

Minutes

5th June, 2006 at 2.30 p.m.
at Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

Present:

Representing Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority
Councillors Bean, G Davis and Brigadier Jones;
Representing Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Councillors Hartin and Mrs Holyoak;
Representing Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority
Councillor Bloomer;
Representing Warwickshire County Council
Councillors Chattaway, Hobbs and Shilton;
Representing West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority
Councillors Hinton (Chair) and Hogarth.

Advisors:

Chief Fire Officer Doig (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Hayden (Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service);
Chief Fire Officer Sheehan (West Midlands Fire Service).
Chief Fire Officer Taylor (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service).

Lynda Bateman (Acting Clerk/Treasurer);
Catherine Witham (Deputy Legal Adviser);
Steve Worrall (Programme Manager);
Steve Haynes (Programme Risk Manager).

Observers:

Councillor Udall;
Peter Dartford, Ray Kings and Alan Rotchell.

Apologies:

Councillors D Davis, Eustace and Morgan;
Chief Fire Officer Brown;
Sue Phelps.

11/06 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed Councillors Chattaway and Holyoak to their first Board meeting.

He referred to the loss of Councillors Kath Banks and John Haynes from the Board, and paid tribute to their valuable contribution to regional working.

The Chair also announced that the groundbreaking ceremony for the West Midlands Regional Control Centre was to take place on 6th July, 2006, and that all Board members would receive invitations to the event. Representative bodies would also be advised of the arrangements.

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12/06 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th January, 2006, be confirmed as a correct record.

13/06 **Membership of the Board**

The Interim Clerk reported that notification had been received from constituent authorities that Councillor Holyoak would be replacing Councillor Eade on a temporary basis (Shropshire Fire and Rescue Authority) and that Councillor Chattaway would serve in place of Councillor Haynes (Warwickshire County Council). A nomination in place of Councillor Banks was awaited from Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority.

A further report would be brought to the Annual Meeting of the Board on 28th July, 2006 with regard to membership and allocation of Senior Responsible Owner positions for 2006/07.

14/06 **Officers of the Regional Management Board**

The Board was reminded that the Regional Management Board, at its meeting on 7th May 2004 [Minute No. 8/04], had confirmed the arrangement whereby the Clerk to the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority also acted as Clerk to the Regional Management Board. Nigel Summers, who had been Clerk to the Board since its inception, had retired with effect from 19th March 2006. The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority had approved an interim arrangement whereby its Treasurer also acted as Clerk; and had now appointed Susan Phelps, Head of Governance Services of Sandwell Council, as substantive Clerk.

Furthermore, the Board's Legal Adviser, John Gregory, Secretary to the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority, had announced his intention to retire on 30th June, 2006. The Deputy Legal Adviser, Catherine Witham, was leaving Warwickshire County Council to take up a post with another authority. Warwickshire County Council had offered the services of Greta Needham, its Head of Legal Services, as Legal Adviser to the Board.

Jean Cole, the Business Change Manager with Government Office West Midlands, had indicated that she would be leaving Government Office on 5th June, 2006 to take up another post. Notification had been received that Tina Thomas had been appointed as Jean Cole's replacement and would be taking up her new post with effect from 14th June, 2006.

There was no change in respect of the other support officers as set out in Minute No. 8/04.

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Resolved:

- (1) that the following arrangements for officer support and advice to the Regional Management Board be agreed:

Clerk to the Regional Management Board

Susan Phelps (Clerk to the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and Head of Governance Services, Sandwell Council) with immediate effect.

Legal Adviser

Greta Needham (Head of Legal Services, Warwickshire County Council) with effect from 1st July, 2006.

- (2) that the Clerk convey the Board's thanks to Nigel Summers for his help and assistance with the establishment and working of the Regional Management Board from its inception.

15/06 Correspondence relating to the Regional Management Board

None received.

16/06 Meeting of the Programme Board

The Board approved the notes of the meeting of the Programme Board held on 21st March, 2006, subject to the addition of Councillor Hobbs to the list of attendances.

Councillor Hobbs reported that he had attended the Regional Chairs' meeting in London on 23rd May 2006. The meeting had discussed governance of Regional Control Centres [see Minute No 21/06 below], and members had received a presentation from Liz Baron, Chair of Firebuy Ltd, the national procurement body for fire and rescue services. Councillor Hobbs indicated that he felt reassured that Ms Baron understood Fire Authorities' concerns about national procurement. It was hoped that Ms Baron would also attend a future meeting of this Board.

Councillor Hobbs indicated that the Regional Chairs' meetings were open to Chairs and Vice Chairs to attend. He proposed that in future, two representatives from the Board attend the meetings.

With reference to Minute No. 31/06, officers undertook to ensure that new members received any necessary training in connection with the programme.

17/06 2005/06 Finance Outturn

The Board noted a report on final spend to date against the approved budget

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allocation for 2005/06, and the actual time spent on individual projects within the programme up to 31st March 2006.

18/06 2006/07 Regional Annual Efficiency Statement

The Board noted the Regional Annual Efficiency Statement 2006/07 which had been submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 17th April 2006.

Resolved that future statements include a breakdown of efficiencies achieved by each constituent Fire Authority.

19/06 Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2006/08

The Programme Manager outlined how the published Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2006/08 differed from the 2005/06 framework and the draft 2006/08 framework that had been circulated for consultation. Changes that might have a regional impact would be referred to the appropriate Project Board/Working Group for consideration. A further report on key drivers for change would be submitted in due course.

20/06 Programme Plan 2006/08

The Programme Manager submitted the Programme Plan for 2006/08 setting out the Region's plans for modernisation over this period.

Resolved that the Programme Plan be approved.

21/06 FireControl Governance – Consultation Response

Submitted – a proposed response to be sent to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with regard to the governance of Regional Control Centres. The deadline for responses was 14th June, 2006. The draft response had been drawn up the regional lawyers group.

The National Framework indicated that the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) which would run the West Midlands Regional Control Centre should be operative by 1st January, 2007. A proposed timetable of actions to meet this deadline was submitted.

Members expressed some concern about possible conflict of interest for members of Fire Authorities who were also directors of the LACC. Assurances were given that legal advice on this aspect would be available to members in forthcoming reports on the establishment of the LACC.

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Resolved:

- (1) that the draft regional response be approved for submission to the DCLG;
- (2) that constituent Fire Authorities be asked to submit their own individual responses to the DCLG supportive of the regional response;
- (3) that the Warwickshire County Council Legal Services be asked to investigate proposals for independent legal advice on the setting up of the local authority controlled company (LACC) for the West Midlands Regional Control Centre and to report back to the next meeting on 28th July, 2006;
- (4) that the timetable for the establishment of the LACC as set out in the report be approved.

22/06 **Programme Organisation and Governance Arrangements**

Submitted – a revised version of the Programme Organisation document updated to include governance arrangements.

Resolved that the document be approved.

23/06 **Programme Risk Review**

The Board noted the contents of the programme risk log.

The Risk Manager indicated that he would be reporting to the next meeting on a process to identify strategic risks identified by members and Chief Fire Officers.

24/06 **Schedule of Meetings 2006**

The Board noted the scheduled dates, times and venues for WMRMB meetings for the remainder of 2006.

25/06 **Date of next meeting**

Regional Management Board - Friday, 28th July, 2006 at 10.30 am (Warwickshire)

Programme Board – Tuesday, 20th June, 2006 at 10.30 am (Telford).

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(Meeting ended at 3.35 pm)

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