



Minutes

Agenda Item 10

25th October, 2007, at 11.00 a.m.

Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury

Present:

Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority

Councillors Bean, Brigadier Jones and Udall;

Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

Councillors Box and West;

Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority

Councillor Bloomer and J Taylor;

Representing Warwickshire County Council

Councillor Chattaway, C Davis and Hobbs;

Representing West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Councillors Hinton, Howard and Ward (substitute member).

Advisors:

Chief Fire Officer Brown (Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service);

Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service).

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Dartford (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service);

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Philips (Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service);

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Raymond (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service);

Lynda Bateman (Treasurer);

Sue Phelps (Clerk) and Georgina Wythes;

Sian Stroud (representing the Legal Adviser);

Steve Worrall (Programme Manager).

Observer:

Councillor Lt Col D Allen.

Apologies:

Councillor Y Holyoak;

Chief Fire Officers Doig, Hayden and Taylor;

Mike Griffiths, Chris Juckes and Christine Walker.

35/07

Minutes

Reference was made to Minute No 30/07 (Regional Control Centre – Development of a Cost Apportionment Model). Members were informed that a report would be submitted to the Programme Board on 13th December, 2007 on this matter.

The Members' Agreement for the Regional Fire Control Centre was also to be circulated shortly to constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities for approval.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th July, 2007, be confirmed as a correct record.

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36/07 Notes of the Programme Board

The Board considered the notes of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 28th September, 2007.

With reference to Minute No 26/07 (WMRMB FRS Lead Officer Progress Report) the Programme Manager reported that John Curtis of Government Office West Midlands would be attending the Programme Board meeting on 13th December, 2007 to give a presentation on the role of Fire and Rescue Authorities on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, followed by a series of presentations in January 2008 to area managers.

Members asked for a summary of the guidance in respect of the Crime and Disorder Partnerships to be provided in advance of the presentation.

Resolved that the recommendations of the Programme Board as set out in the notes be approved.

37/07 End Project Report – Human Resources

The Programme Manager presented the end project report on behalf of the Human Resources Management Thematic Project Board. This was the fifth project stream to close.

The Project Board had met all of its objectives, and the work of the Board would be continued through the regional HR Exchange Group.

Resolved that the closure of the project be agreed.

38/07 WMRMB Annual Report 2006/07

The Board received the final version of their Annual Report for 2006/07 which would now be circulated to constituent authorities and stakeholders.

Members asked for the information on the WMRMB web site now to be updated with details of the current membership.

39/07 WMRMB Programme Plan 2008/11

The Programme Manager presented a report setting out proposals to review current progress and governance arrangements, and preparations to address the requirements of the new Fire and Rescue Service National Framework, with a view to drawing up a Programme Plan for 2008/11.

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The review would look at outcomes delivered against the objectives set out in the 2006/08 Programme Plan; seek to establish stakeholder satisfaction with the progress achieved; and identify any outstanding areas of work that should be carried forward for inclusion in the Region's future programme plans. The draft National Framework for 2008/11 would also be examined to determine proposals for inclusion within the programme plan. Governance arrangements and partnership working would be assessed using the ODPM Partnership Assessment Tool.

It was envisaged that there was scope to develop a more focused and compact regional programme plan, requiring fewer resources and less governance, which should result in fewer meetings and lower financial contributions from the constituent Fire Authorities. It was proposed to commence the review in November, 2007.

In response to a query, the Treasurer confirmed that the review report would include full financial implications. It was also suggested that external peer assessment should be incorporated as part of the review. It was felt that the early progress made on regional working had not been sustained and that members might wish to target further areas that could be considered from a regional perspective for the benefit of the community and all five constituent authorities.

Resolved that the undertaking of a review of the current WMRMB arrangements be approved for a report back to the Programme Board on 13th March, 2008, and a final report to the Regional Management Board on 24th April, 2008.

40/07 WMRMB Finance Review 2007/08

The Board noted a report on spend to 31st July 2007 against the approved budget allocation for 2007/08 and the actual time spent on individual projects for the same period.

A member requested the reason for an increase in the contribution to the salary of the FRS Lead Officer post. The Treasurer undertook to provide this information to members.

41/07 Correspondence relating to the Regional Management Board

Councillor Hobbs reported on the recent RMB Chairs' meeting hosted by the Local Government Association, which had been attended by himself and Councillor Howard. General concerns had been expressed about the operation of FireBuy, and this matter was to be considered further at the Fire Services Forum and the Fire Service Management Committee. Chairs had also discussed the relationship between the Regional Fire Control Local Authority Controlled Companies and Regional Management Boards, and this was a matter that would need further consideration by this Region in due course.

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Date of next meeting

Programme Board – Thursday, 13th December (Shropshire)

WMRMB - Thursday, 24th January, 2008 at 11.00 am (Shropshire)

(Meeting ended at 11.40 pm)

<p><i>Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes</i> <i>Democratic Services Unit</i> <i>Sandwell MBC</i> <i>0121-569 3791</i></p>
