

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Executive Committee

**You are summoned to attend the meeting of Executive Committee to be held
on Monday, 21 March 2016 at 10:00
at Fire Service HQ, 99 Vauxhall Road, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4HW
for the purpose of transacting the following business:**

Agenda – Public Session

1	To receive apologies for absence (if any)	
2	Declarations of interests in contracts or other matters	
3	Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 14 December 2015	3 - 8
4	Corporate Performance Indicators 2016-17	9 - 16
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Distribution:

Stuart Davis - Member, B A Douglas-Maul - Member, Adam Aston - Member, John Edwards - Chairman, Mohammed Idrees - Member, Hendrina Quinnen - Member, Ann Shackleton - Member, Robert Sealey - Member, Gurdial Singh Atwal - Member, Muhammad Afzal - Member

Clerk Name: Karen Gowreesunker

Clerk Telephone: 0121 380 6678

Agenda prepared by Julie Connor

Strategic Hub, West Midlands Fire Service

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**This agenda and supporting documents are also available electronically on the West Midlands Fire Service website at
www.wmfs.net**

Minutes of the Executive Committee

**14 December 2015 at 1000 hours
Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Idrees (Vice Chair)
Councillors Afzal, Atwal Singh, Aston,
Davis, Douglas-Maul, Quinnan,
Sealey and Shackleton

Cllr. Tranter (Chair of Scrutiny Committee)

Observers: Cllrs Spence, Ward, Clinton, P Singh, Barrie Mottram and Skinner, Mr Agar

13/15 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2015, be approved as a correct record.

14/15 **Scrutiny Committee Review of Partnerships**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee stated that under the Terms of Reference, the Scrutiny Committee identifies a minimum of two thematic reviews each year.

In March 2015, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of all aspects of partnerships activity. This was prompted by an increase in Corporate Risk 4 which related to Partnerships and a full year of underperformance in PI 5 the Percentage of Home Safety Checks referred from Partners. The review was facilitated by the Strategic Hub and undertaken by a Member led working group.

The resulting report and proposals were submitted to Scrutiny Committee on 16th November 2015.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee thanked Jim Whittingham from the Strategic Hub and Councillors Spence and Hogarth for their support.

Assistant Chief Officer Gary Taylor provided an overview of the findings.

It was stated that Partnerships are a key priority of West Midlands Fire Service, integral to the delivery of the outcomes of 'The Plan', and that they are the gateway through which the Service engages with the most vulnerable members of the community. The Service welcomed the additional scrutiny on this important area.

Overall the review provided evidence of a healthy position and growing appreciation of the partnership landscape. There was a clear strategy at both corporate and local level. However it was recognised that there were areas for improvement relating to role and responsibilities, engagement and governance.

There is a central Community Fire Safety (CFS) Team based at Headquarters which was redesigned two years ago. The review found that this Team had lost its focus on partnership support and would benefit from clarity of roles and responsibilities and increased leadership.

The Headquarters CFS Team was created to support a network of local Command based Partnership Teams. The review highlighted examples of some well managed partnerships, however there was also evidence of inconsistent partnership engagement across the Command areas which had led to missed opportunities and increased risk.

Commissioning had also emerged as an approach to support the wider health agenda whilst delivering the core prevention objectives and generating income. Commissioning requires a change of partnership focus and a need to develop a new skill set in dealing with partners.

The review had identified this area as a current ‘gap’ across both central local partnership teams that would need addressing.

ACO Taylor highlighted that the Authorities approach to Partnerships is monitored via the corporate risk register. The broad governance of partnerships is controlled by an organisational policy, Standing Order 22/02 and monitored using an electronic database. The review had highlighted mainstream compliance with the current policy, however, a more robust approach would help the organisation respond to the changes in the partnership landscape and increased risk related to new commissioning activity.

Finally, the review identified the links to Data Sharing. There is a direct correlation to functional partnerships leading to effective data sharing arrangements. This issue had previously been chosen by the Scrutiny Committee as their second Thematic Review so it is proposed that the more complex issue of data sharing is considered as a separate thematic review.

The findings of the review and these proposals would be delivered through an action plan with progress monitored by the Scrutiny Committee.

The report had been unanimously approved by the Scrutiny Committee and approval of the proposals arising from the review of the Service’s partnership arrangements was sought from the Executive Committee.

One Member felt that this was an important report which had highlighted strengths and weaknesses and was pleased to see that these are going to be addressed and was something that could be built upon in the future. It was also suggested that there should be three or four Scrutiny Reviews, which could then reduce.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that although the Service were expanding the prevention agenda to include partnerships, he added a note of caution that firefighters were not social workers however they continued to work collaboratively with other agencies.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service's work in the community was greatly appreciated by the people of the West Midlands, and although the Service was not unique in its partnership working WMFS aimed to be an exemplar to other Services.

Reference was made to a report from the National Audit Officer regarding the sustainability of Fire Services and the limited understanding of its work by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Chief Fire Officer felt it was important that Members understood the way 21st century firefighters now worked, how the Fire Service had transformed and was now at the heart of the devolution changes. Preventative work was being undertaken whilst maintaining the Service Delivery Model.

One Member stated that there was still a lack of understanding of the work of firefighters and referenced a meeting of the Road Safety Partnership in that the Fire Service were good at finding solutions to problems, but then handed credit to other agencies and the Member felt that the Fire Service should receive more recognition for their work.

Another Member gave an example of collaborative working and had recently attended a Boot Camp Awards Ceremony where primary school children had turned their lives around. It was felt that the Fire Service should be receiving funding for this work.

The Chair agreed to speak to one of the Members after the meeting about the Scrutiny Committee activities.

The Chair also stated that partnerships were critical to the health and wellbeing agenda and the changes recommended would put the Service in good shape for future work with partners when Commissioning opportunities arose.

It was agreed that the link to the National Audit Office report would be circulated to Members.

It was suggested that the Public Accounts Committee had not made the most of the report and had focused on salaries rather than the lack of understanding by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and opened up some important issues.

In response to a Member's question, the Chair confirmed that both he and the Chief Fire Officer had attended meetings at the Local Government Association (LGA), but recent changes had left CLG out of touch at civil servant level. The Chair stated that the New Fire Minister (Mark Francois MP) had not attended either the LGA Fire Services Management Committee or Fire Commission and there had not been any dialogue between the Minister with the LGA or Chief Fire Officers' Association.

It was noted that the Minister was unwell at moment, but it was felt that the Government had not plugged the gap created by his absence. The National Audit Officer report highlighted the CLG's lack of engagement, limited understanding of the work of the Fire Service, and its associated costs.

Another Member concurred with this stating that Advisers were failing to advise Ministers or provide them with the correct information and he had experienced this in his own Authority.

In response to a Members' question the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that two meetings had been held with Treasury representatives. Invitations had been issued to the Under Secretary of State, Mark Francois, and Clare Cooper, Fire Adviser at CLG. However no response had been received and it remained clear that the CLG were unconvinced of the link between prevention, protection and response.

It was confirmed that Alex Burfitt, NAO would be visiting West Midlands Fire Service in the New Year.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Finance Settlement was expected in two days' time, and that he was concerned that there was a lack of understanding of the

Sector and WMFS had not been able to speak to the Fire Minister for a whole year.

The Chair also stated that the LGA Fire Services Management Committee had also expressed extreme concern about the lack of dialogue with the Fire Minister. CFOA and the FBU had raised the same concerns.

The Members of the Conservative Group agreed to make contact with the Fire Minister and write to him with their concerns. The Chair welcomed this offer of assistance.

The Chair informed the Committee of the excellent work being carried out by Assistant Chief Officer Gary Taylor on the Strategic Fire and Health Project Group and his attendance at Fire and Health Summits where the fear of winter pressures had been raised by the CEO of NHS England (Simon Stevens) and the previous CFOA previous President (Peter Dartford).

The Project Group had a strong commitment to the Fire and Health agenda and was supported by the LGA. The safe and well checks were continuing and it was the intention for Fire to be seen as a Health Asset and as Strategic Stakeholders, however some stakeholders are still not convinced in the Fire Service involvement in the wider health agenda.

Another Health Summit is due to be held in February 2016, where there would be another opportunity to influence and increase understanding of Fires role in health and wellbeing.

The proposals contained within the Scrutiny Committee's Review of Partnerships report were approved and the outcomes would be reported back to the Executive Committee.

(The meeting closed at 1025 hours)

Contact Officer: Julie Connor
Strategic Hub
West Midlands Fire Service
0121 380 6906

Agenda Item No. 4

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2016

1. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016-17

Report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT Executive Committee approves the Corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) and targets for 2016-17 as set out in Appendix 1.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to seek approval for the corporate PIs and targets for 2016-17 and to provide information to Executive Committee about the rationale that formulates the revised targets.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In accordance with its planning framework, the Service has reviewed its rolling three year corporate strategy – The Plan 2016-19. As part of this approach at its meeting on 15 February 2016 the Authority approved a revised vision statement and priorities and outcomes. These are set out in The Plan and are enablers to achieving our vision of ‘Making West Midlands Safer, Healthier and Stronger’.
- 3.2 Following approval of the priorities and outcomes set out in The Plan, the ACFO Service Delivery, as the lead officer for scrutiny matters, has worked with stakeholders to:
- Consider past performance results

- Review the internal strategies and approaches and external influencers that will shape our 2016/17 performance and drive the target setting
 - Identify the appropriate PIs for 2016-17
- 3.3 In accordance with the Service's commitment to enabling governance through effective engagement and transparency and in line with The Constitution officers met with the Scrutiny Committee Chair on 3 March 2016. At this meeting the Scrutiny Committee Chair recommended that the proposed corporate PIs and targets for 2016-17 to be submitted to Executive Committee for approval.

Setting PI targets 2016-17

- 3.4 The methodology for setting performance indicator targets is the same as for previous years. An average of the three previous financial years has been used as a starting point. Professional judgement and some forecasting has been used in providing an estimate for the expected performance for the last quarter of 2015-16. This has enabled the Service to set realistic but challenging targets across the range of its PIs for 2016-17 which are set out in Appendix 1. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee has been consulted and has confirmed that the PIs and targets set are appropriate. However, in the unlikely event of 2015-16 end of year outturn being significantly different to estimated performance, Members may be asked to amend the new target(s).
- 3.5 The performance indicator numbers for 2016-17 remain the same as 2015-16 with the exception of the People Support Services performance indicators 18 – 20 which relate to sickness. PI 18 is now the PI for overall sickness, PI 19 is now the PI for sickness for uniformed employees and PI 20 is the sickness for non-uniformed and Fire Control employees.
- 3.6 The targets that have set for 2016-17 have taken into account the commitment to improving services and outcomes to the community. All the targets have been set either below or at the three year average performance outturn.

- 3.7 PI 5 – the percentage of Safe and Well Checks referred by our partners is set at 40%. This is the same target as in previous years. Although the target was not achieved previously, work has been carried out to determine the cause behind this. As a consequence some of the reporting mechanisms are being changed, referrals through partnerships are being secured but they are not being recorded in the correct way. Through revising and simplifying recording processes we are confident that performance will improve against the target.
- 3.7 PI6 – The number of safe and well checks points achieved by the Brigade, the target has been increased from 135,000 to 180,000 points. It is envisaged that the 2015-16 outturn will be above this; this is due to investing considerable effort in reducing the backlog of safe and well appointments. It has become apparent that safe and well visits take longer than the previous home safety checks because of the additional questions that are asked. However, as a result of the safe and well approach the average scores are eight points per visit. This is more than the home safety checks and evidence in itself that the most vulnerable members of the community are being targeted.
- 3.8 PI 10 – The number of arson vehicle fires, has risen for the last three years so a target of 0% is challenging. Within the prevention strategies we will be targeting our resources to reducing anti-social behaviour and arson. Given the increase, consideration will be given to making this an area for scrutiny review.
- 3.9 PI 14 – The number of false alarm calls due to fire alarm equipment in dwellings and non-domestic properties, in setting a target which is 10% below the three year average we will be attending over 1000 less automatic fire alarms than we were two years ago. This will make a significant contribution to the availability of resources and the five minute attendance standard.

We plan to continue to make reductions through:-

- Continuing to use the Brigade Support Vehicles to educate 'responsible persons' and help them understand how they can minimise the impact of automatic fire alarms on their business
- Improving the data collected at false alarm incidents through an improved workbook which will enable more effective targeting
- Fire safety officers continuing to work with businesses that has high numbers of automatic fire alarms and consider different ways of working (i.e. a 'paid for' response)
- Specifically focusing on the best approach to working with extra care/sheltered housing (the highest repeat group) to minimise risk and reduce unwanted automatic fire alarms
- Explore and develop options for Fire Control operating as an Alarm Receiving Centre to help support more effective mobilising decisions

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. It should be noted that the Authority's approved 2016-17 budget is aligned to and will support the delivery of The Plan.

The contact officer for this report is Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gary Taylor who can be contacted on 0121 380 6914.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Fire Authority Agenda item 7, 15 February 2016, The Plan 2016-19.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Appendix 1

Number	Performance Indicator	Overall target expressed as a % -/+ against 3 year performance average	Overall Target 16/17*
PI 1	Risk Based Attendance Standard	Cat 1 - 5mins Cat 2 - 7mins Cat 3 - 10mins Cat 4 - 20mins Cat 5 - Non Set	Cat 1 - 5mins Cat 2 - 7mins Cat 3 - 10mins Cat 4 - 20mins Cat 5 - Non Set
PI 2	The number of accidental fires in dwellings	-3%	1654
PI 3	Injuries from accidental fires in dwellings (Taken to hospital for treatment)	-1%	62
PI 4	The number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings	We seek to minimise deaths from fires	No target set
PI 5	The percentage of Safe and Well visits referred by our partners	N/A	40%
PI 6	The number of Safe and Well visits points achieved by the Brigade	N/A	180,000
PI 7	The number of people killed or seriously injured in Road Traffic Collisions	-5%	908
PI 8	The number of arson fires in dwellings	-20%	185
PI 9	The number of arson fires in non-domestic premises	-20%	118
PI 10	The number of arson vehicle fires	0%	660
PI 11	The number of arson rubbish fires	-12%	2052
PI 12	The number of arson fires in derelict buildings	-4%	134
PI 13	The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises	-10%	443
PI 14	The number of false alarm calls due to fire alarm equipment in dwellings and non-domestic properties	-10%	5648
PI 15	The percentage of employees that have disclosed their disabled status	N/A	100%

Number	Performance Indicator	Overall target expressed as a % - /+ against 3 year performance average	Overall Target 16/17*
PI 16	The number of female uniformed staff	N/A	76
PI 17	The percentage of all staff from BME communities	N/A	10%
PI 18	The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – All employees	-5%	6.26
PI 19	The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – Uniformed employees	-5%	6.26
PI 20	The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – Non Uniformed and Fire Control employees	-5%	6.26
PI 21	The total number of injuries	-5%	144
PI 22	The total number of RIDDOR injuries	-5%	19
PI 23	To reduce the Fire Authority's carbon emissions	-1%	6,872 tonnes
PI 24	To reduce gas use of Fire Authority premises	-5%	11,976 mwh
PI 25	To reduce electricity use of Fire Authority premises	-1%	5,942 mwh

*Based on 13/14, 14/15 out-turn and 15/16 estimated end of year out-turn and may need to be amended in line with the actual out-turn when these figures are available in May 2016

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2016

1. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority notes the expiry of Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) current contract with Airwave emergency services mobile communications.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority notes the cross-government Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) to replace existing mobile communication services for the emergency services.
- 1.3 THAT the Authority approves the sign up of West Midlands Fire Service to the ESMCP.
- 1.4 THAT the Authority notes the indicative financial implications associated with the ESMCP.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report is submitted to update the Authority on the replacement of Airwave mobile communications with the ESMCP which will deliver a new Emergency Services Network (ESN).
- 2.2 This paper is submitted to seek approval from the Authority to sign up to the ESMCP and note the indicative financial implications associated with the programme.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 ESMCP is a cross-government programme to replace the existing mobile communications service for the emergency

services (Firelink for the FRS) with a new commercial system based on 4G.

3.2 The overall objectives of ESMCP are to be:

- Better with integrated broadband data services; public service functionality; national coverage and high availability.
- More flexible, to evolve and improve over time and pay only for those features required by users.
- Cheaper; to help address budget pressures, with flexibility to be re-competited regularly to leverage market forces.

3.3 There are three strategic drivers that are influencing the scope and timing of ESMCP's development. These are that:

- Current contracts for the emergency services (provided by Airwave) expire between 2016 and 2020 and cannot readily be extended. As such there will be no Airwave Firelink service from 2020 meaning that now is a good time to procure an alternative system.
- The current Airwave Firelink service is already significantly more expensive than similar public safety systems in Europe and price trends for publically available mobile telephony.
- Users within the emergency services are increasingly requiring broadband data (not just voice communications) to support operational transformation. This cannot be met by current Airwave technologies.

3.4 The intended scope of ESMCP will include 44 police forces, 50 fire and rescue services (including those in Scotland and Wales) and 13 Ambulance Trusts. A range of other civil contingency user organisations will also join ESMCP as second tier users. Overall this means that the system is likely to have approximately 300,000 users.

3.5 Fire and rescue service (FRS) transition onto the new ESN

is due to begin with the mobilisation phase in 2016 and will be complete by January 2020 by which time all FRSs will be in a steady state. The steady state will last until the end of the financial year 2032 by which point a retendering of the contracts will have taken place.

- 3.6 DCLG recognises that fire communications systems continue to be the responsibility of each individual FRA. However, central government has a strong interest in ensuring that the country is fully prepared to deal with civil contingency issues. As such the Government believes that it is important to have in place a communications system that enables interrelated working across boundaries and between the emergency services. Furthermore the Government believes it is important to ensure that emergency services communications are robust and resilient, using the latest technology to aid the delivery of a more effective service.
- 3.7 As such, whilst DCLG is currently not mandating take up of ESMCP, it is strongly recommending that FRAs sign up to the system, both from an operational perspective and also a financial perspective (the fire service as a whole stands to make significant savings of approximately £80m over the twelve year life of the contract).
- 3.8 Not providing a mobile communications service at the end of the existing Airwave contract would prevent the WMFS being able to communicate with other Fire and Rescue Services and blue light services when dealing with emergency incidents both regionally and nationally.
- 3.9 WMFS has been working collaboratively with other FRSs across the West Midlands Region for the proposed introduction of the ESMCP. To support the implementation phase of the programme an officer from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service has been appointed to support the transition process from April 2016. This post has been funded by DCLG and FRSs in the region and the officer will be located at WMFS Headquarters.
- 3.10 The delivery and realisation of the new Emergency Services Network via ESMCP will take place in two major stages of mobilisation and transition. The mobilisation stage consisted

of planning, design, build and testing; the transition stage is where FRSs prepare for and undertake the switch to ESN, and the steady state stage where FRSs fully utilise the ESN.

- 3.11 The ESMCP will incur transition costs such as equipment requirements and control room upgrades as Fire Services move from one communications system to another. To help achieve a smooth and effective transition, DCLG has made a commitment to support FRAs in the cost of transition. Whilst DCLG are not yet in a position to confirm funding on an individual basis, a total of £50m will be made available to FRAs to fund transition.
- 3.12 Details regarding the individual costs of transition will be provided over the first two quarters of 2016. However as DCLG requires a commitment from FRAs prior to providing transition funding, it was deemed prudent provide the indicative costs at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.13 During transition FRAs will continue to pay the costs of Firelink until the point at which the transition is completed and the Airwave connection is no longer required.

4. STEADY STATE STAGE

- 4.1 Overall the Programme estimates that ESN will produce at least an £80m saving to English Fire and Rescue Authorities nationally between 2020 and 2032. This indicates a strong value for money case for ESN. The vast majority of FRAs including WMFRA will make a saving on the costs they are currently paying for the existing Airwave radio system.
- 4.2 Government has analysed a range of options for updating emergency service communications as a consequence of the forthcoming expiry of the existing Airwave contracts.
- 4.3 The result of this options analysis was that ESMCP (an enhanced commercial Long-Term Evolution network) provided a compelling case going forward. ESMCP will provide a system that is:
 - Robust, interoperable and contains data capabilities
 - Smart in that it only charges only for what is used
 - Cheaper overall than the existing system

- Contains scope for future efficiencies as it is linked to a commercial system.
- 4.4 DCLG believes that ESMCP offers the best communications system going forward. As such DCLG will only contribute to transition costs for FRAs moving onto ESMCP as a Tier 1 user. It will not provide any support to FRAs wishing to choose alternative methods of communications.

5. FRA REQUIRED RESPONSE TO DCLG

- 5.1 DCLG requires a formal response from each FRA's Chief Fire Officer regarding whether or not they intend to migrate onto the new Emergency Services Network as part of the ESMCP no later than Friday 25th March 2016. This will allow DCLG to have the assurance it needs to be able to distribute the required funding for transition in line with the Programme timescales.
- 5.2 Following FRA sign up to ESMCP, DCLG will make the appropriate funding payments via a Section 31 grant (subject to legal/financial approvals), in time for the transition arrangements.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Under the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 Part 2, sections 7, 8 and 9 a Fire and Rescue Authority must make provision for the purposes of dealing with fires and road traffic collisions and other emergencies deferred by the Secretary of State
- 7.2 An order under by the Secretary of State may require functions conferred on a fire and rescue authority for dealing with other emergencies to be discharged outside the authority's area.
- 7.3 In particular the fire and rescue authority must secure the

provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary efficiently to meet all normal requirements and make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 As stated in paragraph 3.11, transition costs would be incurred when moving from the current Airwave system, which expires by 2020 at the latest, to any alternative communications system. It is not clear at this stage what the actual costs of transition would be for this Authority although as part of the overall ESMCP project arrangements, CLG has committed to 'provide all reasonable transition funding for FRA's moving onto the Emergency Services Network'.
- 8.2 The estimated annual costs for the Emergency Services Network will depend on a number of variables such as; configuration of data and connections and device refresh. However, CLG have produced indicative figures which indicate annual savings for this Authority in the region of £150k from 2019/20 onwards.

9. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None identified

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Not applicable

The contact name for this report is Deputy Chief Fire Officer Phil Hales, telephone number 0121 380 6004

**PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2016

1. NON CONSTITUENT MEMBERSHIP OF WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

Report of the Clerk to the Authority.

RECOMMENDED

THAT Members note the proposal submitted to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) seeking non-constituent membership of the combined authority.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to set out the basis on which West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) seeks non-constituent membership of the WMCA.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 17 November 2015 the Chancellor and Secretary of State confirmed the WMCA devolution agreement. The proposed agreement with government will see it make an annual contribution worth £40 million for 30 years, to support an overall investment package worth £8 billion, alongside the creation of up to half a million jobs.
- 3.2 The proposed deal will give the emerging WMCA, working across the geography of the three LEPs, the funding and the powers to further grow the regional economy and focus on the issues that really matter to the people and businesses of the region; transport, jobs, skills and homes.
- 3.3 During December 2015 each of the 7 Metropolitan Councils of Birmingham, Coventry, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Dudley and Solihull, voted on the devolution agreement at full council and became Constituent members of the WMCA.

- 3.4 It is anticipated that the proposed deal will receive parliamentary approval during Spring/Summer 2016.
- 3.5 WMFRA has demonstrated its ambition to align more closely with the devolved WMCA, through previous consultation responses and ongoing developing collaborative relationships, across the 7 Metropolitan Councils. WMFRA believes that alignment to the WMCA will ensure the communities of the West Midlands receive the best possible delivery of integrated services currently provided through the delivery of The Plan. It also provides West Midlands Fire Service with the ability to widen the level of services we provide to achieve better outcomes for our communities and reduce the burden to the public sector.
- 3.6 To reinforce this ambition, on the 23 February 2016 WMFRA wrote to Mr. K. Ireland, the Secretary to the Combined Authority, proposing membership of the WMCA as a non-constituent member. This would enable a formal approach to engagement for future integration and governance issues in the route towards the devolution deal for the West Midlands.
- 3.7 The letter to the WMCA is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.8 A response to this letter was received on the 10th March 2016, offering WMFRA ‘Observer’ status at the Board without membership. This provides the Authority with the ability to fully participate in the debate and work of the WMCA, but does not provide voting rights. Further detail is set out in the letter in Appendix 2.
- 3.9 Constituent and non-constituent members have to sign up to, and be named within, the West Midlands Combined Authority Scheme.
- 3.10 In the Scheme sent to Government only constituent members have voting rights. However, once the WMCA is established, constituent members can give voting rights to non-constituent members, for example, allowing them to vote on matters to do with economic development.
- 3.11 Constituent members may only be signed up to one combined authority, whilst non-constituent members can be signed up to one or more combined authorities.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The outcomes of this report if in favour of the proposal submitted, will enable WMFS to strengthen and widen its approaches to the provision of its services required through the National Framework, as set out in the Community Safety Strategy (IRMP) and The Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The commitment to becoming an Observer would incur an annual cost of £25,000. Funding for this in the first year could be met from overall Authority savings identified in the current financial year. Any ongoing commitments would need to be considered as part of the Authority's annual budget setting process.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

WMCA Devolution agreement

The contact name for this report is Karen Gowreesunker, telephone number 0121 380 6678.

KAREN GOWREESUNKER
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

Appendix 1

Fire Service Headquarters,
99 Vauxhall Road, Birmingham B7 4HW
@WestMidsFire #RTB

Mr K Ireland
Managing Director
City of Wolverhampton Council
Civic Centre, St Peters Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RL

Our Ref: StrategicHub/Gov/A230216
Please ask for: Asif Afsar
Tel: 0121 380 6906
Date: 23 February 2016

Also e-mail to: keith.ireland@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Dear Mr Ireland,

Proposal to become a Non-Constituent Member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

I write further to West Midlands Fire Service's participation in the West Midlands Combined Authority. We have welcomed discussions through the Public Services Leadership Board. This letter builds on the presentation delivered by Phil Loach (Chief Fire Officer) to the PSLB.

I recognise that there is no blueprint for developing connections with the WMCA and the fire and rescue service, however we would like to formalise an approach to take forward discussions on the value we can add with respect to future integration and governance issues. I therefore wish to confirm our interest in becoming a non-constituent member of the WMCA. I believe this route will provide us with the appropriate opportunity to be engaged in the progress towards the devolution deal for the West Midlands, at the appropriate officer and political lead level.

WMFS continues to deliver effective transformation in order to meet a 46% reduction in central government funding. A key part of our reform has been the integration of prevention, protection and response activities and the move to identifying the causes of risk and vulnerability. This directly impacts on the wider needs of our communities and makes a significant contribution in creating economically sustainable communities across the West Midlands.

Becoming a non-constituent member of the WMCA will provide the opportunity to build on existing collaborative partnerships with the Local Authorities as part of public service reform. It will also provide the best opportunity for input from a FRS perspective, to the legislative road map which will enable the devolution deal in the most economic, efficient and effective way that is in the public interest.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this letter further and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Karen Gowreesunker
Clerk to the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority



Making West Midlands Safer
WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE
www.wmfs.net



Karen Gowreesunker
Fire Service Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 7HW

10 March 2016

Dear Karen

Non-Constituent Membership of West Midlands Combined Authority

Thank you for your letter on the proposal for West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority to become a Non-Constituent member of the WMCA.

Constituent members have considered your request and have agreed to offer West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority Observer status at the Board without membership status but with a financial contribution of £25,000 and the ability to fully participate in the debate and work of the Combined Authority. In the unlikely event that a vote is needed, Observers (your status) will not be able to participate in voting, as voting is reserved for Constituent and Non-Constituent members only.

Whilst I understand this is not the full outcome you were looking for I trust the above is a pragmatic solution. The WMCA look forward to working with the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority which will allow even better joint working and joint visioning of public sector services.

Turning now to the practical realities of Observer status I can confirm the following:

Officer Programme Team – The Chief Fire Officer or substitute has a seat. These meetings are currently Friday mornings 9.00 – 11.00 a.m.

Shadow Board (and then Board after Vesting Day) – The Chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority or substitute has a seat. The Chief Fire Officer is also allowed to attend. These meetings are normally held on a Friday at 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. I attach a meeting schedule for information.

Continued.....

Ref. AU/Exec/2016/Mar/202031614

-2-

Following our discussion, I have prepared a paper for Shadow Board to fully approve this position at its meeting on the 11 March 2016.

Yours Sincerely



Keith Ireland
Clerk to West Midlands Combined Authority
keith.ireland@wolverhampton.gov.uk

cc Councillor Bob Sleigh – Chair WMCA
cc Councillor Darren Cooper – Vice Chair WMCA

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2016

**1. WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY
CONSULTATION**

Report of the Clerk to the Authority.

RECOMMENDED

THAT Members note the response submitted on behalf of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) to the West Midlands Combined Authority Consultation (WMCA).

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted to acknowledge the Authority's response to the consultation recently run by the WMCA, 18 January 2016 – 8 February 2016. The consultation related to the proposed Combined Authority's role and functions and specifically, about the Scheme document that was submitted to the government four months ago.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The WMCA refers to the new governance structure being initiated for the West Midlands by the seven Metropolitan Councils of Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull, Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton.
- 3.2 The WMCA launched a consultation on 18 January 2016 to seek opinion on the roles and functions of the proposed Combined Authority.
- 3.3 The Authority recognises the need for public service reform ensuring that the communities we serve are at the heart of the decision-making and service delivery.

- 3.4 The Authority supports the approach that the WMCA is taking in enabling councils to work together to create benefits to our communities through joined up approaches and delivery in relation to regeneration, economic growth and development and improved transport infrastructure.
- 3.5 In response to the WMCA consultation, the Authority provided a response to the five questions asked and also provided a more comprehensive response as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The outcomes of the consultation were released on 16 February 2016. There were over 1,900 responses to the consultation. These responses will support the government's decision regarding whether it is appropriate to form a West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).
- 3.7 Overall, the majority of respondents were supportive of what the WMCA is trying to achieve. The outcomes of the consultation are detailed in Appendix 2.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The information set out in this report will no impact on any change in policy.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

WMCA Consultation 18 January 2016
WMCA Devolution Agreement

The contact name for this report is Karen Gowreesunker, telephone number 0121 380 6678.

KAREN GOWREESUNKER
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Response to WMCA Consultation

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) welcome the opportunity to respond to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) consultation.

In writing this consultation response WMFRA has given consideration to the scheme document and the WMCA devolution agreement, taking note of the respective priorities.

WMFRA recognises the need for public service reform ensuring that the communities we serve are at the heart of decision making and service delivery. Councils working together through the WMCA will create benefit to our communities through joined up approaches and delivery in relation to regeneration, economic growth and development and improved transport infrastructure.

WMFRA supports this approach and would seek to be actively involved in these discussions with the WMCA. We have demonstrated the ability to reform and transform by working with Councils and other partners to deliver innovative, efficient and effective services to our communities. We believe that public services as a whole, not just councils, working together in a Combined Authority can make a real difference to our communities.

We recognise that there is no blueprint for developing connections with the WMCA and the fire and rescue service. WMFRA therefore welcomes continued discussions in relation to the Combined Authority and our involvement within it. As such we would seek to formalise an approach to take forward discussions on the value we can add, future integration and governance issues.

Whilst our services are critical to our communities we recognise and embrace the need for public service reform. Since 2011 we have transformed its services to maintain our service delivery commitment to our communities, but also to meet continued reductions in Government funding. By 2019/20 WMFRA will have seen a 46% (£38m) reduction in Government funding. In order to maintain our core offering we have gone through fundamental internal changes to absorb the reductions. This has seen innovative working both in terms of internal structural change as

well as service delivery. We believe that we can add value should we become an integral part of the WMCA in the future. As an influential partner we currently contribute to reducing vulnerability, protecting the transport infrastructure through rapid response to incidents on our highways and supporting economic growth and stability through our protection and emergency response which provides assertive interventions to limit business and commercial losses from fire.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's) demonstrate the desire to support local business and our local economy. Healthy business communities create employment and economic stability and growth. We believe that this is an essential part of creating a sustainable future and is the reason we work closely with businesses, helping to keep businesses in business through our protection services and our emergency response thereby reducing the burden of fire and other incidents and supporting business continuity and resilience. In 2013/14 the cost of dwelling fires, non-dwelling fires and road traffic collisions in the West Midlands stood at £198,651,600. Without our response these costs would spiral with even higher impact upon our communities and the economy. The impact of our response times is not just relative to casualties but also the impact it has on our transport network and critical national infrastructure. We aim for the highest standards of emergency response with a targeted response time of 5 minutes to high risk incidents, where life or property is endangered. This keeps businesses in operating, reduces vulnerability and enables economic stability and growth, demonstrating alignment to the key priorities of the WMCA. The fire service in the West Midlands is not what it was 5 years ago. We deliver a range of services that focus on prevention and protection in the first instance, reducing the cost and the burden on our economy and reducing vulnerability.

We support the continuation of the LEP's and would seek to be actively engaged and involved in these areas of the WMCA.

To achieve the greatest benefits from the creation of the WMCA the right participation is vital. This has to be participation from all relevant stakeholders and we would suggest that purely seeing this as councils is too narrow. We believe that the emergency service sector has a key part to play and that participation should be extended to include emergency services.

Our prevention and protection activities have been at the heart of public service reform, looking at the causes of risk and vulnerability and the wider needs of our communities. We play a significant role in creating economically sustainable communities across the West Midlands. We support the WMCA and look forward to increased involvement with partners across the WMCA from a perspective of improved outcomes for the community, alignment to a WMCA model incorporating public health agencies and access to health and wellbeing commissioning. We believe this would have the potential to deliver connected public services in an effective and efficient way.

Positive Response to WMCA Survey

There were over 1900 responses to the survey that will help government decide whether it is appropriate to form a West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

The survey ran on the WMCA's website for three weeks (18 January to 08 February) and the results have now been fed back to government.

There were five key questions relating to the proposed Combined Authority's role and functions and, specifically, about the Scheme document that was submitted to government three months ago.

Overall, the majority of respondents were in favour of what the incoming WMCA is trying to achieve. Between 60% and 72% of people agreed or strongly agreed that:

- by working together local authorities in the West Midlands would deliver improvements in economic development, regeneration and transport
- better coordination of these areas would mean more effective and convenient local government and services
- the region's Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) would ensure businesses have a strong voice moving forward, and
- neighbouring local authorities should be invited to participate in the WMCA.

An overwhelming 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the WMCA should not become a 'super council' and that a Combined Authority for the region should not have an adverse effect on the identities and interests of local communities.

The support for the emerging WMCA was particularly strong amongst businesses with between 75% and 88% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with all five questions in the survey.

Set against the overall support across residents, businesses, elected members and council employees, there were also those

who expressed their concerns about the proposed Combined Authority. Between 24% and 32% of people disagreed or strongly disagreed with the four questions relating to the WMCA's role and functions. Additionally, a wide range of negative comments were expressed in the free text section of the survey which was used by over 800 people. The concerns included the role and powers of a directly elected Mayor, whether there would be cross party unity between participating authorities and the ongoing identity of the WMCA.

Councillor Darren Cooper, Vice Chairman of Shadow West Midlands Combined Authority, said: "This consultation has been incredibly useful and shows that there is certainly an appetite to discuss our plans to become a Combined Authority. It's important that people have a voice and we understand that people want to express a view. To achieve over 1900 responses over a three week period is encouraging and we will now take our time to analyse what people have said and how we can best respond to them.

"In the meantime we have submitted the initial results to government who will consider what people have said and who will ultimately decide whether it is in the region's best interests to form a Combined Authority for the West Midlands."