

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010**

**1. 'PLACE-BASED BUDGET' POSITION STATEMENT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

**RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 THAT the Executive Committee endorses the position statement attached as Appendix 1, regarding the contribution of the Service to Place-Based Budget proposals.
- 1.2 THAT the Executive Committee receives further information and updates as appropriate that could impact or evolve this strategy.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to confirm the Authority's Executive Committee's position on Place-Based Budgets.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The position statement at Appendix 1 has been produced as a continuation of consultations initiated at the Policy Planning Forum on September 6<sup>th</sup> 2010.
- 3.2 Place-Based budgeting is an evolution of the Total Place agenda, which seeks greater collaboration between organisations to achieve more efficient and effective services.
- 3.3 It is possible that Place-Based budgets could form a component of the Comprehensive Spending Review on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010 and further information will be presented to Executive Committee Members as necessary.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out as the concept concerns partnership working which does not represent a change of strategy.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, refers to the Secretary of State preparing a National Framework to set out the objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The National Framework for 2008-2011 requires FRAs to work in partnership with other FRAs and local authorities.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications at this stage as we are only committed to support the principles of Placed-Based budgets. Continued representation at Place-Based meetings needs to be maintained to ensure any future budget implications have been fully considered and agreed.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-2011

Report to the Authority – 21 September 2009 – Agenda Item No. 9

VIJ RANDENIYA  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**APPENDIX 1**

# **Total Place & Place-Based Budgets**

West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority Position  
Statement

## **Total Place and Place Based Budgets**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this statement is to confirm the position of Fire and Rescue Authority on the most appropriate method of engagement for the Service in relation to Total Place/Place-Based budgets. This position will be instrumental in guiding the involvement of West Midlands Fire Service as this agenda develops.

### **Reason for statement**

The objective of the Total Place agenda is to reshape public service delivery in order to provide 'more for less' to the citizen. It is argued that current operating methods are inefficient and the silo-based approach adopted by organisations creates substantial duplication and over-lap. The lack of a joint approach to tackling complex societal issues, which impact multiple agencies, also creates frustrations for the service user resulting in low levels of satisfaction.

Total Place studies indicated that a prevention based approach would assist in reducing the financial burden on society. The evidence demonstrated that once problems had developed they cost a disproportionate amount to address when compared to the cost of preventing them from occurring.

Following the change of Government the Total Place name has been dropped and replaced by Place Based or Community budgets. The principles however remain and it is possible that some form of Place-based budgets will feature in the Comprehensive Spending Review in October, most likely as pilot programmes.

The Local Government Association submitted a proposal to Government<sup>1</sup> detailing how Place-based budgeting could work, this proposal was supported via expressions of interest received from 49 organisations including Coventry City and Birmingham City Councils.

Place-based budgeting is likely to mean that a portion of an organisation's operating budget is redistributed into an area based pooled budget with commissioning decisions taken by a public investment board comprising of elected members and senior officers.

### **Position Statement**

During the Policy Planning Forum on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2010, Fire and Rescue Authority Members indicated the following position:

1. West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to delivering the most efficient and cost effective service across the region. Commitment to this is demonstrated by support of the current Building upon Success review and

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<sup>1</sup> Place-based budgets; the future governance of public services  
- Local Government Association June 2010

can be further evidenced by our key priority of 'Value for Money' contained within 'The Plan'.

2. The Fire and Rescue Authority recognise the ongoing economic challenges faced by the Country and the Service, and remain committed to developing and evaluating initiatives which may enable our resources to be more effectively used in achieving our vision statement of "Making West Midlands Safer".
3. Fire and Rescue Authority Members are supportive of sharing our assets e.g. (buildings, people) as a way of contributing to Total Place across the conurbation. The Authority recognises the efficiency of this approach and encourages partners to offer a similar commitment in order to provide best value to citizens.
4. The value of prevention work is recognised and the Service will continue to build upon the influence and success which has been achieved in this field.
5. The Service will use its positive brand image to assist other agencies to achieve influence in areas such as anti-social behaviour, healthier living etc. In addition, maximising the Home Safety Check service to assist with cross-cutting priorities should be encouraged.
6. Members attach the utmost importance to ensuring the delivery of a consistently excellent level of emergency response across the conurbation in its entirety. In addition, the flexibility of the current approach, which involves moving resources around the conurbation as required, should be maintained in order to facilitate a level of response and resilience which ensures public safety at all times.
7. The risk-based approach to the location of fire stations and fire appliances is vital and any decisions taken on relocation should continue to be made using this approach.
8. The Authority discharges the functions previously held by eight organisations and has rationalised resources and back-office functions. The suitability for the Authority's budget to be sub-divided is questionable. Our responsibilities are derived from Statute, staff perform a broad range of duties including community safety and emergency response and we operate across the conurbation and on a regional, national and international basis. Therefore, an effective way of allocating budgets to; particular facets of the Service or specific metropolitan districts remains unclear.
9. Any body established to administer a Place Based budget should recognise the governance arrangements of the bodies/organisations that contribute to the budget.

