



**WEST MIDLANDS
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Monday, 11 April 2016 at 11:00

**FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,
99 VAUXHALL ROAD,
BIRMINGHAM, B7 4HW**

Distribution of Councillors	
<u>Birmingham</u>	M Afzal G S Atwal D Barrie L Clinton N Eustace M Idrees H Quinnen R Sealey S Spence A Ward
<u>Coventry</u>	B Singh C Miks D Skinner
<u>Dudley</u>	A Aston N Barlow M Mottram (JP)
<u>Sandwell</u>	J Edwards A Shackleton C Tranter
<u>Solihull</u>	S Davis P Hogarth
<u>Walsall</u>	S Craddock B Douglas-Maul A Young
<u>Wolverhampton</u>	J Dehar T Singh P Singh

Car Parking will be available for Members at Fire Service Headquarters.

Accommodation has been arranged from 10.00 am for meetings of the various Political Groups.

Fire Authority

You are summoned to attend the meeting of Fire Authority to be held on
Monday, 11 April 2016 at 11:00

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 Chair's announcements
- 4 Minutes of Fire Authority held on 15 February 2016 5 - 20
- 5 Statement of Assurance 2014-15 21 - 42
- 6 Substantive Appointment to the Post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer 43 - 52
- 7 Contract Awards Summary for period to 31 March 2016 53 - 58
- 8 Notes of the Policy Planning Forum held on 18 January 2016 59 - 66
- 9 Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 18 January 2016 67 - 72
- 10 Notes of the Policy Planning Forum held on 1 February 2016 73 - 76
- 11 Notes of the Joint Consultative Panel held on 1 February 2016 77 - 82
- 12 Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 15th February 2016 83 - 92

13 Exclusion of the public and press

Chair to move:- "*That the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 for the reasons stated below.*"

Agenda (not open to public and press)

14 Indemnity for Principal Officers

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

15 Planned Procurement Exercises for 2016-17

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

Agenda prepared by Julie Connor

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

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**

**15 February 2016 at 11.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Cllrs Afzal, Singh Atwal, Aston, Barrie, Barlow, Clinton, Craddock, Davis, Douglas-Maul, Edwards (Chair), Eustace, Hogarth, Idrees (Vice Chair), Miks, Mottram, Quinnen, Sealey, Shackleton, B. Singh, P. Singh, Skinner, Tranter, Ward and Young

Apologies: Cllrs Aston, T. Singh, Dehar, Ward, Spence, Mr Agar

Observer: Mr S Price-Hunt, FBU Branch Secretary

1/16 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Edwards declared a non-disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute No. 5/16 below (Monitoring of Finances).

2/16 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised members that the Chief Fire Officer had met with the Chief Executives of the seven District Councils regarding collaborative work. He stated that this was going well and if members required further information they should contact the Chief personally.

The Chair also advised members that he had attended the Health Summit on the 8 February and the Fire Service contribution had been well received.

Members were advised that the draft plans for Coventry and Aston Fire Stations were available to view at the back of the meeting room and Officers would be available to answer any questions members may have.

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

3/15

Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 23 November 2015

Following a request from one of the members the word “annual” was removed from the first page of the minutes.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2015, be confirmed as a correct record.

4/16

Budget and Precept 2016-2017 and Budget Forecast 2017/18 to 2019/20

The Authority considered a revised report on the Authority’s Net Revenue Budget for 2016/17, the consequent additional 1.99% Band D Precept Level increase and the resultant amount payable by each constituent District Council, the Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2019/20, the Treasury Management Strategy including the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement and Prudential Indicators.

The Authority also considered the offer of a four year financial settlement, as set out in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement on 9 February 2016 directing the Treasurer to prepare and submit an efficiency plan and any other required documentation to the Home Office.

On 17 December 2015, the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had announced the provisional settlement for 2016/17 at £58.660m, resulting in a core funding reduction of £3.283m. The Government also proposed a referendum threshold of 2% for any Fire and Rescue Authority increasing its Council Tax.

The Treasurer apologised for needing to table a slightly amended report due to the final Local Government Finance Settlement not being received from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) until 9 February 2016 with a slight increase in core funding of £5k on 2016/17, resulting in total core funding of £58,665m. The changes to the report were highlighted in grey. It was proposed to increase the Band D Council Tax by 1.99% in 2016/17.

There had been a small impact of an additional £5,000 core funding in 2016/17 arising from the final Finance Settlement. The four year settlement offer would result in the following core funding reductions over the four year period (2016/17 – 2019/20) of £9.644m (15.6% of the 2015/16 core funding).

- 2016/17 £3.278m
- 2017/18 £3.985m
- 2018/19 £1.691m
- 2019/20 £0.690m

The Authority noted the Chancellor's announcement in the Spending Review in November 2015 of his intention to localise 100% of business rates to local authorities by 2019/20.

The final figures from external funding sources had now been notified and totalled £97,413. In addition, it was estimated that the Authority will generate income of £2.893m.

The Authority noted that the available General Balances at 31st March 2016 are estimated to be £9.2m, but the actual level would not be determined until the completion of the Authority's 2015/16 closedown of accounts process.

The Capital Programme approved at the Authority meeting on 16 February 2015 had been monitored throughout 2015/16.

The Strategic Enabler, Finance and Resources, highlighted the importance of Treasury Management and confirmed that these functions were provided by Sandwell MBC who, in turn, had appointed external advisors to support them and that the Authority had also linked its appointment of bankers to that of Sandwell MBC in order to benefit from efficiencies in tendering, cash flow management and investment and gave assurances in accordance with the Prudential Code under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003 that the budget preparation had been robust and that the capital investment plans of the Authority are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

In accordance with the terms of the letter from the Fire Minister on 9th February 2016, the figures are subject to the submission of an efficiency plan to cover the cumulative budget deficit of circa £10m.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Enabler, Finance and Resources for the Budget setting report and the outlined the drastic reduction of £10m to the budget between 2016 and 2020. The substantial reductions would be achieved by savings made up as:

Staffing	£4m
Commissioning	£2m
Internal Restructures	£1m
General Budget Reductions	£1m
Council Tax Base	£2m

The Chair stated that the Fire Authority were set to lose circa 150 firefighters as well as the 275 firefighters that had already been lost. Between the years 2011 and 2020 the Authority's Government funding would have reduced by £38m.

The Authority were committed to no firefighter redundancies, however, circa 60 firefighters were due to retire during this period and would not be replaced and 18 firefighters on secondment would be returning to Hereford and Worcester. This would mean the Brigade would offer firefighters voluntary additional shifts to help maintain the Service Delivery Model.

The Chair invited the FBU Branch Secretary to address the Members of the Authority.

The FBU Branch Secretary stated that it was worth noting that initially the budget reductions were expected to be £14m and that the FBU were totally opposed to any cuts and the Union were currently undertaking their first trade dispute in over a decade. Ballot papers were due to be returned by Monday 22 February 2016.

The FBU Branch Secretary felt that the Authority's suggestion of voluntary additional shifts were an attack on their members Conditions of Service and the FBU were concerned about the Authority's strategy in managing a reduced budget.

The FBU Branch Secretary said that Green Book staff had been made redundant and the Management Review was still awaited, three years after it was first mentioned. There had not been a review since 2005 when the Watch Manager Review had taken place and management positions represented 10% of the workforce.

The FBU Branch Secretary asked the Members of the Authority if they felt it to be right in the current financial climate and in light of staff redundancies that the Authority were paying consultants to run management courses.

The FBU Branch Secretary confirmed that he would write to all Members of the Authority with the results of the balloted industrial action result in 7 days time.

In response, the Chair stated that 275 firefighter posts had been lost between 2011 and the current year. Circa 150 firefighter posts would be lost in first two years of the current four year period. He stated that as the Authority had already received a £38m reduction in its Government funding, it was no longer able to employ the number of staff currently employed and maintain the current Service Delivery Model (SDM). The West Midlands response time of 4.42 minutes to category 1 incidents was currently the best response time in the country and the Authority wanted to maintain this by offering voluntary additional shifts, running this as a pilot.

Without the use of the voluntary additional shifts, the Authority would not be able to provide the current SDM. Negotiations had been ongoing with the FBU for a local agreement. However, the FBU had balloted for action short of a strike and to not take part in overtime.

The Chair stated that Members need to be clear on the position and that the Authority wished to work in harmony with the FBU. There had not been any compulsory redundancies. There had been a single number of redundancies for green book staff with the majority of leavers taking voluntary retirement.

The Chair stated that the Authority would await the letter from the Fire Brigades Union and respond accordingly.

In response, the Chief Fire Officer stated that it would be impossible with a reduction to Government funding of £38m without making some reform and change internally. The vast majority of changes had been through internal change, which had been recognised externally and in some cases had improved the service currently provided and the Fire Service had expanded into the health care agenda.

The Service had worked extensively with staff to understand the reasons for change and had made a commitment to the Leading Excellence programme. The Chief offered to provide further information to Members about this programme of learning.

The Service would continue to engage with the Representative Bodies, however, tough decisions and changes were required to meet the £38m reduction in Government funding. The CFO stated that the voluntary additional shifts were not ideal, but would place the Brigade in a position to maintain the SDM.

In response the Chair confirmed that following a comparison with the other Metropolitan Fire Authorities, the West Midlands Fire Service spends less on management.

The Chair stated that a management review had been undertaken as part of the cuts 2011 – 2015 where £1.4m had been saved in management costs. A further review of senior brigade managers had reduced senior brigade managers from 4 down to 3 and had realised a reduction of £235,000 in costs from the top tier. The Authority had also agreed to pay the Living Wage to lower paid staff. A further management review would be undertaken. Substantial savings have been made and the West Midlands Brigade costs less than our comparative Brigades.

The Treasurer stated that the figures provided in paragraph 3.5 of the report assumed an increase of 2% each year in Council Tax.

Members welcomed the attendance of the FBU at the Authority meeting and asked if their attendance had been for clarification of the core dispute and asked if any alternative suggestions had been received from the FBU.

The Chief confirmed that the dispute was about payment rates and also related to a proposal for Fire Control. The points raised by the FBU around the Learning and Development Programme were not part of the dispute.

Members felt that the public should be made aware of the value for money they were receiving from the Fire Service and that the £56 precept charged at Band D for a full time Fire Service equated to a full tank of petrol. The Members wanted to place on record how fantastic the workforce were and how impressed the Fire Authority were with its employees.

The Authority were more than grateful to firefighters and those who work for the organisation. There had been three major fires over the previous weekend and were truly thankful.

In response to a question, the Treasurer confirmed that the commitments in respect of those projects which make up the proposed capital programme rose from £6.4m in 2016/17 to £10.7 in 2017/18. This reflected in the main the redevelopment of Aston and Coventry Fire Stations.

In response to a question regarding the creditworthy policy, the Treasurer confirmed that all active parties have to fulfil the criteria and couldn't recall a company failing. Institutes are omitted from the counterparty (dealing) list if they are failing. Any risks are highlighted and changes in market intelligence is monitored.

Members noted that in Appendix E to the report regarding the Vehicle Replacement Programme, it was proposed to purchase 12 new vans during 2016/17 at a cost of £16,000 each. This was felt to be a large sum of money for a van.

The Treasurer confirmed that the vans used diesel, which was available from pumps on stations and undertook an average mileage of 8,000 to 10,000 a year. The replacement of vehicles is reviewed regularly and when required the most competitive framework is used and in some cases ex-demonstration vehicles are purchased.

A full review of the whole fleet was scheduled for 2016/17. Members requested the review of vehicles to take place. The Chief confirmed that the outcome of the fleet review would be brought to the Authority.

The Chair echoed the Members support for members of staff and firefighters and agreed that they do an exceptional job and a specialist role. He confirmed that both he and the Chief communicated internally, through their blogs and always passed on their thanks following incidents and would continue to do so. Staff are also complimented on how they deliver services and how they work to achieve balanced budget being flexible and open to change.

The CFO also wished to recognise the commitment of firefighters, managers and staff over the previous four years.

Resolved:

- (1) that the Authority's Net Revenue Budget for 2016/17 of £97.413m which includes a Council Tax requirement of £37.874m together with associated precept levels and resulting Band D precept increase of 1.99%, as now submitted, be approved;
- (2) that the Authority's capital programme for 2016/17 to 2019/2020, as now submitted, be approved;
- (3) that the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy which includes the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, and the Prudential Indicators, as now submitted, be approved;
- (4) that it be noted that the constituent District Councils have formally set their Council Tax bases for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as follows:-

	Tax Base
Birmingham	239,042.00
Coventry	77,525.10
Dudley	88,126.08
Sandwell	69,913.98
Solihull	73,456.00
Walsall	67,520.37
Wolverhampton	60,405.94
	<hr/> <hr/> 675,989.47

- (5) that the following amounts be now calculated by the Authority for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 40 to 48 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
 - (i) £101,906,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(2)(a) to (d) of the Act;
 - (ii) £64,032,338 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(3)(a) to (b) of the Act;

- (iii) £37,873,662 being the amount by which the aggregate at (5)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (5)(ii) above calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year.
- (iv) £56.03 being the amount at (5)(iii) above divided by the total amount at (4) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42B(1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (6) Valuation Bands

	£ (to 6 decimals)	£ (rounded to 2 decimals)
A	37.351333	37.35
B	43.576556	43.58
C	49.801778	49.80
D	56.027000	56.03
E	68.477444	68.48
F	80.927889	80.93
G	93.378333	93.38
H	112.054000	112.05

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (5)(iv) above by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 47(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

(7) Resultant precepts:	£
Birmingham City Council	13,392,806
Coventry City Council	4,343,499
Dudley MBC	4,937,440
Sandwell MBC	3,917,070
Solihull MBC	4,115,519
Walsall MBC	3,782,964
Wolverhampton City Council	<u>3,384,364</u>
Total	<u>37,873,662</u>

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (5)(iv) above by the appropriate tax base at 1.1 above in accordance with section 48(2) of the Act, as the amount of precept payable by each constituent District Council.

- (8) that the precept for each District Council as calculated at (5)(iv) above be issued in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Councillors Barrie, Barlow, Davis, Douglas-Maul, Hogarth, Sealey, Skinner, P.Singh abstained from voting on the above decision.

5/16

Monitoring of Finances

The Authority noted a report on the monitoring of finances to the end of January, 2016, which included revenue expenditure and the capital programme.

The main variances in the Capital Programme related to the Vehicle Replacement Programme and the Training at Height facilities.

The Treasurer stated that a letter had been received regarding capital receipts flexibilities but that it was unlikely to affect any of the assumptions within the budget report. Over the next four years, no capital grant funding was assumed.

The Treasurer was thanked for producing an excellent report at the end of another financial year. The Members of the Authority thanked the Treasurer for looking after the Authority's finances and all the hard work carried out throughout the year. The Treasurer highlighted that the Financial Management Section had been recognised by the external Auditor as well as himself.

6/16

The Plan 2016-2019

Members considered the amendments to the Vision Statement, Priorities and Outcomes which would be set out in the Service's three year corporate strategy - the Plan for 2016-2019.

The Chief Fire Officer reported on the factors he had considered in recommending the revisions to the Plan, which were derived from the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The changes were designed to enable the Service to sufficiently respond to react to the increasingly changing environment of the public sector.

The Vision statement, the Priorities and Outcomes had been aligned to reflect the ongoing ambition to support wider improved outcomes in other areas, in particular health and well-being as set out in the report. It was proposed to revise the Vision statement to:

“Making the West Midlands Fire Safer, Stronger and Healthier”.

to provide clarity in the Authority’s ambition to align to the devolved combined authority, to continue to support through effective partnerships and our commissioning mode and to reflect the change in our service and vulnerability in the community.

The wording of the Priority statements have been reviewed in line with the Vision Statement and the Outcome Statements aligned to the priorities have also been refreshed. An additional area of focus was proposed as part of the review of the Plan which aimed to demonstrate the strategic intent. This was set out as:

“Effective Delivery through Collaboration”.

The following factors had been considered in the recommendation:

- risk analysis
- the Strategic Enabling Team restructure and to maintain continuity in order to embed and improve performance
- funding reductions
- the external environment

The Plan is evidenced based through the IRMP and how the Service can contribute to reducing risk.

The Plan, as now submitted, is a dynamic document that would be available on line.

Officers were considering the corporate performance indicators that would be put in place to enable the effective management and performance monitoring of The Plan. Following discussions with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, a report would be presented to the Executive Committee on 21 March 2016 and The Plan would go live on 1 April 2016. Performance against The Plan would also be monitored on a regular basis by the Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a member’s enquiry, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the guiding principles would not change, as the Vision Statement was simply being refreshed.

The Chair confirmed that the Authority’s direction of travel was towards the Combined Authority.

In answer to a member's enquiry, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that as there were no significant changes to The Plan, there was no requirement to consult the public.

Resolved that the amendments to the Vision Statement, Priorities and Outcomes in The Plan for 2016-2019 as now submitted be approved.

7/16

2016/17 Property Asset Management Plan

Approval was sought to the 2016/17 Property Asset Management Plan. In order to ensure the effective and efficient use of land and buildings, a Property Asset Management Plan is essential.

Over the previous twelve months, considerable work had been undertaken in assessing the appropriateness of the existing property assets and consideration had been taken where any future investment should be directed.

A fundamental review of property assets is necessary to demonstrate the effective use of resources.

The Plan involved input from all key West Midlands Fire Service stakeholders and reflected the property and property related priorities over the next five years, attached to the plan in appendix 2 to the report.

In respect of the one for one station replacement update, Members attention was brought to the Board Displays set up in the meeting room showing the plans for Aston and Coventry Fire Stations.

Section 9 of the Plan outlined the proposed specific actions in 2016/17.

In answer to a Member's enquiry the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Strategic Enabler for Finance and Resources had been in dialogue with his counter-part in the Police in respect of potential sharing of sites.

The Police had been consulted particularly in respect of the Aston and Coventry Fire Stations, however, the Police had been working towards their 2020 vision. The Police had not expressed an interest in co-locating and had recently received further protection to their budget and were planning a £5 council tax precept for 2016/17.. However, they may review their position in respect of estates and

may get back to us to look at joint working in respect of estates. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Fire Service was actively working with all partners, including the Police in Coventry to share emergency response and capability. He explained that the Fire Service were seeking engagement on neighbourhood policing and not replacing police stations.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Treasurer agreed to provide information on the timings for maintenance work in respect of Bloxwich Old Bank and the possible plans for the future, but explained that quite a considerable sum would be required to bring the building up to a habitable standard. A further meeting was being arranged to discuss the possibility of bringing the building back into use.

It was confirmed that a planning application would be submitted by March 2016 and work would commence on Coventry Fire Station in the Summer of 2016. Following an 18 month development it was planned to open in January 2018.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that the replacement of Aston Fire Station was more complex due to the historic listing of parts of the building.

Resolved that the 2016/17 Property Asset Management Plan be approved.

8/16

Pay Policy Statement 2016-17

Approval was sought to the Pay Policy Statement for the 2016/17 financial year setting out the Authority's policies relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 complied with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 and would be available on the Internet.

In response to a member's enquiry regarding pensions, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer agreed to respond following the meeting as legislation was changing in this regard.

Resolved that the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2016/17 as now submitted be approved.

Proposed Vehicle Replacement Programme 2016 to 2019

Approval was sought to proceed with the proposed Vehicle Replacement Programme (VRP) for the financial years 2016/17/18/19, based on the three year capital programme for 2016/17 to 2018/19 identified as part of the Authority's budget setting process.

The intention was to procure a range of vehicles identified in the VRP using the Crown Commercial Services Purchase Framework Agreement RM859, Open EU Tenders and other approved Consortia routes that represent value for money to the Authority.

The age profile and review periods were used to determine the type and number of vehicles in the fleet recommended during the financial period 2016/17. The report also highlighted that a full fleet review was currently being undertaken.

Following a 2015 review of Aerial Appliances, it was felt appropriate to reduce the reserve appliances from two to one, resulting in a saving of £710,000 and no aerial appliances being due for replacement in the current VRP.

The Estimated Replacement Values for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 were provided.

The option of leasing vehicles would continue to be explored. When compared with the current method of procuring vehicles via the current framework agreement, the whole life costs of leasing were found to be more expensive.

Resolved:

- (1) that the Vehicle Replacement Programme for the financial years 2016/17/18/19, as now submitted, be approved.
- (2) that the intention to procure a range of vehicles identified in the Vehicle Replacement Programme using the Crown Commercial Services Purchase Framework Agreement RM859, Open EU tenders and other approved Consortia routes that represent value for money to the Authority be noted.

10/16

High Speed Rail 2 Update

An update report had been provided by Peter Holland, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA) into the impact of the proposed High Speed Rail 2 (HS) on the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) site.

WMFS officers felt that Fire Control should move during the work to build the HS2 viaduct, however, following a site visit the CFRA did not agree that Fire Control should move, but felt that HS2 should conduct further noise testings and pay for a sound barrier. A framework had been agreed with the HS2 and there was now no need to go to a Select Committee. This was felt to be good news and progress was being made with engineers and staff.

The sound proofing work would commence in 2017 and the Authority would be reimbursed for this work.

In answer to Member's questions, it was confirmed that ground works had been undertaken to test the suitability of the ground for driving pylons and to check if any gas or electric main were underneath.

If the noise from the construction work is unacceptable or ground works change, HS2 would need to discuss the Code of Construction with the Service.

In response to a Members enquiry the DCFO confirmed that following the noise assessments, if the noise was found to be too high, cladding and sound proof barriers would be erected. If it was impossible for Fire Control to operate, there were clauses within the framework and HS2 would have to stop work on the project.

Members welcomed this information.

The update report was noted.

11/16

Notes of Joint Consultative Panel held on 9 November 2015

The notes of the Joint Consultative Panel held on 9 November 2015 were received.

12/16

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum held on 9 November 2015

The notes of the Policy Planning Forum held on 9 November 2015 were received.

- 13/16 **Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 9 November 2015**
- The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 9 November 2015 were received.
- 14/16 **Minutes of the Appeals Committee held on 23 November 2015**
- The minutes of the Appeals Committee held on 23 November 2015 were received.
- 15/16 **Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 14 December 2015**
- The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 14 December 2015 were received. It was noted that Cllr Davis was present at the meeting although not listed.
- 16/15 **Notes of the Policy Planning Forum held on 14 December 2015**
- The notes of the Policy Planning Forum held on 12 October 2015 were received.
- 17/15 **Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 18 January 2016**
- The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 18 January 2016 were received.

(The meeting ended at 1233 hours)

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

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

11 APRIL 2016

1. **STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2014-2015**

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, and the Monitoring Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority approves the Statement of Assurance 2014-15.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to seek approval for the Statement of Assurance 2014-15, which we are legally obliged to produce and review on an annual basis under the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England published in July 2012 sets out a requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish 'Statements of Assurance' and review them annually. The requirement is contained within Chapter 3 of the Framework which focuses entirely on 'assurance'.

3.2 In line with this expectation, the Authority's Statement of Assurance (attached as Appendix 1) has been reviewed for the year 2014-15 and is submitted for approval.

3.3 The Government has indicated that there are four key areas that should form part of any Statement of Assurance. These are:

- Financial
- Governance
- Operational

- Future improvements

3.4 With regard to our arrangements the following are all part of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service's (WMFS) assurance process.

3.4.1 **Financial**

The Authority publishes its statement of accounts, pay policy, transparency data, internal and external audit information. Each year the auditors discharge pre-agreed audit plans and are invited to the Fire Authority and Audit Committee to give their findings. Additionally the outcomes are published via Fire Authority meetings, the Internet and contained within the annual report.

3.4.2 **Governance**

Each year the Authority produces its annual governance statement in support of its accounts. This statement expresses the measures undertaken to ensure propriety. In addition, the Fire Authority maintains a level of scrutiny of the Service through its governance framework, the reports of which are all publicly available.

3.4.3 **Operational**

The Fire Authority publishes and consults on its Community Safety Strategy (Integrated Risk Management Plan) on at least a three-yearly basis. This process of consultation is robust and is in line with the Fire Authority's own consultation strategy which is based on government guidance.

3.4.4 **Future Improvements**

Future improvements reflect on our work to continuously improve our Service Delivery model through the Prevention, Protection and Response integration project in order to deliver our vision of 'Making West Midlands safer'.

- 3.5 It is reassuring to note that the overwhelming majority of the information required as part of the Statement of Assurance is established within the organisation and the vast majority of the documents are already within the public domain. However, we do acknowledge the benefits of bringing these together within a single document in terms of providing transparency. The Statement of Assurance also ensures compliance with our specific data transparency requirements.
- 3.6 The Statement of Assurance brings together our key financial, governance and operational assurances together within one publication. It is the intention that the document will be live and to this end there will be electronic links from it to other corporate documents referenced therein. This will enable the reader to evaluate and make a valid assessment of our performance.
- 3.7 The Authority is required to review this document annually to reflect the previous year's activity and must publish this document prior to 1 April 2016.

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**

The preparation of the Statement of Assurance document is a legal requirement as part of the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework for England. It must be published before 1 April 2016.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Statement of Assurance will be a web based publication. No hard copies will be produced and as such there are no direct financial implications.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, DCLG, 2012

Guidance on statements of assurance for Fire and Rescue
Authorities in England, DCLG, May 2013

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

KAREN GOWREESUNKER
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

MELANIE DUDLEY
MONITORING OFFICER

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Assurance 2014 - 2015

Published April 2016



Prevention Protection Response

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

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To follow



Councillor John Edwards
Chair, West Midlands
Fire & Rescue Authority



Phil Loach
Chief Fire Officer
West Midlands Fire Service

All public bodies are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is properly accounted for and spent in a value for money way.

It is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011 (updated 2015) for public bodies to publish the financial results of their activities for the year. This document, which is called the [Statement of Accounts](#) shows the annual cost of providing West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and is available on our website. Alternatively, the accounts can be viewed in summary format - [Summary of Accounts](#). The statement of accounts is published in September of each year following approval by the Fire Authority. The Authority is composed of 27 members, all of whom are councillors elected to one of the seven constituent district councils within West Midlands.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority's Statement of Accounts are independently verified on an annual basis by an external auditor. Members of the public and local government electors have certain rights in the audit process prior to the formal approval and publication of the statement of accounts. These rights are set out in [Audit of Accounts](#).

The Authority's external audit work is undertaken by Grant Thornton UK LLP a private audit practice who were awarded a 5 year contract from 2012-13 following a tendering process. The full external audit work programme and the risk based approach to its determination are explained in the external auditor's [Audit Plan](#). As well as auditing the accounts, the external auditor is required to conclude whether the Authority has in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the value for money conclusion.

This assessment is undertaken against two criteria set out in the external audit plan. The audit plan is approved and its performance monitored by the Authority's [Audit Committee](#).



The external auditor will report their findings and provide their opinion on the Authority's accounts and the value for money conclusion to the Fire Authority in September of each year. This information is detailed within the external auditors [Audit Findings Report](#) and will be laid out in the [Authority's Statement of Accounts](#) (Independent Auditor's Report). As a result of the external audit work in 2013/14, there were no matters arising that required the authority to implement an action plan for improvement.

The external auditor has produced the [Annual Audit Letter](#) which summarises the outcomes arising from the audit of the Authority. This document is available on the Service's website and confirms that the external auditor issued:

- an unqualified opinion on the accounts which give a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position as at financial year end and its income and expenditure for the year;
- an unqualified conclusion in respect of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;
- an unqualified opinion on the authority's Whole of Government Accounts submission.

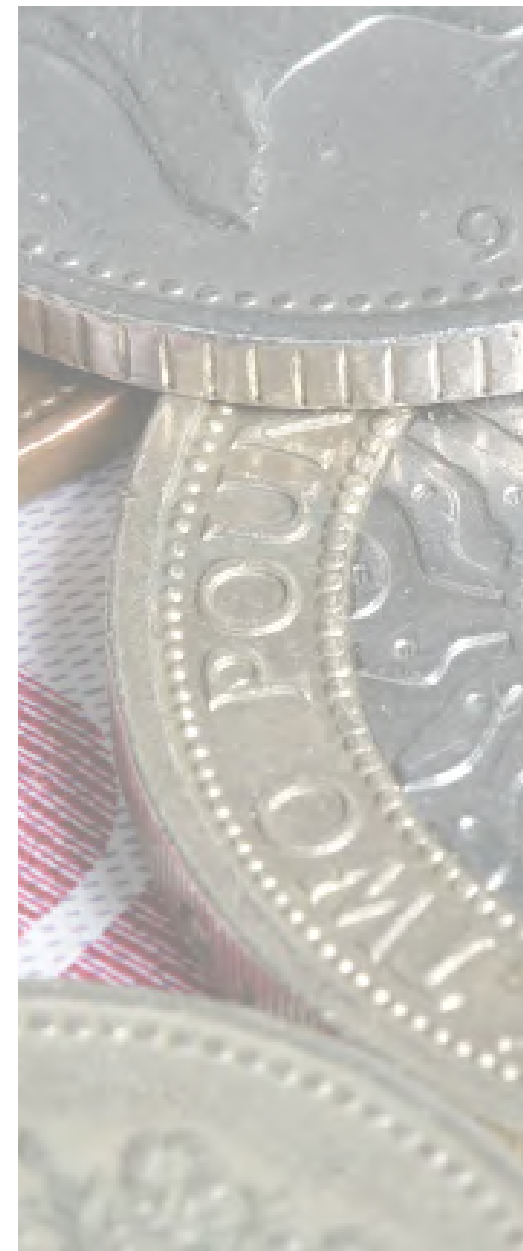


The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 requires Authorities to prepare an annual governance statement in support of the statement of accounts. The governance statement explains the measures taken by the Authority to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance.

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and controlled, including its activities through which it engages with, and is accountable to, the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, value for money services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised and to manage them in an efficient, effective and economic manner.

The [Authority's Annual Governance Statement](#), which is approved by the Authority's Audit Committee in June of each year, and is included within the published statement of accounts, sets out in detail the purpose of the governance framework and the key elements of the systems and processes that make it up.



The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Authority's governance arrangements include the following:

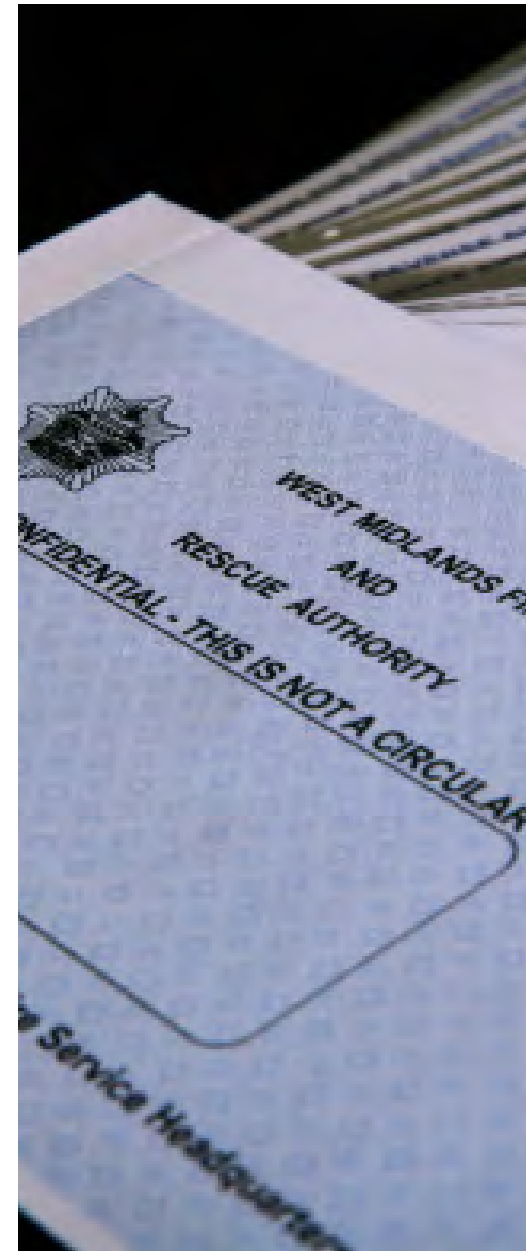
The Authority has an agreed [Constitution](#) which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local citizens. The Authority facilitates policy and decision-making via regular Policy Planning Forums and Authority and Executive Committee meetings. An Audit Committee provides independent assurance to the Authority on risk management and internal control, and the effectiveness of the arrangements the Authority has for these matters. The Authority reviews its [governance arrangements](#) including its Committees and their terms of reference annually.

The Authority has a Corporate Strategy ([The Plan](#)) setting out its objectives and there is quarterly performance monitoring in which achievement of the Authority's objectives are measured and monitored by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Authority has established clear channels of communication with the community and stakeholders regarding the production of the [Annual Report](#) and consultation on the key priorities of the Service, encouraging open communication.

The Authority ensures compliance with established strategies, procedures, laws and regulations – including risk management. The Authority also maintains and reviews regularly its [Code of Conduct](#) and [Whistle Blowing Policy](#). There is a comprehensive induction and [Member Development Strategy](#) in place and information regarding strategies and procedures are held on the intranet. The Authority has a strong Internal Audit function and has established protocols for working with External Audit.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority will continue to enhance and strengthen its internal control environment through regular review of current policies and procedures.



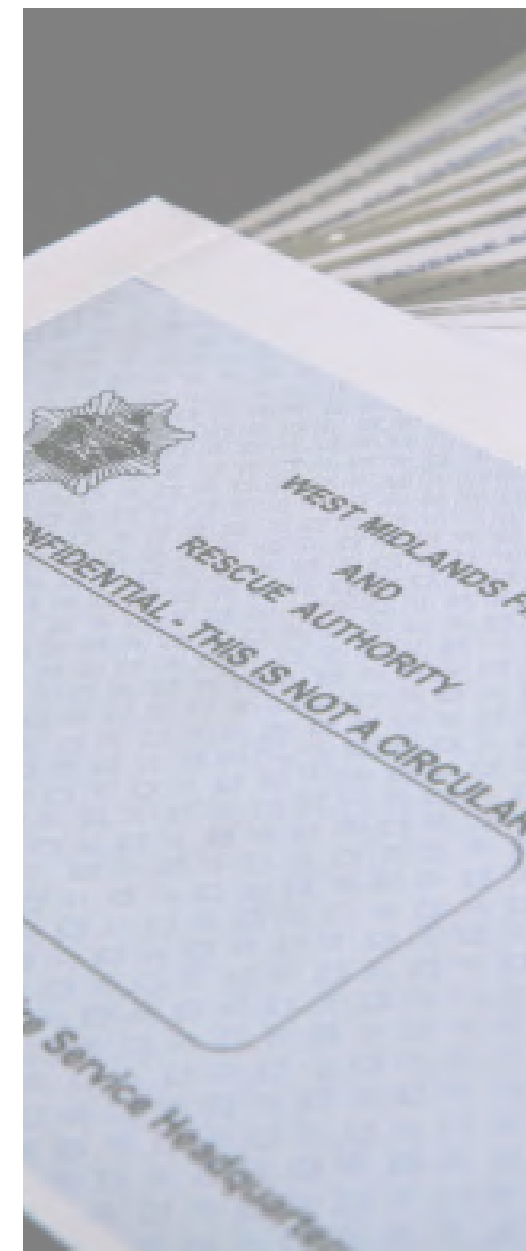
The Authority has corporate risk management arrangements in place which are supported by an approved [Risk Management Strategy](#), enabling managers and other senior officers to identify, assess and prioritise risks within their own work areas which impact on the ability of the Authority and its services to meet objectives. To consider the effectiveness of the Authority's risk management arrangements is a specific term of reference for the Audit Committee and risk management is a specific responsibility of both the Chair and Vice Chair.

The Authority's [Corporate Risk Assurance Map Summary](#) identifies the principal risks to the achievement of the Authority's objectives and assesses the nature and extent of those risks (through assessment of impact and likelihood). The Assurance Map identifies risk owners whose responsibility includes the identification of controls and actions to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. Corporate Risk matters are discussed with the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

The Authority ensures the economical, effective and efficient use of resources, and secures continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, by having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness as required by the Best Value duty. The Authority plans its spending on an established planning cycle for policy development, budget setting and performance management through its business planning process. This ensures that resources are aligned to priorities and secures best value from the resources that are available.

The Authority's financial system is an ORACLE based general ledger and management information system, which integrates the general ledger function with those of budgetary control and payments. [Financial Regulations](#) and [Contract Procedure Rules](#) are approved and regularly reviewed by the Authority. A rigorous system of monthly financial monitoring by the Strategic Enabling Team ensures that any significant budget variances are identified in a timely way, and corrective action initiated. Performance is reported to Authority on a quarterly frequency.

The Authority's performance management and reporting of performance management continues to be improved with a more focused Corporate Strategy, and setting of priorities supported by regular performance monitoring. Corporate performance is reported on a quarterly basis to [Page 33 of 92](#) members via the Quarterly



Review of the Governance Framework

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Performance Review framework and to Members through [Scrutiny Committee](#).

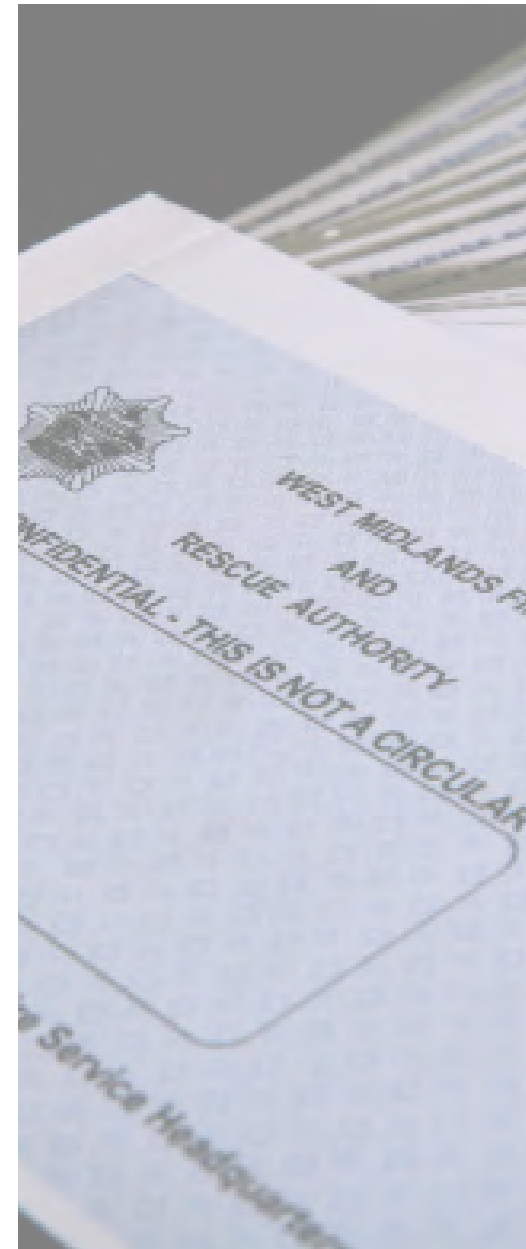
[The Report](#) sets out our achievements and demonstrates our performance in delivering our key priorities, strategic objectives and outcomes during the previous financial year.

The Authority has a Standards Committee which promotes high [ethical standards amongst Members](#). This Standards Committee leads on developing policies and procedures to accompany the revised [Code of Conduct for Members](#) and is responsible for local assessment and review of complaints about members' conduct.

The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the statutory officers and principal managers of the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the internal audit annual report and comments made by the external auditors in their [Annual Audit Letter](#) and other reports.

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Authority's accounting and other systems of internal control as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulation. The internal audit provision operates in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government. The arrangements for the provision of internal audit are contained within section 3 of the [Authority's Financial Regulations](#). The purpose of internal audit is to provide the Authority with an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance and their effectiveness in achieving the Authority's agreed objectives

In order to achieve this, the [Internal Audit Strategy and Plan](#) has been developed. The strategy sets out the internal audit work to be undertaken on a rolling three year basis and includes a detailed annual internal audit plan for the current fiscal year. This work is prioritised by a combination of the key internal controls, assessment and review on the basis of risk and the Authority's corporate governance arrangements, including risk management. Provision is made within the internal audit strategy to audit aspects of the Authority's governance and risk management arrangements on an annual basis. The work is further supported by reviews around the main



Review of the Governance Framework

financial systems, scheduled visits to Authority establishments, fraud investigations and counter-fraud activity including training for managers. The Authority has in place an [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#).

The internal audit strategy is discussed and agreed with Principal Officers and the Audit Committee, and shared with the Authority's external auditor. Meetings between the internal and external auditor ensure that duplication of effort is avoided. All Authority internal audit reports include an assessment of the adequacy of internal control and prioritised action plans to address any areas needing improvement.

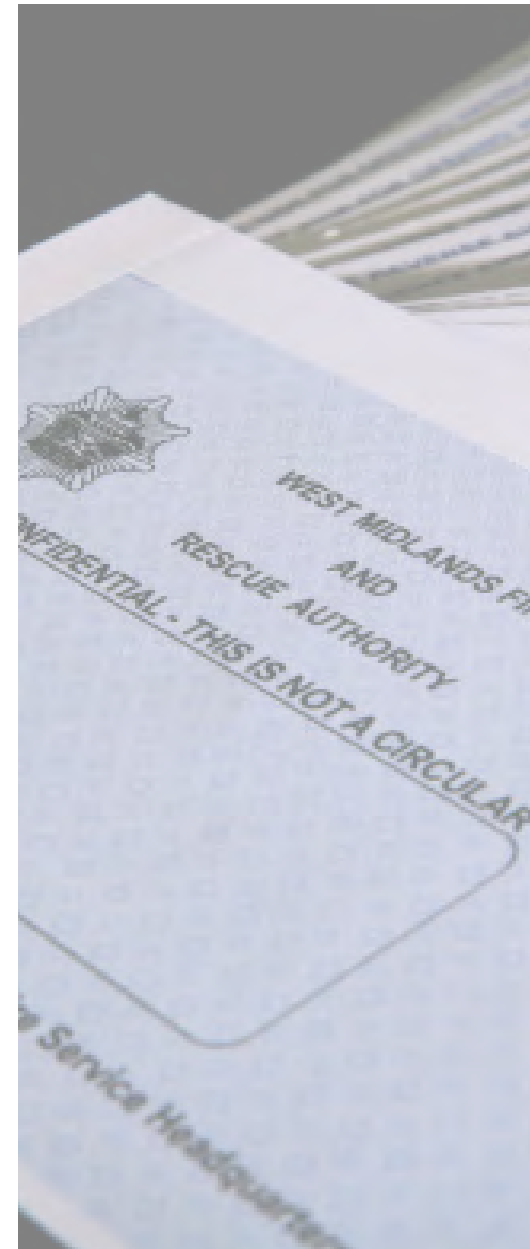
The Authority's review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The work undertaken by Internal Audit during the year reported in the Annual Internal Audit Report;
- The work undertaken by the external auditor reported in their Annual Audit Letter; and
- Other work undertaken by independent inspection bodies.

In fulfilling the internal audit plan, quarterly reports will be provided to the Authority's Audit Committee detailing matters arising from internal audit work undertaken within the audit year. The purpose of these reports is to bring the Audit Committee up to date with progress made. The information included in progress reports informs the end of year [Internal Audit Annual Report](#). This report provides an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's governance, risk management and internal control processes.

Based on the work undertaken during the year and the implementation by management of the recommendations made, internal audit has provided reasonable assurance that the Fire Authority has adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control processes. This is an unqualified opinion and the highest level of assurance available to the internal audit function. The most that internal audit can provide is reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the Authority's governance, risk management and control processes.

In order to provide assurance of the high quality of the work of the internal audit service, an annual [Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit](#) is undertaken, the findings of which are presented to the Audit Committee.



The Audit Committee undertakes an annual self assessment / review of its effectiveness using the industry standard toolkit. This year's review highlighted that the Committee was operating within a recognised best practice framework. The Audit Committee is required to produce an [Annual Report](#). This report sets out in detail the business undertaken by the Committee, its achievements and its conclusion upon the adequacy of the system of internal control, governance and risk management in the Authority. The conclusion of the Audit Committee is derived from, and informed by, the work of internal audit and the compilation of the [Annual Governance Statement](#). As a consequence of this work the Audit Committee was able to confirm:

'That the system of internal control, governance and risk management in the authority was adequate in identifying risks and allowing the authority to understand the appropriate management of these risks. That there were no areas of significant duplication or omission in the systems of internal control, governance and risk management that had come to the Committee's attention, and had not been adequately resolved.'

In preparing this Statement of Assurance, the Authority has considered the principles of transparency as set out in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and is mindful that greater transparency is at the heart of enabling the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account. Where public money is spent is a matter of public interest. The information provided in the links below, provides additional information on how the Authority has spent its public money and further demonstrates the Authority's commitment to transparency and accountability.

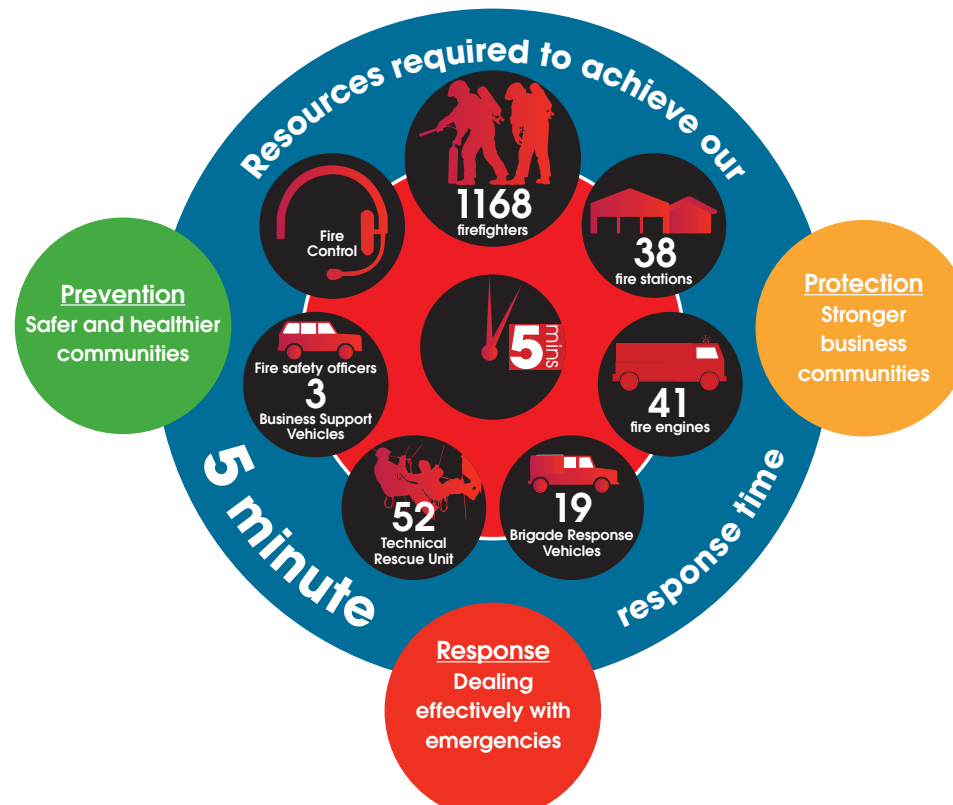
- [Contracts information & expenditure over £500](#)
- [Salary information](#)
- [Pay Policy Statement](#)
- [Member allowances scheme](#) – (Appendix 5 of the link) and [Member allowances](#)
- [The location of land and building assets](#)
- [Counter Fraud Information](#)
- The democratic running of the Authority including [The Constitution](#), committee minutes, decision making processes and records of decisions are maintained on our website via the [Committee Management Information System](#) (CMIS)

In supporting the transparency agenda, the Authority is compliant with its responsibility set out in the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

The Fire Authority meets the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004, Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) 2007, Localism Act 2011 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. All Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to produce and publish an integrated risk management plan. The Authority's integrated risk management plan is called the [Community Safety Strategy](#) and sets out how we will keep people of the West Midlands safe through our Service Delivery Model.

The [Community Safety Strategy](#) contains our analysis of fire and rescue related risks in the West Midlands. It shows how we will target our restricted resources so that we can prevent incidents from happening, while also making sure they are located to best protect the community therefore enabling us to continue providing the highest standards of service in the areas of prevention, protection and emergency response through our Service Delivery Model.

Our Community Safety Strategy is the foundation on which we build our Service Delivery Model which is set out here:



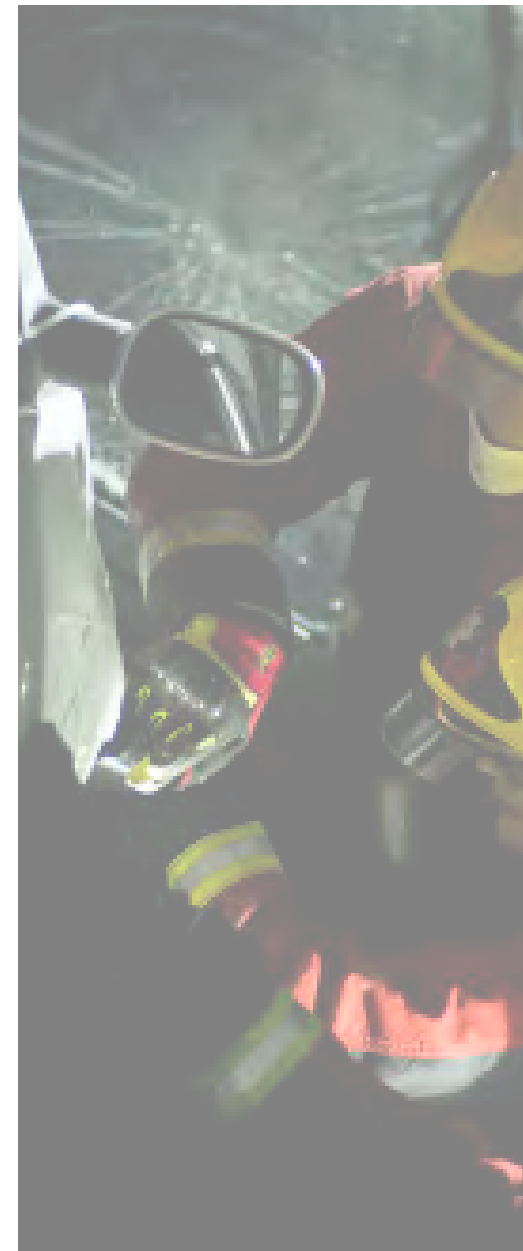
Picture: © John Tuckey

The [Community Safety Strategy](#) is integral to informing and shaping our key priorities, desired outcomes, Service Delivery Model and corporate objectives as set out in [The Plan](#). The Authority last consulted on the [Community Safety Strategy](#) in 2013. Over the last 12 months the West Midlands Fire Service has been working to produce an online, interactive community safety strategy which is due to go live between April 2016 and April 2017. This online tool will enable individuals to view information contained within the [Community Safety Strategy](#) which is relevant to their geographical area (by postcode), making it more personal and tailored to the individual. An engagement exercise was held in headquarters during the development stage of the interactive [Community Safety Strategy](#) with a range of stakeholders including employees, safeside volunteers and community members being invited to attend. These focus groups were structured to enable West Midlands Fire Service to capture the perceptions, opinions and attitudes towards the future approach we will be taking to communicating the [Community Safety Strategy](#) to the public. The results from this engagement was fed back to the developers and amendments made to further improve the tools function prior to release in 2016. Over the next 12 months the tool will be evaluated with a view to evolving it in future years.

In accordance with Section 13 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, arrangements are in place to give mutual assistance to neighbouring Fire Authorities due to a lack of available resources in a geographical area in the event of large-scale incidents, or where the resources of the recipient authority are seriously reduced. Similarly, the Authority has reciprocal arrangements in place to receive assistance from neighbouring Authorities when required.

Agreements can be made with other Fire Authorities in accordance with Section 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 in respect of calls received from outside the West Midlands border. These agreements vary in detail from Authority to Authority but essentially they are a commitment to a neighbouring Fire and Rescue Authority to mobilise appliances to pre-agreed areas, known as Section 16 areas in the event of an emergency call being received.

WMFS has mutual assistance arrangements with all Fire and Rescue Services surrounding the West Midlands (Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Services.)



In order to meet our specific responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Authority is a partner in the multi agency [West Midlands Conurbation Local Resilience Forum \(LRF\)](#). This forum brings together local responders, as well as partners in the military and voluntary sectors, to plan and prepare for localised incidents and catastrophic emergencies. The work of the LRF is enabled through the General Working Group (GWG) which is chaired by West Midlands Fire Service and involves members from all the agencies who attend the LRF. At local level, each Local Authority has a Local Resilience Group (LRG). Station and Operations Commanders are engaged with these in partnership with their local colleagues in other services.

In support of [National Resilience](#) we have enhanced our capability to respond to major emergencies such as terrorist attacks, industrial and domestic accidents and natural disasters. We are a partner in the Multi Agency Initial Assessment Team (MAIAT) which provides an initial assessment of potential chemical, biological, radiological, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) incidents.

Each of the UK's emergency services works to keep our country safe and secure as well as protecting their communities. This means that we work together at major incidents and emergencies on an ever increasing basis. The introduction of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) provides the pathway as to how emergency services can work together more effectively. We also run the regional arrangements for the National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer cadre (NILO) which supports cross Blue Light organisational information sharing to support complex incident resolution.

A major incident can be thought of as an emergency arising with or without warning. It can threaten or cause death, injury or serious disruption to a significant number of people, property or the environment. It may require the implementation of specialist arrangements and response teams.

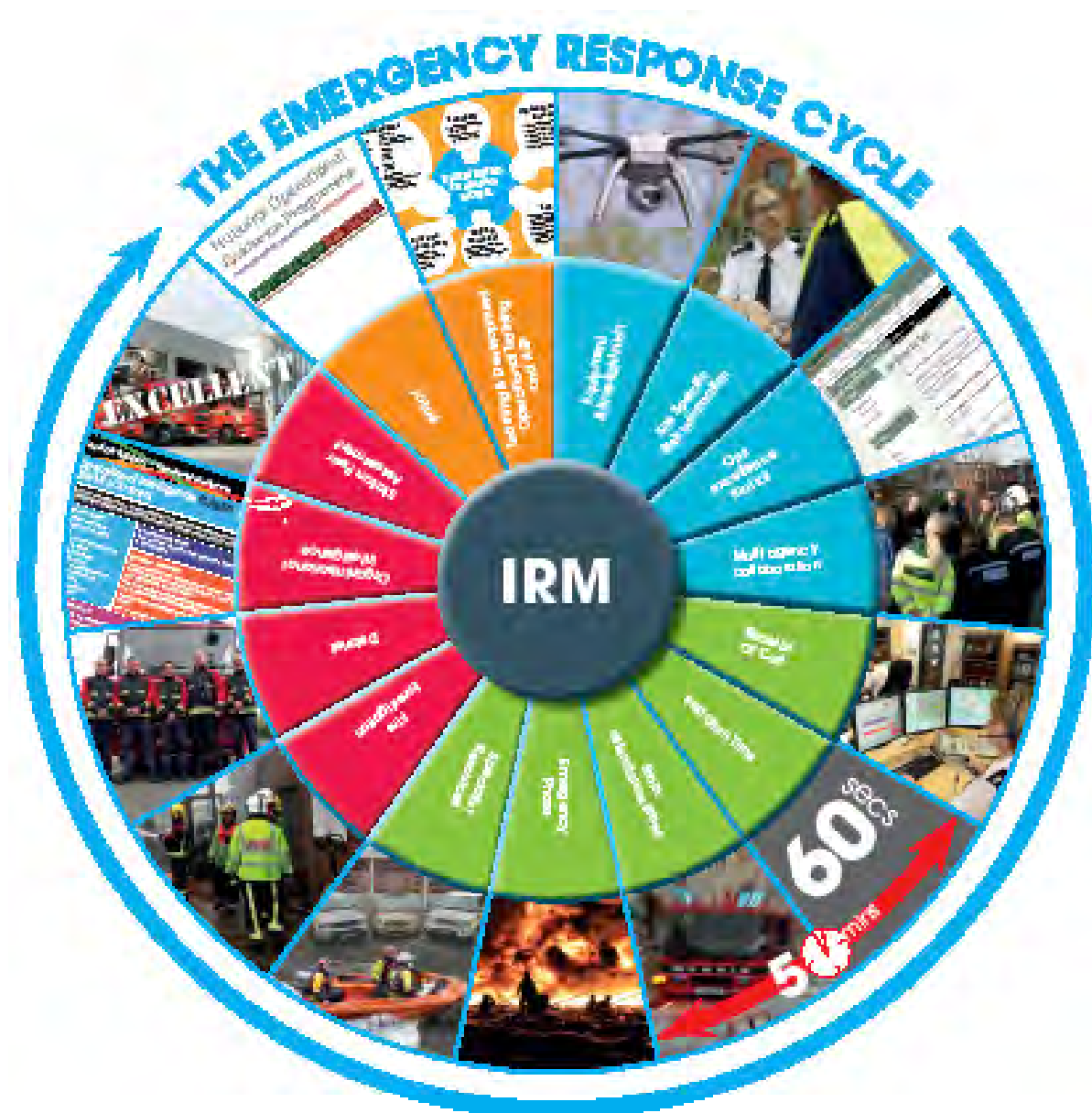
When police, fire and ambulance services respond to major incidents, along with other agencies, each organisation brings their own expertise to that situation. This programme will help the emergency services better understand each other's expertise and ways of working so they can improve how they can jointly deal with an emergency. The clarity that JESIP will bring to a major emergency scene will enable for the better integration and more efficient and effective management of such incidents.



Through our fire protection work we assist businesses to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This assistance may take the form of educational events, signposting to relevant guidance and the checking and auditing of fire protection measures. We are committed to enforcing the law so that members of the public and local employees are protected from the risk of death or injury caused by fire. Our [protection measures](#) evidence our performance.

The West Midlands Fire Service strives for a commitment to excellence through a framework of learning and development defined by a culture of personal accountability.

Our “Emergency Response Cycle” breaks down the key elements that underpin this learning and development framework leading to assertive, safe and effective firefighting and excellent emergency response. The response cycle complements our commitment to HSG 65 and defines a simple but effective approach to Plan-Do-Check-Act. It starts with our people being highly skilled with our equipment, policy and procedures (acquisition of skills), with the cycle then moving through to the emergency response phase (application and maintenance of competence). We use reflective learning and direct observation of performance to look for both areas of excellence and improvement through our debrief and operational intelligence policy. The outcomes of this learning then directly impacts on continuous improvement influencing changes in policy, procedure and people leading to even safer firefighters delivering an even greater service.



Future Improvements

A great deal of progress has already been made, in the drive to adopt an intelligence-led approach to risk management and the allocation of resources based on the outcomes of data and risk analysis. The future, whilst posing a number of challenges in terms of financial constraints arising from the ongoing funding reduction, will see WMFS continuing to innovate and adopt increasingly flexible and creative ways to provide the highest standards of service delivery.

New vehicle types are being deployed, with state of the art equipment and technology, so that fast response times can be maintained with fewer firefighters.

Staffing systems have been refined, so that specialist vehicles are now crewed only when required to respond to emergencies and other ways of managing our workforce as efficiently as possible at the local level, are being developed and enhanced.

Our stations and other building assets are being reviewed, with a view to maximising efficiencies in their distribution and combining some stations where possible, to streamline local resources. Additionally, we are continuing to challenge some calls received by our Fire Control centre, to minimise the number of false alarms responded to and to ensure we always have sufficient resources to mobilise most effectively to the calls where lives and property are in danger.

Working with Staffordshire FRS we have combined the Fire Control function of the two services, reaping financial savings in the process, whilst improving the level of operational collaboration and inter-agency working within our region.

At the same time, we are actively engaging in productive partnerships and sharing data with key agencies to accurately target our preventative and educational activities, in the drive to moderate and improve behaviours in those most vulnerable from fire and other emergencies.

Our service delivery model blends our prevention, protection and response activity to reduce the effects and the number of emergency incidents. We have seen the benefits of our core delivery areas working together on many occasions in the past and we recognise the time is right to encourage further integration in a more co-ordinated way. This is the aim of the prevention, protection and response integration work stream.

We are striving to work together more closely as 'one team' for the benefit of the community. So, where prevention is currently delivered by firefighters we believe that by providing the right training and support to our fire safety team, they will be able to support our prevention priorities. It could be that they are carrying out an inspection at a business premises and they identify some vulnerable people; we want them to be able to help.

Likewise, whilst spending time amongst their community, firefighters might encounter fire safety concerns. In future, through closer working arrangements, we believe that our frontline crews will be able to offer appropriate advice.

Finally, as we aim to do all we can to achieve our risk based five minute attendance time we believe that we can provide resilience to our response teams through utilising fire safety officers to provide operational cover when appropriate. There will be other benefits to operating as one team including sharing information, joint training and closer relationships – all contributing to Making West Midlands Safer.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

11 APRIL 2016

1. **SUBSTANTIVE APPOINTMENT TO THE POST OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

1.1 THAT the Authority select a preferred option from either 1.1.1 or 1.1.2 below to enable recruitment to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

1.1.1 internal recruitment process be followed for the appointment on a substantive basis to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

or

1.1.2 an external recruitment process be followed for the appointment on a substantive basis to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

1.2 THAT the role description at Appendix 1 be noted as the basis for the recruitment.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to Members to decide on the appropriate process to facilitate the appointment on a substantive basis to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 At the Authority meeting on 21 July 2014, Members considered and approved the recommendations made within the 'Review of Principal Management' report. As part of this review it was agreed to introduce the new Strategic Enabling Team arrangements with effect from 1 September 2014.

[IL1: PROTECT]

- 3.2 The implementation of the Strategic Enabling Team has enabled savings of £235K to be made. In order to facilitate this new senior management structure Members approved the disestablishment of an Assistant Chief Fire Officer post, Technical and Operational Support post and the removal of 2 Director posts.
- 3.3 The implementation of the Strategic Enabling Team demonstrates the Service's continued proactive and innovative commitment to making efficiencies, maintaining and improving Service Delivery and ensuring value for money.
- 3.4 As set out in the 'Principal Management Review' report, the Chief Fire Officer undertook a 12 month evaluation of the Strategic Enabling Team to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Following the initial 12 month evaluation a three yearly review in accordance with the Service's strategic planning cycle will be implemented.
- 3.5 The Strategic Enabling Team is led by 3 Brigade Managers:
- Chief Fire Officer
 - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
 - Assistant Chief Fire Officer

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (who has responsibility for Service Delivery functions) supports the Chief Fire Officer in providing leadership and strategic direction to a large organisation in the context of a changing environment.

As one of the three Brigade Managers, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer discharges responsibility for emergency incident command at 'gold' level on a continuous duty basis.

- 3.6 The Service is operating its Gold Command responsibilities through the three Brigade Managers. In order to facilitate this approach the CFO, DCFO and ACFO Operations have provided Gold Command operational cover on a three weekly rota providing cover on a continuous basis. The Association of Principal Fire Officers recommends four people. The distribution of Gold Command cover has required an additional 33% increase per Brigade Manager and is recognised and the leanest model being used amongst other Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services.

- 3.7 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer post is currently being undertaken on an 'acting up' temporary basis.
- 3.8 The current acting up arrangements have been successful. This has enabled realignment of the Service Delivery function and implemented community based commissioning projects such as Tele Care and the Falls Project.
- 3.9 This paper seeks to gain Authority approval on the approach to be taken for the substantive appointment to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer position. An overview of the benefits and disadvantages of the two approaches can be viewed at Appendix 2.

3.10 **External Recruitment**

An external recruitment process would allow for full, open competition and in theory would be compatible with affording potential candidates with protected characteristics the opportunity to apply. This method of recruitment would demonstrate a proactive approach to equality and diversity be in line with the Service's Resourcing Policies and Workforce Planning Strategy. Our Workforce Planning Strategy specifically states that 'diversity will be at the core of all talent management' and that 'we will continue to seek diversity in senior roles through our positive action work'.

In addition, the Service's Recruitment and Selection Policy provides the outline for our recruitment and selection decisions. It confirms that 'authorised vacancies will be advertised on the intranet and that positions may also be advertised on a wider range of media'. This wider media helps us to progress our positive action which works to address the under-represented groups in our workforce.

This approach would encourage a wider scope of applicants who have experience of managing at an executive/strategic level within a fire and rescue service or other service but do not necessarily possess direct operational experience.

It is important to note that this option would also support internal applicants applying for the position of Assistant Chief Fire Officer. It is envisaged that both processes would run concurrently.

However, there is some scope to have a short period of time for internal candidates only to apply. This would have a negative impact on achieving our tight timescales for the appointment of this role.

3.11 Internal Process

If the appointment to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer position on a permanent basis is managed as an internal appointment there could be several advantages. It would avoid an extended delay in the post being filled; it would provide continuity of service at a time when there are several important change initiatives progressing, the costs associated with an external recruitment process would be reduced.

An internal candidate would already have contacts and credibility within the Service and with our external partners and stakeholders and have a clear picture on our values and ways of working. It would enable consistency and continuity in relationships and links not only internally but also externally, particularly around the health agenda that have been built and developed.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 In considering the equality implications of the Authority's preferred option, Members are advised that the learning outcomes arising from the full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and implications undertaken in respect of the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer have formed the basis and provide the evidence that an equality impact assessment is not required.

4.2 This EIA confirmed that the approach to recruitment and appointment of the Chief Fire Officer was not unlawfully discriminatory. This decision was based upon the diversity of those potential applicants from West Midlands Fire Service senior management comparing favourably with the diversity of potential applicants from other Fire and Rescue Services.

4.3 Given that those eligible to be recruited to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer will be drawn from the same pool of potential candidates as for the Chief Fire Officer, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that an internal recruitment process will not be unlawfully discriminatory and therefore a full equality impact

assessment is not required.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Constitution of the Authority provides for the appointment of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer to be by the Appointments Committee. The Authority should approve the job description and personal specification including the level of salary.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Recruitment to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer is in line with the approved Strategic Enabling Team staffing arrangements, therefore continuing to achieve the cost savings identified in paragraph 3.2 and ensuring safe and effective working arrangements.

6.2 The process of external recruitment is likely to incur some modest recruitment costs but could incur relocation costs of up to £25,000.

The contact name for this report is Phil Loach, Chief Fire Officer, 0121 380 6909.

Phil Loach
Chief Fire Officer

Job Title	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)
Job Summary	As outlined in 'The Plan', the jobholder performs a specific individual leadership role as part of an accountable, empowered and sustainable management structure, the 'Strategic Enabling Team', with personal accountability for enabling delivery of key priorities set out in 'The Plan'.
Gold Command Responsibilities	As one of 3 Brigade Managers, the ACFO discharges responsibility for emergency incident command at 'Gold' level on a 'continuous duty' basis as either No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3.
Strategic Enabling Team Responsibilities	<p>Whilst being personally accountable for their individual areas of expertise and functional responsibilities, members of the Strategic Enabling Team share the following strategic responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Contributes to delivering key priorities set out in 'The Plan' through a focused and collaborative approach to planning and delivering activities in Level 2 Service Delivery Plans, Level 3 Command Plans and other Level 3 Plans.◆ Adds value to strategic decision making through meaningful and constructive evidence-based contributions.◆ Enables and sustains responsive, supportive and effective working relationships with all members of the Strategic Enabling Team and personally demonstrates the core values.
Reports to:	Chief Fire Officer
Direct reports:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Strategic Enabler Response◆ Strategic Enabler Prevention◆ Strategic Enabler Protection◆ Personal Assistant to the Director of Service Delivery
Managerial / Service Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To take executive responsibility for such references as may be delegated by the Chief Fire Officerb) Supports the Chief Fire Officer in advising West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority, its committees and elected members, on the discharge of statutory responsibilities in the provision of an efficient and effective Fire Service.c) Supports the Chief Fire Officer in providing strategic direction and leadership to the organisation in pursuit of being a modern, flexible and influential Fire Service aligned to delivery of The Plan.d) To lead Service Delivery staff by creating a culture of; public service, innovation, appropriate risk taking, and individual accountability and professional responsibility at all levels.



- e) Lead the development and implementation of intelligence led strategies that enable the delivery of effective, economical and efficient services in Service Delivery areas:
 - ◆ Prevention
 - ◆ Home Safety
 - ◆ Health and Wellbeing
 - ◆ Road Safety
 - ◆ Arson and Anti-Social Behaviour
 - ◆ SafeSide and Volunteering
 - ◆ Protection
 - ◆ Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety)
 - ◆ Primary Authority Scheme
 - ◆ Shared Fire Control
 - ◆ Response
 - ◆ Service Delivery Model including Staffing
 - ◆ Operational Excellence satisfying specific responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act
 - ◆ Technical Rescue Unit, Urban Search and Rescue and international Search and Rescue
 - ◆ Specialist Emergency Response
- f) To develop professional relationships and networks which enable the delivery of services through collaboration and in partnership for the benefit of the public, business community.
- g) To lead the development and implementation of the Service's performance management framework within Service Delivery including Individual Performance Development and Review.
- h) To lead the delivery of projects and programmes as necessary
- i) Ensures the efficient use of resources and to achieve continuous improvement in service provision.
- j) Represents the Chief Fire Officer at ceremonial and civic events as may be required from time to time.



Generic managerial responsibilities

- (M1) Responsible and accountable for budgets and spending of sections for which they are responsible.
- (M2) Proactively manages the performance and development of sections and individuals for which they are responsible including succession planning.
- (M3) Proactively manages the attendance of those individuals for which they are responsible.
- (M4) Enables the sections for which they are responsible to develop and sustain responsive, supportive and effective working relationships with other sections across WMFS.
- (M5) Enables the sections for which they are responsible to uphold and actively promote the Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality policies of WMFS



(M6) Enables the sections for which they are responsible for to work within the Safety, Health and Environmental policies of WMFS.

(M7) Responsible and accountable for the Business Continuity Planning and appropriate implementation of plans in sections for which they are responsible.

**Role Profile /
Behavioural
Framework**

Strategic Manager Behavioural Framework

**Is this a
politically
restricted post?**

Yes. Refer to SO 01/13, section 2.5. Reports to CFO.

Date:

March 2016

Appendix 2

Benefits and Disadvantages of an External Recruitment Process

Benefits	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Open competition.▪ Opportunity to attract new talent to the Service.▪ More compatible with attracting candidates with protected characteristics that may be under-represented in our Service.▪ Proactive approach to Equality and Diversity.▪ In line with our Workforce Strategy and Resourcing Policy.▪ New vision, ideas, approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Additional cost but these can be kept to a minimum with the use of on line resources.▪ A relocation package of upto £25,000.▪ An external appointment would not assist with reducing job numbers;▪ Possibly longer commencement dates.▪ Possibly longer time for successful candidate, if not current employee, to embed into the Service.

Benefits and Disadvantages of an Internal Recruitment process

Benefits	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Opportunity to promote from within.▪ Reduced recruitment costs and no relocation fees.▪ Opportunity to further review structure as new vacancy arises.▪ Possibly reduced timescale to commencement date.▪ Continuity of service/approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reduces opportunity of improving Equality and Diversity at a senior level within the Service.▪ Reduces opportunity to inject new views and contributions at an executive level.▪ Smaller pool to attract candidates from.▪ Reduces selection pool.

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

11 APRIL 2016

1. **CONTRACT AWARDS SUMMARY FOR PERIOD TO 31 MARCH 2016**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority note the attached Appendices which summarise the contracts between £100,000 and £250,000 (appendix 1) and contracts in excess of £250,000 (appendix 2) that have been awarded since 1 October 2015.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides a six month summary of all contracts that have been awarded since the last report.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 At the Authority meeting on the 29 June 2015, Members approved a number of revisions to the Constitution. One of the revisions was that a retrospective twice yearly summary report of tender contract awards in excess of £250,000 be submitted to the Executive Committee/Fire Authority for information purposes.

3.2 In accordance with the above requirement, a summary of those contracts awarded is attached as Appendix 2. A list of contracts between £100,000 and £250,000 has been attached as Appendix 1 as requested at the Authority meeting on 21 September 2015 (minute number 72/15).

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 procurement processes that were followed for the procurement exercises detailed in the Appendices to this report were conducted in accordance with the Authority's Procurement Standing Orders and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

These are contained in the attached Appendices.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Authority Meeting 21 September 2015

Standing Order 1/8 – Procurement Procedures

The contact name for this report is Phil Hales - Telephone Number - 0121 380 6907.

PHIL LOACH
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Contract Title	Winning Supplier	Approval Date	Contract Period (Including Extension Options)	Annual Contract value or Total Value for one off Purchase	Total Contract Value (including extension periods)	Budget PA	Basis of award e.g. Lowest Price or MEAT*	Date of Planned Tender Report
Replacement Boilers at Canley and Hay Mills Fire Stations	Lot 1 Canley Fire Station- British Gas New Heating Lot 2 Hay Mills Fire Station- Laker BMS Limited	17/08/2015	One off purchase	LOT 1- £52,500 LOT 2- £69,000 Total £121,500	£121,500	£210,000	MEAT	29 June 2015
Windows and Door Installations	Clearway Windows and Doors Ltd	14/9/2015	One off purchase	£134,500	£134,500	£172,000	MEAT	15 February 2015

* Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)

Contract Title	Winning Supplier	Approval Date	Contract Period (Including Extension Options)	Annual Contract value or Total Value for one off Purchase	Total Contract Value (including extension periods)	Budget PA	Basis of award e.g. Lowest Price or MEAT*	Date of Planned Tender Report
Insurance Arrangements	Various insurance companies	15/9/15	3 years plus option to extend by 12 months	£504,000	£2,000,000	£600,000	MEAT	29 June 2015
Wide Area Network	Virgin Media	17/11/15	3 years	£165,000	£495,000	£180,000	Direct Award from framework agreement	21 September 2015
Liquid Fuels	Certas Uk Limited	12/10/15	12 months	£472,500	£472,500	£484,200	MEAT	15 February 2015
Gas	Corona	20/11/15	2 years from April 2015	£336,000	£672,000	£336,000	Direct Award from framework agreement	15 February 2015
Electricity	EDF	20/11/15	2 years from April 2015	£355,500	£711,000	£355,500	Direct Award from framework agreement	15 February 2015
NHH Electricity	British Gas	20/11/15	2 years from April 2015	£255,500	£511,000	£255,500	Direct Award from framework agreement	15 February 2015
Cleaning Consumables	Bunzl Cleaning & Hygiene Supplies	17/2/16	4 years	£100,000	£400,000	£125,000	Direct Award from framework agreement	15 February 2015

* Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)

Contract Title	Winning Supplier	Approval Date	Contract Period (Including Extension Options)	Annual Contract value or Total Value for one off Purchase	Total Contract Value (including extension periods)	Budget PA	Basis of award e.g. Lowest Price or MEAT*	Date of Planned Tender Report
Replatforming ICT Systems Development – Activity Assistant Mobile Accreditation	Advent IM	09/11/15	One off purchase	£20,000	£20,000**	Part of £400k budget for Third Platform Programme	Direct Award following exemption process	29 June 2015
Replatforming ICT Systems Development – Activity Assistant Core Re-Design	IE Design	25/08/15	One off purchase	£28,000	£28,000**	Part of the above budget	MEAT	29 June 2015
Replatforming ICT Systems Development – Application Template Design	IE Design	29/02/16	One off purchase	£28,000	£28,000**	Part of the above budget	MEAT	29 June 2015
Replatforming ICT Systems Development – Digital Market Application	Advice Cloud	21/09/15	One off purchase	£3,500	£3,500**	Part of the above budget	Direct Award following exemption process	29 June 2015
Replatforming ICT Systems Development – Data Warehouse Consultancy	Talent International	26/01/16	One off purchase	£25,500	£25,500**	Part of the above budget	Direct Award	29 June 2015

* Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)

** The above five contracts are elements of the estimated overall contract value of £400k.

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

**18 January 2016 at 10.30 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

- Present:** **Members of the Authority**
Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Idrees (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Afzal, Aston, Atwal Singh, Barlow,
Barrie, Clinton, Craddock, Davis, Dehar, Douglas-
Maul, Eustace, Hogarth, Miks, Mottram JP, Quinnen,
Sealey, Shackleton, B Singh, P Singh, T Singh,
Spence, Tranter and Young.
Mr Ager.
- Officers:** **West Midlands Fire Service**
Chief Fire Officer (P Loach)
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (P Hales);
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (G Taylor);
M Griffiths (Treasurer), M Hamilton-Russell, S Barry, S
Shilton, S Timmington, S Vincent and S Warnes.
- Clerk and Monitoring Officer**
K Gowreesunker (Clerk)
- Apologies:** Councillors Skinner and Ward;
Mr Bell.
M Dudley (Monitoring Officer) and S Sahota (Deputy
Monitoring Officer).
- Observers:** A Afsar, M Pym.

1/16 Chair and CFO's Announcements

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the Policy Planning Forum.

The Chair informed Members of opportunities that were coming up for Authority Member development:

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Policy Planning Forum 18 January 2016

- 15 February 2016: Transport Engineering Workshops visit
- 11 April 2016: Community Heritage Centre Tour at Aston Fire Station
- Date to be confirmed: Employment Law update

The Chair recapped announcements made by the Government earlier in January regarding the transfer of Fire Service policy responsibility from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Home Office. MP Mike Penning had become the new Fire Minister and he had been invited to visit West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS).

The move to the Home Office presented a potential impact upon budgets with no guarantees regarding the provisional settlement issued in December 2015 (which represented a £10 million reduction over a four year period). Home Secretary Theresa May had stated that, in her view, the Fire and Rescue Service could realise more efficiencies.

Additionally, the move to the Home Office indicated a strengthening of Home Office view that Fire and Rescue Services should develop closer working arrangements with the Police. A new policing and crime bill to enable closer working between the emergency services would be tabled for first reading in February 2016, with Royal assent expected by December 2016. This was expected to enable PCCs to assume the governance role of FRAs.

Connections between West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and WMFRA were also discussed along with the ongoing potential to develop closer collaborative opportunities with other FRSs to provide improved operational delivery and efficiencies.

The following points were raised in discussion prompted by the Chair's announcements:

- The Government did not consult before transferring control of fire policy to the Home Office. There had been no consultation with the Local Government Association, the Chief Fire Officer's Association, or with the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU).
- The Chair and the Chief Fire Officer meet with the PCC on a regular basis. WMFRA were positive regarding increasing collaboration with the Police, for example discussions had been

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Policy Planning Forum 18 January 2016

held regarding joint use of estates. However, WMFRA felt that governance and management mergers with the PCC would be a time-consuming and expensive distraction that could potentially impede development of cost-saving collaborative opportunities.

The Chief Fire Officer welcomed all attendees to the Policy Planning Forum.

In relation to the points raised by Members' questions (as above), the Chief Fire Officer advised that the Principal Officers are operational experts but the posts are politically restricted. Governance remained with the Fire Authority and politicians. It was important for WMFS to have the support from Councillors and the connection between Members and the Fire Service was as good as it ever had been. Such support, from Councillors and Chief Executives, was illustrated in the keenness for the Fire Service to be part of public reform.

WMFS already worked with services that had different profiles and a case for regionalisation had already been developed, making savings without reducing the emergency cover.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that as part of the consultation on the provisional settlement, WMFS had noted that the ten lowest funded police forces, which included West Midlands Police, have flexibility on council tax (the ability to raise income from council tax by £5 rather than 2%). WMFS had stated that it should have the same flexibility as those Police forces.

The Chief Fire Officer provided a brief update on staffing: the provisional settlement had been more favorable than forecast and as a result; the Service had reduced the number of firefighter posts that would be disestablished. This would also reduce the reliance on, and the number of voluntary additional shifts.

The FBU had issued a notice of dispute and more consultation would be carried out.

Presentations to the Forum

The following presentations were given to the Policy Planning Forum:

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Policy Planning Forum 18 January 2016

- The Budget
- The Plan

2/16 **The Budget**

Mike Griffiths, Strategic Enabler of Finance and Resources, provided a presentation on the budget:

The provisional financial settlement was issued in December 2015 and provided a better settlement than had been forecast. However, it must be noted that the settlement still represented a reduction in core funding of approximately £10 million over the next four years:

- Core Funding Reductions

	£Ms	%
2016/17	3.3	5.3
2017/18	4.0	6.8
2018/19	1.7	3.1
2019/20	0.7	1.3

The provisional financial settlement does not account for New Dimensions funding where a decrease is also expected, although such funding is a low figure compared to core funding.

In terms of the wider fire sector, the metropolitan fire and rescue services including WMFS, fared better than the majority of services regarding core funding reductions. WMFS received almost the lowest funding decrease in the country. However, in terms of core spending, WMFS fared the worst out of all fire services because the Service is heavily reliant on core funding.

The provisional financial settlement is for a four year period and would be subject to an efficiency plan being approved. The efficiency plan for WMFS includes:

- Staffing
- Commissioning
- Internal restructures

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Policy Planning Forum 18 January 2016

- General budget reductions
- Council tax base increases

In addition to the requirement of an efficiency plan, the settlement remains very provisional due to:

- the state of the UK economy, how it fares, and what changes there could be as a result
- the move of the fire service to the Home Office and any future changes to police and fire budgets

The council tax precept for WMFS is the lowest in the country, at £54.95 per year for a Band D property. An increase of 2% would equate to an increase of £1.09 per year.

With regard to capital funding, there is no specific direct capital funding for the next four years. However, WMFS capital requirements are fully funded over the next four years and is able to undertake funding for major projects including the rebuild of Coventry Fire Station and the redevelopment of Aston Fire Station.

At the time of the meeting, the remaining issues to be resolved were:

- 29 January – conclusion of ratepayers consultation
- 31 January – council tax / business rate figures
- Early February – final finance settlement
- 15 February – Fire Authority meeting

3/16 **The Plan**

Phil Loach, Chief Fire Officer, provided a presentation on 'The Plan':

Following on from the budget settlement, officers had considered the Integrated Risk Management Plan and how WMFS conducts its prevention, protection and response activities, the provision of emergency cover, and the examination of resources. The Service had been forecasting cuts and is confident that the service delivery model will continue to be provided. However, it is based on the need for additional shifts.

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Policy Planning Forum 18 January 2016

'The Plan' will be accessed via an interactive website. It is a website that Members can use when out within their communities and with colleagues at their respective councils.

'The Plan' will link to the new interactive Community Safety Strategy (CSS), which was demonstrated to Members at the Policy Planning Forum held in December. The aim is to use the CSS as an improvement tool with Members. Both 'The Plan' and the CSS will go live in April 2016. A demonstration will be delivered to Members at the Policy Planning Forum on 1 February, and a report will be presented at the Fire Authority meeting on 15 February.

The following points were raised in discussion prompted by the presentation on 'The Plan' and the subjects covered during the course of the Policy Planning Forum:

- Officers have set out to deliver the priorities as agreed with the Fire Authority. With regard to staffing, options were explored by the Service in liaison with the representative bodies and the option of additional shifts was identified as the best option and the intention remains to use additional shifts.
- Additional shifts are different to the current terms and conditions. The Fire Brigade's Union cites that the terms and conditions state overtime is to be paid at time and a half (in accordance with the Grey Book). Voluntary additional shifts are not part of Firefighters current terms and conditions and are not overtime and therefore, can be paid at flat rate. The Service will also pay a 25% disturbance allowance to those carrying out voluntary additional shifts. Firefighters terms and conditions are not affected by these proposals.
- The cost associated with using overtime remains the same as previously. Paying at time and a half for overtime instead of using voluntary additional shifts does not achieve any significant savings. It only works if payment is at flat rate. Indeed, if time and a half was paid, the Service would need to reduce the number of firefighters by more than it needs to. It should be noted that the option is scaleable, with savings now predicted to be £4 million rather than £7 million as per previously, reflecting the outcome of the provisional financial settlement.

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**Policy Planning Forum
18 January 2016**

- Consideration is being given to recruiting firefighters in year three of the provisional financial settlement.
- A Member raised concerns regarding a particular incident involving the use of an Oil Burner in a domestic premise (laundry beads were used in an oil burner as a cheap alternative to scented candles, as advocated via social media). Gary Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, committed to sending a briefing note to all Members following the meeting which would explain the background to the incident and the actions taken to communicate to communities at a local and national level, highlighting this risk.

(Meeting ended at 11:52 am)

Contact Officer: Stephen Timmington Strategic Hub West Midlands Fire Service 0121 380 6680

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Minutes of the Audit Committee

**18 January 2016 at 12.30 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham B7 4HW**

Present: Councillor T. Singh (Chair);
Councillors Aston, Miks, Sealey, P. Singh
Mr Ager (Independent Member).

Apology: Councillor Quinnen

Observer: Councillor M Mottram

1/16 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2015, be approved as a correct record.

Cllr Sealey asked for his apologies to be recorded for the meeting as they had not been passed on.

2/16 **Corporate Risk Quarter 2 Update 2015/16**

The Committee received the Corporate Risk Assurance Map Summary.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer referred the Audit Committee to the position Statement shown at Appendix 2 to the report. The statement requires risk owners to provide the level of risk owner confidence in the effectiveness of the Service's risk management and control environment. The level of risk owner confidence remains high, with the following confidence opinions being awarded.

Of the 11 risks, 7 of the overall confidence ratings were green, 4 were amber and there were no red ratings.

In respect of Risk 4, a Partnerships Review was undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee and action plan for improvement was approved by the Executive Committee on 14 December 2015. The Direction of Travel for this risk has increased from 2 to 3 but the overall rating remains the same.

Audit Committee – 18 January 2016

It was noted that the score would change as the improvement work is undertaken.

Appendix 1, Risks 1 and 5 were shown as red. This was as a result of the national Pensions Dispute. Positive engagement had taken place, however, because of internal changes with staffing this had caused the risk to remain as red.

The Pensions Dispute was still ongoing but following a legal challenge from the Fire Brigades Unions in respect of age discrimination, the Authority had been advised that an outcome from the High Court would not be available until 2017 and no further action would be taken until the ruling was issued. Officers would continue to monitor the position and would report back to a future meeting of the Audit Committee.

At the time that the report was prepared, the Authority had not received its Provisional Financial Settlement and the risk score of Risk 8 was based on a deficit of £14m. The risk would now be reviewed in line with the outcome of the settlement.

Consultation was taking place with the Unions on the Review of Fire Control. The owners of Risks 6 and 11 would be required to reflect on the consultation and look at risk scores and would be required to be more assertive about the possible risks in the assurance map.

The Independent Member stated that following the Policy Planning Forum held prior to the Audit Committee on 18 January, 2016 he felt there were strategic emerging risks that needed to be considered in respect of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Combined Authority (CA).

The Independent Member also expressed concern that Partnerships and Commissioning were being treated similarly. He said that there is a distinct difference, Commissioning is a more commercially focussed and should not be confused with Partnerships.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) felt that was a valid point. He explained that the recent review of the Strategic Enabling Team provided an opportunity to update and refresh risk owners and the changes should address this point. The DCFO accepted that the Authority could be challenged in respect of its Partnerships and Commissioning activity and there were a number of emerging risks.

The DCFO stated that the CA was taking up some time of both officers and Members, but this work would not stop the Service in delivering its service to the community. The DCFO felt the Service would still be able to

Audit Committee – 18 January 2016

deliver its service to the community irrespective of change of governance arrangements. However, he would take on board the Independent Member's views and would feedback the comments to officers.

Resolved that the Corporate Risk Assurance Map Summary be approved and that the Position Statement be noted.

3/16

Audit Committee Update for West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

The Committee noted the contents of the Audit Committee Update. The Update provided the Audit Committee with a report on progress of the external auditors in delivering their responsibilities. The Update also included a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

A detailed 2015/16 Accounts Audit Plan is in progress and a report would be presented to the next Audit Committee.

The Interim Accounts Audit is in progress and the External Auditor would continue to carry out testing, and work closely with the Internal Auditor in relation to risk, work on the financial statements and fraud.

The 2015/16 Final Account Audit would take place in the Summer months and would include:

- audit of the 2015/16 financial statements
- proposed opinion of the Fire Authority's Accounts
- proposed value for Money Conclusion

The Value for Money (VFM) conclusion was in progress and the sub-criteria to be used would be:

Informed decision making – where the Review of Control and Staffing issues would be considered.

Sustainable resource deployment – The External Auditor would discuss the use of budgetary Resources with the Strategic Enabler for Finance and Resources.

Working with partners and other third parties. This was very important in light of closer working with PCC and CA.

The External Auditor would ensure that the Authority moved forward in a positive manner.

Audit Committee – 18 January 2016

The Annual Audit Letter would be produced in October 2016.

The Committee's attention was brought to a link to a document entitled: Knowing the Ropes – Audit Committee Effectiveness Review

An electronic link to the document was provided and it was explained that the document provided an insight into the ways in which audit committees could create an effective role within an organisation's governance structure and understand how they are perceived more widely.

Grant Thornton and the Centre for Public Scrutiny had produced a document entitled "Supporting Members in Governance". It was agreed that a copy of the document would be circulated to Members of the Audit Committee.

4/16 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee noted a report which detailed the progress made against the delivery of the 2015/16 Internal Audit Plan. The information contained within the report included a summary of work completed and in progress as at 30 November 2015.

It was noted that the Key Financial Systems were well controlled and provided substantial assurance and a final report would be completed by March/April 2016.

5/16 Internal Audit Charter – Annual Review

The Committee were advised that the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 required authorities to conduct a review of the effectiveness of internal audit at least once a year.

The Committee agreed that the existing Internal Audit Charter be subject to its next annual review in January 2015.

6/16 CIPFA Audit Committee Update No 18

The Committee received the CIPFA Audit Committee Update No. 18. The update was published three times a year, the latest edition focused on Self-Assessment and Improving Effectiveness of an Audit Committee, the Appointment and Procurement of External Auditors and a Regular Briefing on current issues.

The update provided a list of workshops and training events for Audit Committee Members.

Audit Committee – 18 January 2016

The Internal Auditor drew the Committee's attention to the section entitled Appointment and Procurement of External Auditors. The provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 would soon come into force. Current contracts would continue to be managed by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. However, new auditors would need to be appointed by 2018/19 and an external auditor must be appointed by the end of December 2017.

It was recommended that evaluations of options should start soon to allow time to plan procurement. Consideration should be given to a joint procurement with other Services either Regionally or with the CA. It was noted that a sector led body could be appointed by the Secretary of State.

The Committee were advised to consider the options over the next 18 – 24 months to see what was available.

Members of the Audit Committee were asked to return their Self-Assessment Review to the Clerk prior to the next meeting in order that the Assessment can be undertaken. Members were advised to leave any areas they were not aware of blank.

7/16 Audit Committee Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee noted its Work Programme 2015/16. The Chair indicated that he and another member of the Committee would not be available for the meeting scheduled on 21 March 2016 and requested that the meeting be moved to the 11 April 2016 following the Fire Authority meeting.

The change of date was approved by the members of the Audit Committee.

8/16 Update on Topical, Legal and Regulatory Issues

Audit Committee Members were reminded of the free development session being provided by Price Waterhouse Cooper on 4 February 2016. The Chair of the Audit Committee requested a placed be booked on his behalf.

(The meeting ended at 1256 pm)

Audit Committee – 18 January 2016

Contact Officer: Julie Connor
Strategic Hub
0121 380 6906

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

**1 February 2016 at 10.30 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Members of the Authority
Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Idrees (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Atwal Singh, Barrie, Clinton, Davis,
Dehar, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Hogarth, Miks,
Mottram JP, Quinnen, Sealey, Shackleton, B Singh,
P Singh, T Singh, Spence, Tranter, Ward and
Young.

Officers: West Midlands Fire Service
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (P Hales);
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (G Taylor);
A Afsar, B Brook, M Hamilton-Russell, M Pym, P Shergill,
S Shilton, N Spencer, S Timmington, S Vincent and
S Warnes.

Clerk and Monitoring Officer
K Gowreesunker (Clerk)
M Dudley (Monitoring Officer)
S Sahota (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Afzal, Aston, Barlow, Craddock and Skinner.
Mr Ager and Mr Bell.
Chief Fire Officer (P Loach).

Observers: Nil

4/16 Chair and CFO's Announcements

The Chair and Deputy Chief Fire Officer welcomed all attendees to the Policy Planning Forum.

The Chair reminded Members of the upcoming development opportunities:

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Policy Planning Forum 1 February 2016

- 15 February 2016: Transport Engineering Workshops visit
- 11 April 2016: Community Heritage Centre Tour at Aston Fire Station
- Date to be confirmed: Employment Law update

An update on the future governance of the Fire Service which had been published on the WMFS intranet for members of staff was circulated to Members for their information.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that a ballot paper had been issued by the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU). The ballot was to call for action short of strike. The closing date was 22 February 2016. A meeting held between the Service and the FBU on 29 January 2016 had proved to be positive, although too late to stop the ballot papers being sent out. Members would continue to be updated on progress as events unfold.

Presentations to the Forum

The following presentation was given to the Policy Planning Forum:

- The Plan – interactive demonstration

5/16 The Plan – interactive demonstration

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Fire Authority, delivered a presentation on The Plan, the vision statement, and priorities and outcomes:

The Plan had been refreshed to ensure the statements reflected the broadening approach to prevention, protection and response. Changes were reflected in the vision statement and the priorities and outcomes.

The priority and outcome statements had been streamlined to three areas, Prevention, Protection and Response, focusing The Plan.

The changes reflected the broadening of WMFS's services and alignment with the West Midlands Combined Authority, over the rolling three year strategy. The inclusion of 'safer, healthier and stronger communities' within the vision statement supported the Service's

[ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]

Policy Planning Forum 1 February 2016

prevention agenda and helped the Service to explore areas for flexible funding.

The vision statement and the priority and outcome statements would be presented to the Fire Authority on 15 February 2016 for approval.

In response to Members' questions on the vision statement and the priorities and outcomes, the following answers were provided:

- The future governance arrangements of WMFS may still be uncertain with so many options regarding governance; however it was believed that the vision statement would still remain whatever the outcome, as this is what WMFS stands for.
- The West Midlands Combined Authority represented potentially more alignment and shared priorities with WMFS. There may be different viewpoints in the future, such as those of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) although some PCC's have stated that fire and police should be kept separate, citing the need for a separate Chief Fire Officer and a separate Chief Constable. However, WMFS has a three year strategy which in light of so much potential uncertainty would allow the flexibility to adapt, evolve and change.

Ben Brook, Group Commander Integrated Risk Management, delivered a presentation on the Community Safety Strategy (CSS) and new interactive web tool which provided a second opportunity following the Policy Planning Forum in December 2015 for Members to have a hands-on demonstration:

The CSS links directly with The Plan. It is the risk plan, which along with The Plan, demonstrates WMFS's integrated risk management which is a legal obligation of the national framework.

The CSS would allow Officers, Members, and members of the public to look at their area to examine what is happening and what WMFS is doing to support this, linking in with The Plan. The tool provides evidence that backs up the WMFS service delivery model, demonstrating why the Service has the assets it does, located where they are.

The CSS interactive tool will replace the previous CSS which comprised

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**Policy Planning Forum
1 February 2016**

an 80 – 90 page document, improving the accessibility and aiding the understanding of the information contained within. The tool will enable users to drill down to incident data and further information can be linked to enabling greater analysis of command areas. The data is real incident data; updated quarterly in line with the WMFS quarterly performance schedule (it was acknowledged that the publication of live data would be ideal). Additionally, other 'non-fire' data will be available via the tool such as demographic data, deprivation levels and flood risk.

Members were encouraged to show and use the CSS when engaging with their communities.

(Meeting ended at 11:15 am)

Contact Officer: Stephen Timmington Strategic Hub West Midlands Fire Service 0121 380 6680

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Notes of Joint Consultative Panel

**1 February 2016
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Councillor Clinton (Chair)
Councillor Dehar (Vice Chair)
Councillors Shackleton, Douglas-Maul, P Singh

Apologies:

Cllr Afzal
CFO Andy Hickmott, Association of Principal Fire Officers (APFO)
Ade Robinson, Fire Officers' Association (FOA)

Employees Side:

Steve Price Hunt – Fire Brigades Unions (FBU)
John Routley – Unison

Officers:

Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Fire Authority
Sarah Warnes, Strategic Enabler (People Support Services)
Wendy Browning Sampson, People Support Manager
Paul Hinckley, Senior Business Partner (Occupational Health)

Observer:

Cllr Tranter – (Chair of Scrutiny Committee)

1/16 The Chair asked everyone attending the meeting to introduce themselves.

2/16 Notes of the Joint Consultative Panel held on the 9 November 2016

The notes of the Joint Consultative Panel held on the 9 November 2016 were approved as a correct record.

3/16 Wellbeing Strategy and “Blue Light” Pledge

Sarah Warnes outlined the Wellbeing Strategy, which is a supporting strategy that is currently being embedded within the organisation to provide employees with the correct supporting mechanisms to maintain their wellbeing at a time of uncertainty and change. It had been recognised that illness caused by stress and mental health issues were an essential area for the organisation to focus on through the Wellbeing Strategy. This directly links to the Service Delivery Model.

Wendy Browning Sampson asked the members of the Joint Consultative Panel to note the development and implementation of the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) Wellbeing Strategy and the subsequent signing of the MIND “Blue Light” pledge to raise awareness of mental health issues in the workplace.

A copy of the Employee Wellbeing Strategy was outlined and a copy provided to each member of the Panel. It was explained that a mobile Application would be developed in the future. The wellbeing strategy has been developed throughout 2015 as a collaborative project involving People Support Services (PSS), Occupational Health (OH), Safety Health and Environment (SHE) and diversity Inclusion Cohesion and Equality (DICE) employees and Trade Unions. A number of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events were held and feedback received on what employees most valued.

At the same time, WMFS has been working with the United Kingdom’s leading mental health charity MIND to promote their “Blue Light” programme, a Government-funded initiative (via the Cabinet Office) package of training, education and

support specifically tailored to members of the emergency services.

Mental Health issues personally affect one in four of the UK general population at some point, however, incidence has been shown to be significantly higher in emergency services.

The Wellbeing Strategy was launched in December 2015 and is supported by online managers toolkits, intranet and social media websites. During 2016, a programme of discussions and sessions will be rolled out to all stations and sections raising awareness and destigmatising mental health issues.

In January 2016, the WMFS Action Plan, submitted through Occupational Health, was approved by MIND and the Service became signatories to the pledge. A National Representative commented that the WMFS plan was one of the most comprehensive and robust plans that they had seen.

The Occupational Health Team would continue to engage with MIND and the workforce.

It was noted that a WMFS employee, Rob Norman, had an article published in the Guardian newspaper about mental health issues, which would help to break down the stigma of mental health issues, within the organisation and nationally. The OH team would be working closely with him and would recruit MIND champions.

Paul Hinckley stated that the Strategy would equip operational workforce with a knowledge of mental health issues.

The Chair welcomed the report.

Councillor Shackleton asked for further data in respect of mental health issues and in response to her question about the costs, Paul Hinckley confirmed that £5m had been provided nationally and the funding had been provided from the Libor rate fixing receipts.

It was noted that mental health issues were the second biggest cause of illness and it was believed that one in four illnesses caused by mental health was the tip of the iceberg and is more widespread than previously realised.

Cllr P Singh welcomed the report and requested a copy of the presentation so that he could share it with his colleagues.

The Fire Brigades Union fully supported the work that had been ongoing and felt it was a great success and would provide positive outcomes in the future.

John Routledge from UNISON echoed this and felt the strategy was long overdue and that the approach had been significant. He felt that the article by Rob Norman sharing his personal experiences was awe inspiring. He felt that the over the next few years members of staff would be affected dramatically by change and this support would be of great benefit.

Sarah Warnes informed the Panel that a video was being produced around disabilities, similar to the recent dyslexia video. Role models were coming forward and the video would be released in the next couple of months.

The members of the Panel felt that the Strategy would also provide support to members of staff in respect of disciplinary matters.

Cllr Dehar welcomed the report and the work on disabilities.

In answer to a question about age profiles from Cllr Shackleton,
Paul Hinckley stated that mental health conditions were across the board. However, the age range of males having suicidal thoughts had shifted from males aged 16 – 24 towards middle aged men (our own workforce demographic).

Cllr Tranter welcomed the Wellbeing Strategy and “Blue Light” Pledge.

It was noted that an update report would be provided to the Panel meeting scheduled in September 2016.

The Joint Consultative Panel noted the development and implementation of the WMFS wellbeing strategy and agreed to the signing of the MIND “Blue Light” pledge.

(Meeting ended at 12.45 pm)

Contact Officer: Julie Connor
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Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

15 February 2016 at 12.30pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Tranter (Chair);
Councillors Barrie, Hogarth, B Singh, Skinner, and
Young

Apology: Councillors Spence and Ward

Observer: Not applicable

1/16 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2015, be approved as a correct record.

2/16 **Update on Partnership Review**

The Committee received an update on the 'Review of Partnerships' and the Members noted the initial direction of travel in implementing the recommendations made following the review.

Gary Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented an overview of the report to Members:

Members of staff had moved as a result of the review of the Strategic Enabling Team, resulting in a new Strategic Enabler for Prevention who would also cover the area of partnerships.

The Review of Partnerships had highlighted that although the Service had a good external view of partnerships, it had lost some focus in terms of an internal view. Therefore, the Service would ensure clear direction and support internally.

The post of Health and Wellbeing Advisor was in the process of being established formally and integrated further into the structure.

In answer to Members' questions, the following points were raised during the presentation:

- The Service's financial plan includes £2 million to be raised via commissioning which is and will be one of the Service's key activities. Areas of work that are being commissioned by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), such as hospital discharges, may be new products for the Service, but they compliment the WMFS service delivery model, aid the targeting of vulnerable people, and provides a source of income generation. The CCG's currently commission some of these activities to the private sector. However, an organisation such as WMFS can provide the service saving significant amounts of money per call, saving the NHS as a whole a significant amount, plus recycling public money and therefore it remaining within the public sector.
- In response to a question regarding how the Telecare Falls Service worked, it was explained that:
 - The wider Telecare Service was the responsibility of the local authority that devolves this to the service provider.
 - WMFS are called to non-emergency falls. WMFS do not respond under blue lights.
 - The average WMFS attendance is 14 minutes 51 seconds (the Service is contracted to attend within forty five minutes within receipt of a call).
 - Upon arrival, staff will assist the patient, lifting them up and checking they are ok. An ambulance is to be called in any situation where something is observed outside of this remit, such as an injury.
 - Approximately ninety five percent of calls result in no requirement for the attendance of the Ambulance Service (as of 6 March 2016, 15 out of 180 calls had resulted in the attendance of the Ambulance Service).
 - There had been 101 Telecare visits in the first three months of the pilot (it had been a slow start to the pilot

but numbers had increased as the confidence to make referrals had increased).

- The premises monitored under the Telecare Service have alarms installed which are directed to Fire Control in the event of actuation. '999' calls would still go through to the Ambulance Service.
- WMFS are currently supporting Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust with providing a hospital discharge service. The service would entail WMFS staff conducting a one hour visit to a person who has been discharged from hospital, checking that the individual has settled and suitable arrangements are in place including the availability of water, heating, toilet facilities, etc. A secondary visit would be arranged to be conducted in the presence of a family member or social worker, where necessary.

The Committee were introduced to Michele Pym, WMFS Strategic Hub, who briefed Members on the forthcoming review of data sharing:

The review of data sharing was one of the proposals identified as an outcome of the Scrutiny Committee review of partnership working. The review concluded that 'Whilst data sharing arrangements appear to be in place across commands, a systematic review of the quality of the arrangements and underpinning systems and processes should be undertaken'.

Data sharing had long been a critical success factor in identifying and engaging the most vulnerable people within our communities. It was a corporate responsibility to share data and refer vulnerable people (adults and children) with WMFS partners across the public sector.

In many cases, Serious Case Reviews and higher level investigations had all identified that the sharing of data remained a consistent barrier to effective partnership working and could be a contributory factor to a decreased service.

The review was intended to provide a clear picture of the level and effectiveness of data sharing between WMFS and partner agencies, in addition to identifying any lessons that could be learnt from other agencies and sectors.

A working group comprised of members of the Scrutiny Committee would be established to lead on the review. An update would be provided to members at the Scrutiny Committee meeting in August 2016. It was expected that the review would be completed and the findings / outcomes reported to members during the first quarter of 2017 (January to March).

Resolved: -

- 1) That a working group is to be established comprising Councillors Hogarth, Spence and Tranter to take forward a review of data sharing.
- 2) That as part of the working group, communication would be via email to include all Committee members. Executive decisions would to be delegated to Councillor Tranter.
- 3) The Scrutiny Committee would receive an update on the data sharing review at the August committee meeting.
- 4) The report of the review of data sharing would be completed and reported back to the Scrutiny Committee during the first quarter of 2017 (January to March).

3/16

Analysis of Progress of Quarterly Performance Against The Plan Quarter 3 2015/16

Gary Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Sarah Warnes, Strategic Enabler for People Support Services, presented an overview of the report to Members:

PI 1 'the risk based attendance standard' remained blue although response times for category 1 incidents had increased by 5 seconds. The slight increase had been forecast by the Service's data analysts as a result of the winter months affecting response times.

Performance within prevention (PIs 2 to 12) remained largely positive:

- PI 3 'injuries from accidental fires in dwellings' had moved into a red rating following a spike of 10 injuries during October (the number of incidents was 2 above the upper tolerance level). However, no specific trends or reasons had been identified.

- PI 5 'the percentage of Home Safety Checks referred by our partners' remained red due to the target of 40% not being met. The Black Country North command area was close to reaching the target due to established good partnership networks. All other command areas had achieved percentage rates of 20% to 25%.
- PI 6 'the number of Home Safety Check points' was rated as over performing against the tolerance level (blue). During quarter three Safe and Well visits had been introduced and the risk point scoring system had been revised to better reflect the level and range of fire risk, and to improve alignment with the priority target groups identified in the Command Level 3 Plans. The points had been back dated and as a result the target for the year 2015/16 had been reached. The figures would be reset for quarter 4 to act as a baseline as part of a benchmarking exercise in preparation for 2016/17 when the target would be revised to reflect the changes to the scoring mechanism.
- There had been positive performance within the set of PIs related to arson, with the exception of PI 10 'the number of arson vehicle fires' and PI 12 'the number of arson fires in derelict buildings' which demonstrated under performance against the tolerance levels (red).

Performance within Protection (PI 13 'the number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises' and PI 14 'the number of false alarm calls due to fire alarm equipment') remained very positive with good work ongoing with local universities.

Performance of the People Support Services performance indicators was as follows:

- PI 15 'the percentage of employees that have disclosed their employment status' continued to demonstrate under performance against the tolerance level, although it was acknowledged that the target was ambitious and the direction of travel remained positive. Good progress continued to be made with a 12% increase in the number of declarations (to 88%) with evidence that members of staff understood the need for this information to be collated and trusted the Service. The impact of the dyslexia campaign had been a positive one and a second video entitled 'Behind the Mask'

focussing on disability was to be launched, featuring a number of people from WMFS discussing their conditions and experiences.

- Performance of PI 16 ‘the number of female staff’ and PI 17 ‘the percentage of all staff from ethnic minority communities’ remained within the tolerance levels (green). Retention and progression remain a key focus of the Service as a result of the recruitment freeze. The balance of the volunteers and community members had been examined to identify if their makeup was representative of the West Midlands communities and to identify ways in which the Service could engage with these groups.
- PI 18 ‘the average number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness’: demonstrated over performance against the tolerance levels (red). Key areas of work included:
 - The formation of a task and finish group that was focussing on managing effectively. Changes had been proposed to be made to the sickness policy to ensure the correct balance was reached between the individual and the manager.
 - Tackling long term sickness via an emphasis around command areas about getting members of staff back to work, working closely with Occupational Health to identify operational limitations, for example identifying if any and what amendments could be made to allow a member of staff to return to work.
 - Reviewing how sickness absences were recorded to ensure the Service was receiving the correct information and data (previously 25% of people had recorded the reason for sickness absence as none; this had been reduced to 8% by the end of quarter 3).
- PI 19 ‘the average number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (non-uniformed and Fire Control staff)’ continued to perform well, demonstrating over performance against the tolerance levels (blue).

It was noted that the figures for January 2016 had improved significantly indicating a 90% reduction in sickness compared to January 2015 and that this would be monitored going forward.

PI 21 'the total number of injuries' demonstrated over performance against the tolerance levels (blue) with a 23% reduction in the number of injuries observed during quarter 3. The main causes of injuries continued to be slips, trips and falls, and manual handling. Age profiling of members of staff suffering injuries had been conducted but no trends had been identified. Manual handling training would be delivered as part of the distributed training model (training was currently be delivered to the trainers).

PI 22 'the total number of RIDDOR injuries' demonstrated under performance against the tolerance levels (red) although the gap between actual performance and the year end target had narrowed, with the number of incidents recorded just one above the upper tolerance level.

In answer to Members' questions, the following points were raised during the presentation:

- In relation to the under performance of the percentage of Home Safety Checks referred by our partners:
 - It was believed that there were deep rooted issues regarding this and it was more than just a need for improved partnership working and more analysis. There was a need to identify critical success factors.
 - All registered social landlords received the same partnership approach from WMFS, no matter to their difference in size. Although the model adopted was important to ensure successful partnership working, it was appreciated that good working relationships were just as important.
 - The imminent data sharing review would assist with improvement within this area, enabling a more scientific approach.
 - It was agreed that Members were potential stakeholders in this process and any support provided was appreciated.

- In relation to PI 10 'the number of arson vehicle fires' and PI 12 'the number of arson fires in derelict buildings' performance had declined over the last 3 quarters of 2015/16 with a number of external factors having been identified:
 - The Service was working with Local Authorities to understand that the continued rate of these types of incidents was an outcome of the ripple effect from a number of factors. For example, the time it often took for vacant local authority buildings to be secured / boarded up to prevent access by members of the public was quite short but this was often not the case if a third party such as a private owner was involved. There was no longer a proactive approach to securing premises from unwanted access and the pump priming funding was no longer available.
 - The Service had commissioned a piece of work to be undertaken with Local Authorities to identify what was happening and what had changed. There had been a view to monitor these type of incidents but the Service had taken the decision to take a proactive approach and to work with partner agencies to tackle these issues.
 - Arson was not an issue solely for the Fire Service and there was a need for a multi agency approach to take responsibility for reducing the number of such incidents, including organisations such as the Police.
 - With regard to securing premises on private land, there is no single authority or agency that is solely accountable. The responsibility is across a number of agencies and organisations. The Arson Task Forces used to have responsibility but they had been disbanded for some time, and although it fell within the remit of Environmental Officers, this was a significantly reduced resource due to the continuing decline in public funding and the resultant cuts to services.
- Educating the public on the causes and risks of kitchen fires, and the actions to take in the event of such an incident occurring formed part of national fire safety policy and was delivered by WMFS.

- Incident data evidenced that males aged 25 to 40 experienced a large number of fires but the vast majority were not significant in severity. Incidentally, the elderly did not necessarily experience multiple fires but the 1 fire they could experience would be significant. There was a need to identify and understand the factors that were involved in the group of males aged 25 to 40, for example, unemployment was often an underlying issue and support in finding employment could prove beneficial for this group.
- With regard to the levels of sickness absence, there was no evidence at the current time that the recruitment freeze was having an adverse affect and causing an increase, as members of staff left the Service. No correlation between the age of the work force and sickness had been identified so far. It was agreed that the workforce planning profile would be presented at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee in March 2016.

4/16

Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2015/16

The Committee noted the progress of the work programme for 2015/16.

Members of the committee agreed that:

- Updates on the data sharing review would be presented at the regular scheduled Committee meetings and the facility for specific meetings to be scheduled for this purpose would not be utilised
- Meetings of the Scrutiny Committee for year 2016/17 would be scheduled to occur on separate dates to other meetings of the Fire Authority

(Meeting ended at 14:01 pm)

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