

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the West Midlands Regional Management Board

7th May, 2004 at 10.30 a.m.
at the Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury

- Present:** **Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority**
Councillors Austin, Hartin and Hill (substitute for
Councillor Lt Col Littlejohns).
**Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire
Authority**
Councillor Bather.
Representing Warwickshire County Council
Councillors Haynes, Hobbs and Shilton.
**Representing West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence
Authority**
Councillors Hinton and Hogarth.
- Advisors:** Acting Chief Fire Officer Brown (Warwickshire Fire and
Rescue Service)
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Maltby (representing Chief Fire
Officer Doig – Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service)
Chief Fire Officer Kerr (Shropshire Fire and Rescue
Service)
Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service)
- F N Summers (Clerk)
L Bateman (Treasurer)
J Gregory (Legal Advisor)
S Worrall (Programme Manager).
- Apologies:** Councillors Banks, D Davies, G Davies, Kazi, Lt Col
Littlejohns, Taylor and Udall;
Chief Fire Officers Doig and O'Dwyer.

1/04

Election of Chair

Resolved that Councillor Austin be elected Chair of the Regional Management Board for the period ending with the annual meeting of the Board in 2005.

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2/04 Election of Vice-Chairs

Resolved that the Chairs of each of the five constituent Fire Authorities be elected as Vice-Chairs of the Regional Management Board for the period ending with the annual meeting of the Board in 2005.

3/04 Declaration of Interests in Contracts or Other Matters

Councillor Hill declared a general personal interest in all matters being discussed by the Board in so far that his grandson was employed as a retained firefighter.

4/04 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first annual meeting of the West Midlands Regional Management Board. This was the first constituted meeting of the Board since the formal adoption of joint advisory committee status under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972.

5/04 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the shadow Regional Management Board held on 26th March, 2004 be confirmed as a correct record.

6/04 Membership of the Regional Management Board

The Clerk reported on the membership of the Regional Management Board with effect from 1st April, 2004.

7/04 Constitution and Standing Orders

The Clerk reported that the agreement relating to the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Regional Management Board had been adopted with effect from 1st April, 2004.

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The agreement and Standing Orders were received. These documents set out the obligations of the constituent fire authorities and various other provisions.

8/04

Confirmation of Arrangements for Officer Support and Advice

The Clerk reported on the arrangements for officer support and advice to the Regional Management Board. These arrangements had been discussed at the meeting of the Shadow Regional Management Board on 26th March, 2004. The Board was invited to confirm the arrangements.

Resolved that the following arrangements for officer support and advice to the Regional Management Board be confirmed:-

Advisors to the Regional Management Board

Acting Chief Fire Officer W Brown (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Chief Fire Officer A Doig (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Chief Fire Officer I Kerr (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Chief Fire Officer D O'Dwyer (Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade)

Chief Fire Officer F Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service)

Clerk to the Regional Management Board

F N Summers (Clerk to West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority and Chief Executive of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council)

Treasurer to the Regional Management Board

L Bateman (Treasurer to West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority and Director of Finance and Business Services, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council)

Legal Advisor

J Gregory (Staffordshire County Council and Secretary to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Fire Authority)

Assistant Legal Advisor

C Witham (Warwickshire County Council Senior Solicitor and Advisor to Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service)

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Programme Manager

S Worrall (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service) (subject to the decision of the Shadow Regional Management Board on 26th March, 2004 – See Minute No. 7).

Programme Accountant

D Clark (Treasurer – Warwickshire County Council)

Programme Communications Manager

P McCafferey (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Programme Risk Manager

S Haynes (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service).

9/04

Programme of Meetings of the Regional Management Board

The Clerk reported on a programme of meetings for the Regional Management Board for the remainder of 2004. It was noted that additional meetings may need to be convened during the year should it be necessary to transact business of an urgent nature. The dates of meetings for the early part of 2005 would be considered in November, 2004 following a period of operational experience.

It was suggested that the date of the next meeting of the Board should be amended to 30th July, 2004 in view of the arrangements for annual meetings of constituent authorities following the forthcoming elections.

Resolved that the programme of meetings of the Regional Management Board, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

10/04

Establishment of Programme Board and Schedule of Meetings

The Clerk reported on the establishment of a Programme Board to progress the work programme of the Regional Management Board. The Programme Brief indicated that this Board would provide for senior level sponsorship of the programme in relation to investment decisions and endorsement of the rationale and objectives for the programme.

The Programme Board would be established as a Member/Officer Working Group with the membership and key participants as set out in Appendix 2. The Working Group would not have delegated powers and would submit its recommendations to the Regional Management Board.

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A programme of meetings for the Programme Board was considered and it was noted that additional meetings would be convened during the year should it be necessary to discuss additional business of an urgent nature.

Resolved:-

- (1) that a Programme Board be established as a Member/Officer Working Group with the key participants as set out in Appendix 2;
- (2) that the schedule of meetings of the Programme Board, as set out in Appendix 2, be approved.

11/04 Speedy Decision Taking

The Board received a report from the Legal Adviser on the processes within the constituent Fire Authorities to meet the expectations of the Government and the Local Government Association with regard to robust and speedy decision making processes. This was an important requirement in relation to Regional Management Boards to ensure that effective progress could be made at the regional level. The Legal Adviser gave an overview of the arrangements currently in place in four of the constituent authorities.

An update would be given at a future meeting with regard to the processes in Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority. It was also noted that Shropshire and Wrekin had recently considered the establishment of an Emergency Committee.

The Board suggested that it would be helpful to receive a forward plan to identify key projects and decision-making deadlines. The Programme Manager would shortly be holding discussions with individual authorities. The Chair requested that a business programme be reported to the next meeting of the Board on 30th July, 2004.

12/04 Programme/Project Interim Training Strategy

The Board received a report on the proposed interim training strategy to support the modernisation programme and associated projects. Such training was advocated by the Office of Government Commerce

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and the proposals would demonstrate the level of capacity as required in the draft Fire and Rescue National Framework: 2004/2005. The interim training strategy would enable the formal programme launch to take place on 1st June, 2004.

The delivery of the programme was, amongst other factors, dependent upon the assigned resources having the relevant expertise underpinned by appropriate training. The key roles identified as requiring interim training were:-

- Senior Responsible Owner
- Programme Board Executive
- Project Manager
- Business Change Manager.

The proposed interim strategy would ensure a regional approach to the provision of training and take account of the existing qualifications and expertise of Project Managers. To support Project Managers further, it was proposed to hold a series of Workshops commencing in June, 2004.

The scoping of training providers had been endorsed at the Shadow Regional Management Board on 26th March, 2004. A number of accredited training providers had been approached to determine availability and costs. A summary of the responses was submitted. The total costs of the proposed training, based on the submission of the recommended training provider, were as follows:-

Hereford and Worcester £1,098

Shropshire £1,632

Staffordshire £1,773

Warwickshire £1,737

West Midlands £3,289

Nominations to attend training were requested by a deadline of 14th May, 2004. West Midlands Fire Service would act as the lead organisation to manage course nominations and payments to the training provider.

The Board accepted the interim training strategy, however, it was noted that the nomination of certain elected Members to participate in the training would not be possible until after the elections taking place on 10th June, 2004. In addition, the annual meetings of constituent fire authorities would be held during the summer.

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Resolved to recommend:-

- (1) that the proposed interim training strategy be approved;
- (2) that subject to the comments noted above regarding nominations from elected Members, each constituent Authority nominate and finance the necessary key programme/project resources to undertake the required training.

13/04 **Appointment of Programme Manager**

The Board considered proposals to advertise the post of Regional Programme Manager within the five constituent authorities and to adopt a mechanism for making the appointment. As lead Authority on Project Management, Shropshire and Wrekin were providing the Project Manager on a temporary basis until a permanent appointment was made.

A draft job description and person specification were submitted. The Board considered that the posts should be advertised on the basis of a "role" at principal officer level rather than a "rank". The initial grade of the post would be subject to review on the full introduction of the integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) and "Rank to Role". It was considered that, in the first instance, the post should be advertised internally within the constituent fire authorities. The post would be advertised externally should there be no suitable internal applicants.

It was not possible to quantify the full costs of the Programme Manager's post at this stage, however, these were likely to be in the region of £50,000 in the first year. The Board would need to consider how these and other costs associated with the modernisation programme would be apportioned between the constituent authorities. The Treasurer indicated that she was making arrangements to meet the Treasurers of the other constituent authorities to discuss this issue.

Resolved to recommend:-

- (1) that the job description, person specification and conditions of employment of the post of Regional Programme Manager be approved subject to amendments to reflect the post as a 'role' rather than a 'rank';

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- (2) that the post be advertised internally within the constituent Fire Authorities of the West Midlands Region and in the event that no suitable applications are received, the post be advertised externally;
- (3) that an appointments panel comprising one elected Member from each constituent Fire Authority, supported by the Chief Fire Officer and Personnel Manager of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, be established to arrange for the appointment of the Regional Programme Manager.

14/04 **Regional Management Board Modernisation Programme – Progress Report**

The Board received a progress report on the development of the Regional Management Board modernisation programme. The report made reference to the following issues and projects:-

- Liaison with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM);
- Liaison with the ODPM Business Change Manager;
- Programme Strategy Documents/Plans/Templates;
- Regional Management Board Corporate Design/Logo;
- Interim Training Strategy;
- Regional Management Board Website;
- Meetings of the Programme Board and Programme Office.
- Programme Financial Matters.

Reference was made to the costs involved with developing and implementing regional structures and the need to properly identify, evaluate and report these to the Board, the constituent Fire Authorities and the Government.

The workload of the Communications Manager was being evaluated to ensure that the regional communications strategy could be delivered. This would be the subject of a future report to the Board.

The Board welcomed Jean Cole (ODPM Business Change Manager) who addressed the meeting. It was noted that the role and remit of the Business Change Manager would be included as a link on the Government Office West Midlands Website. The Board also welcomed Martin Webb (Programme Office Manager – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) who gave an overview of the role of his Team.

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Reference was made to the relationship with the Audit Commission and the need to make appropriate connections between the emerging structures and the various inspection regimes, including the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. This issue would be given further consideration to ensure that appropriate connections were being made.

Concerns were expressed regarding the Fire Control Project, the changed requirements of central Government and the clarity of the guidance received. It was noted that Hereford and Worcester were leading on this project from the regional perspective. The Board requested that the team working on this project at the national level should be invited to give a presentation to the next meeting of the Board.

15/04 Correspondence Relating to the Regional Management Board

The Board considered a proposal to include a standing item on all future meetings to enable consideration to be given to correspondence received relating to the work of the Regional Management Board. This would provide for discussion of relevant circulars and other communications received between meetings.

In connection with Fire Service Circular 11/2004, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Maltby gave an update on the progress of national discussions and developments regarding the production of a national procurement strategy.

Resolved that correspondence relating to the Regional Management Board be included as a standing item on future agenda for meetings of the Board.

(Meeting ended at 11.17 a.m.)

<p><i>Contact Officer: Steve Griffiths Democratic Services Unit Sandwell MBC 0121-569 3791</i></p>
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**West Midlands Regional Management Board
Programme of Meetings 2004**

Final Date for reports to be received by Clerk (12 noon)	Date of Regional Management Board Meeting (10.30am)
Wednesday, 21 st July, 2004	Friday, 30th July, 2004 (Hereford and Worcester Fire Service)
Wednesday, 15 th September, 2004	Friday, 24th September, 2004 (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service)
Wednesday, 17 th November, 2004	Friday, 26th November, 2004 (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service)

Programme Board (Sponsoring Group)

Programme of Meetings 2004

Final Date for reports to be received by Programme Manager (12 noon)	Date of Programme Board Meeting (10.30am)
Tuesday, 18 th May, 2004	Tuesday, 1st June, 2004 (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, HQ)
Tuesday, 10 th August, 2004	Tuesday, 24th August, 2004 (Hereford and Worcester Fire Service, HQ)
Tuesday, 12 th October, 2004	Tuesday, 26th October, 2004 (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, HQ)
Tuesday, 30 th November, 2004	Tuesday, 14th December, 2004 (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, HQ)
Key Participants	
Members/ Chief Fire Officers	Cllr K Austin (Chair) Cllr D Davis Cllr R Udall Cllr N Hartin Cllr J Haynes Cllr D Hinton CFO W Brown CFO A Doig CFO I Kerr CFO D O'Dwyer CFO F Sheehan
Programme Office	All appointed Programme Office Staff