSCA	Fire Services Consultation Association
GTC	Global Training Courses
HFRA	Home Fire Risk Assessment
HMFSI	Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IPDR	Individual Personal Development Review
IPDS	Integrated Personal Development System
IRM	Integrated Risk Management
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
JCP	Joint Consultative Panel
LALOs	Local Authority Liaison Officers
LIs	Local Indicators
LDG	Local Delivery Groups
LGIB	Local Government Information Bureaux
LPSA	Local Public Service Agreement

Table of Abbreviations (continued)

LSC	Learning Skills Council
LSPs	Local Strategic Partnerships
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
NCFSC	National Community Fire Safety Centre
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
ORS	Opinion Research Services
P & P	Performance and Planning department
PIs	Performance Indicators
PMG	Programme Management Group
PQAs	Personal Qualities and Attributes
PRC	Performance Review of Command
PRSM	Performance Review of Station Management
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RBs	Representative Bodies
RBIP	Risk Based Inspection Programme
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RES	Race Equality Scheme
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Dangerous Diseases, Occurrences Regulations
RMB	Regional Management Board
RIMSAT	Remote Intelligent Management Support and Training
RTCs	Road Traffic Collisions
SROs	Senior Responsible Owners
TRACS	Training Readiness and Community Safety
VFM	Value For Money
WMATF	West Midlands Arson Task Force
WMFS	West Midlands Fire Service
WMFCDA	West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority
G-Cat	A catalogue based procurement scheme for
S-Cat	goods and services to provide public sector