

# THE PLAN

Making West Midlands Safer 2013-2016

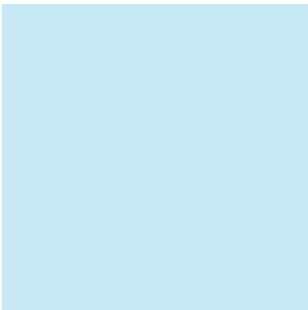
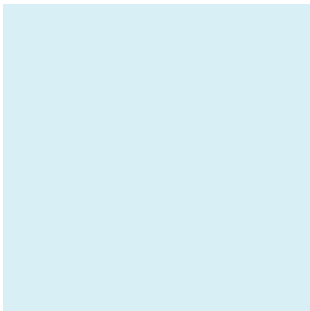
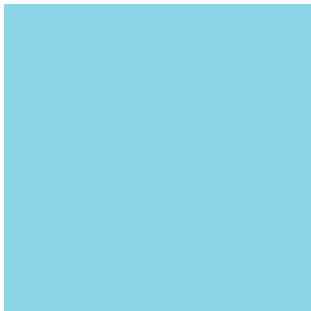
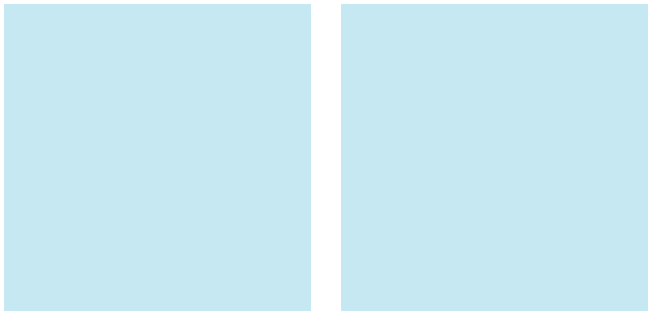




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Further information  
about the work of  
the West Midlands  
Fire Service may  
be found by  
visiting our website:  
**[www.wmfs.net](http://www.wmfs.net)**





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# 01



**Councillor John Edwards**

Chair, West Midlands  
Fire & Rescue Authority



**Vijith Randeniya OBE**

Chief Fire Officer  
West Midlands  
Fire Service

## INTRODUCTION AND FOREWORD:

Welcome to 'The Plan 2013-16' which sets out the priorities agreed by West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) for the fire and rescue service to deliver over the rolling 3-year period it covers.

We are in times of sweeping change driven by requirements for the Fire and Rescue sector nationally to cope with formula grant reductions of 25% as part of the governments Comprehensive Spending Review which covers the period 2011 - 2015. WMFRA is facing reductions of £20.8 million (26%) in its Government formula grant during this period. Beyond that the requirements are unclear but the expectation is that further grant reductions are likely to be made after 2015. The WMFRA and Corporate Board team have lobbied successfully to achieve a fairer approach to cuts in order to minimise the adverse impact on our key aim of 'Making West Midlands Safer'. Matching available resources with the intentions within 'The Plan 2013-16' will be a critical objective during this period of grant reductions.

Against this challenging backdrop WMFRA is changing and developing greater flexibility. We have a legal responsibility to deliver an effective and efficient fire and rescue service and we remain committed to the highest standards of emergency incident cover. We will continue to deliver a risk based five minute attendance time for the first fire fighting appliance to incidents where life and property are at risk. This is underpinned by the delivery of prevention and protection services that are designed to provide maximum impact for the investment made. Delivery of these services forms the core requirements of a fire fighter, a fire officer, a fire safety officer and other service delivery staff. We will continue to use our 38 community fire stations as a base for our staff and to share these facilities with other emergency service workers and partners. Our service delivery will be enabled by a compact, responsive and motivated team of support staff providing essential high quality support services. We will seek further efficiencies by exploring opportunities for shared services with other public sector providers.



To achieve the highest standards of performance WMFRA is committed to providing an environment that encourages all staff to 'be the best they can be' in pursuit of excellence. This includes investment in the highest quality training and development facilities used to support individual and team development plans. To ensure this focus is maintained a robust performance management framework will be delivered through a lean, accountable and empowered management structure.

We are committed to an evidence based approach to enhancing the delivery of our response, prevention and protection services. We seek to be flexible and technologically advanced. We will equip our staff with the most effective systems and equipment to deliver our services to the community in an assertive, safe and effective manner. The tried and tested 'fire engine' continues to be the primary vehicle to attend our highest risk incidents and a minimum of one will continue to operate from all of our stations, supported by the Brigade Response Vehicles that the service continues to develop.

All staff in West Midlands Fire Service are empowered to act and innovate in delivery of the strategic objectives contained within 'The Plan 2013-16'. We will publish our progress through a set of performance indicators that will be scrutinised by members of the WMFRA on a regular basis.

To provide transparency and focus our strategic direction is detailed in this 'rolling' 3-year strategy. It is intended to focus our plans for the current business whilst indicating our intentions for subsequent years. By sharing this strategy with the community we serve it is also intended to inform future public consultation that will help shape our priorities on a continuous basis.

Over many years the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service has achieved a national and international reputation for delivering a high quality and cost effective service. Our key aim in these challenging times is to maintain this excellence for communities here in the West Midlands.

# 03

## THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

### People

West Midlands Fire Service is the second largest fire and rescue service in the country, delivering emergency response, prevention, advice and legislative enforcement services to 2.7 million residents in the seven local authority districts that make up the service area within the West Midlands conurbation. The population of the West Midlands is made up of the following ethnicities:

- White 70.1%
- Asian or Asian British 18.9%
- Black African/Caribbean or Black British 6%
- Mixed Origin 3.4%
- Other 1.6%

(<sup>1</sup> Census 2011 First Release)

The communities of the West Midlands are amongst the most diverse in the UK. The services we provide must continue to meet these differing needs and achieve our vision through the delivery of our core services of Prevention, Protection and Response. As part of our commitment to this and in delivering services effectively, we continue to work with partner agencies and other organisations to improve outcomes for the communities of the West Midlands.

Our partnerships aim to deliver prevention activities through supporting the priorities of Community Safety Partnerships as well as influencing other collaborative partners such as Health and Wellbeing boards. We continue to proactively work with local authorities, government agencies, voluntary organisations and the private sector to achieve our vision of 'Making West Midlands Safer.'

A breakdown of our community profiles covered by West Midlands Fire Service can be found in the 'Equality and Diversity Report and Objectives 2012-2015.'

This report outlines our approaches to engaging with and delivering our services to the communities of the West Midlands. Through the achievement of these objectives we meet legislative requirements and our public duties and aim to achieve excellence in the following key areas:

- Accountability
- Leadership & Promoting Inclusion
- Effective Service Delivery & Community Engagement
- Employment & Training
- Evaluation & Sharing Good Practice

## The Place

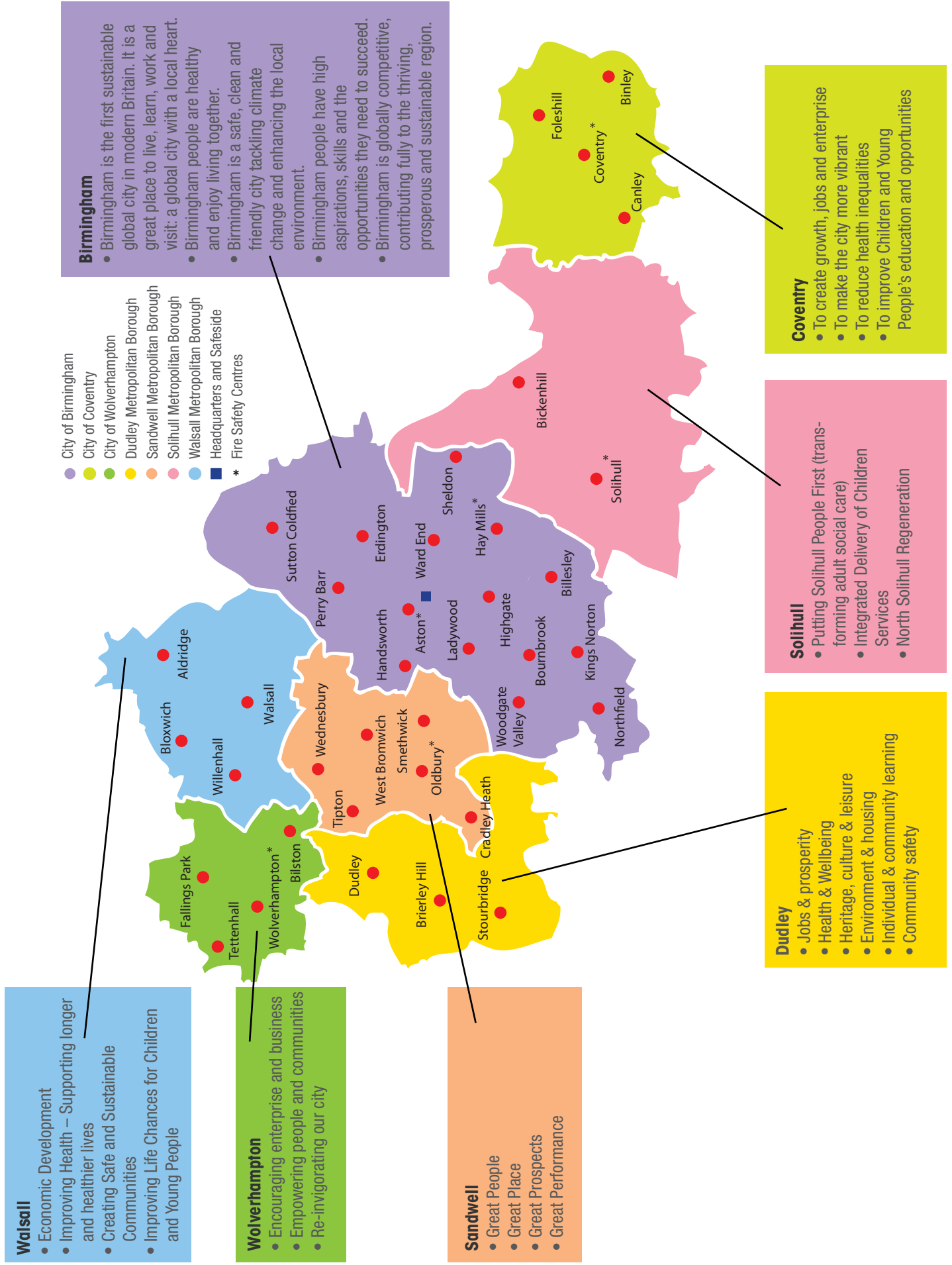
The West Midlands conurbation is heavily urbanised and has one of the highest proportions of manufacturing companies in the UK as well as a thriving service sector. There are several highly industrialised areas.

The West Midlands has an excellent transport infrastructure located at the hub of the UK's major and busiest road and rail routes and has the second largest airport in the UK, Birmingham International.

There continues to be significant investment in urban regeneration which continues to change the face of the West Midlands, providing more commercial opportunities and residential accommodation.

The map on the next page highlights, in each of the cities and metropolitan boroughs which West Midlands Fire Service covers, the priorities set by local authority partnerships to address the needs of the communities they serve. The location of all our community fire stations and fire safety centres is also indicated demonstrating the wide geographical spread of our people and other resources.

# Our Local Partnership Priorities





## ABOUT US

There are several key primary pieces of legislation set out by central Government which affect the delivery of our services.

[The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) sets out our statutory duties and powers. These duties are discharged through the [Fire and Rescue Service National Framework](#), launched in July 2012. This document sets out the Governments expectations of all Fire Authorities in England.

[The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#) applies to most premises other than single private dwellings and sets out the steps required of premise owners to reduce the risk from fire.

The Plan sets out how we will respond to these legislative responsibilities by addressing risks in the community and continuing to deliver against the expectations of central Government through our core services of prevention, protection and response.

Our **prevention** services focus on public involvement and education, engaging with our partners, targeting schools, communities and vulnerable people with advice and guidance.

Our **protection** service prioritises the risks to the business sector, focusing on the provision of advice and importantly the enforcement of legislation.

Our **response** service protects life and properties across the range of emergencies we attend.

West Midlands Fire Service has successfully reduced the number and impact of fires across our area reinforcing the importance of these core services. In delivering these in the most effective and efficient way we maintain our vision of 'Making West Midlands Safer.'

## Our Authority and Corporate Board

WMFRA is made up of Members of the seven Local Authorities in the West Midlands conurbation. Our Authority and Corporate Board work together to set the direction for the Service through:

- Consulting the public on service priorities and allocation of resources
- Agreeing the plans and objectives for service delivery.
- Setting the budget and the amount paid to the service through council tax.
- Working with partners on community safety, protection and response.
- Monitoring the performance of the Service

More detail around the roles and responsibilities of our Authority and Corporate Board can be found [here](#).

## Our Staff

Our core values set out how we expect our employees to be the best they can be in all that they do to deliver our core services to the communities of the West Midlands:

We will value **service to the community** by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

We value all of our **people** by practicing and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

We value **diversity** in the service and the community by:

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the Service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

We value **improvement** at all levels of the Service by:

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others



## OUR PRIORITIES: OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Through our work we intend to continue to focus on reducing the demands placed upon us to respond to emergencies, through public education and by engaging with partner services.

The following page sets out the Priorities, Outcomes and Strategic Objectives which will inform how we will target our resources and activity towards 'Making West Midlands Safer' in each of our four key Priority areas: Communities and Partnerships, Response, People and Value for Money.

These priorities are underpinned by a number of supporting strategies, action plans and programmes and projects, detailing how we intend to deliver our Strategic Objectives and Outcomes.





# OUR PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

PRIORITIES	OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<b>Communities And Partnerships</b> Working with our partners these objectives will enable us to target communities and individuals who are more at risk from safety related issues in the home, including fire. We will also aim to tackle issues such as healthier living, anti-social behaviour and safer business premises, through a multi-agency approach.	1. We will improve the safety of our communities at risk from fire 2. We will improve road safety through targeted action 3. We will improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of local communities 4. We will advise and enforce on fire safety issues across the West Midlands to comply with fire safety legislation 5. We will deliver a safe, economic, efficient and effective emergency response service	1. Reduce the number and severity of fire, injuries and deaths 2. Improved road safety 3. At all times we are well prepared in order to respond to all incidents including major threat and emergencies 4. Improved safety, health and wellbeing of our local communities	<b>“MAKING WEST MIDLANDS SAFER”</b>
<b>Response</b> Planning in conjunction with other partner agencies for known risks and emergency situations can make a real impact on saving lives and protecting our local community in an emergency.	6. We will develop a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce reflective of our community, who are focused on continually improving the services we provide	5. Protect business from risk of fire in order to support the economy	
<b>People</b> We will develop a highly skilled, flexible and dynamic workforce that delivers excellence in our work for the community  We will embed effective strategies in all that we do to support the service in achieving equality outcomes for our diverse communities and workforce  We will ensure that our workforce is continually developed so that it is increasingly responsive and able to meet the challenges of change		6. Reduce the number of malicious calls and false alarms  7. Deliver value for money and improve our services by making best use of all of our resources	
<b>Value For Money</b> West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to providing a high quality Value for Money (VfM) service. We recognise the need to continue to place an emphasis on VfM, so we are able to respond to external influences and the challenges we face in delivering the high quality services expected by our communities, with less resources.		8. Deliver services in a responsible and sustainable way to reduce the impact of our work on the environment	
Through the provision of an effective performance management and reporting framework, we will constantly challenge the use of resources to ensure the delivery of our Services in the most economic, efficient and effective way.		9. High levels of public satisfaction and confidence in our services so people feel safer	

## OUR RISK BASED ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

To manage our performance in responding to emergency incidents, we ensure that we give greater priority to the most important calls, allowing us to allocate resources according to risk taking into account factors such as deprivation and the history of dwelling fires within that location. An Area Risk Map (ARM), shows us where the areas of high, medium and low risk reside in the West Midlands. This map is then used as part of the basis for planning our emergency response strategy and helps to categorise all of the incidents we respond to, according to the level of risk they present, aligning these with the risk areas shown on the map, to produce a risk matrix. Using the ARM and risk matrix gives us confidence that even if we need to change our approach to emergency response in the future, we can do this in a way that aligns resources with risk, which is proportionate and appropriate.

Our Risk Based Attendance Standards sets out our commitment to the communities of the West Midlands, showing how we will respond to incidents according to the risks they present. The ARM and [Risk Based Attendance Standards](#) can be viewed in our '[Community Safety Strategy](#)' which is explained further in that document. We will continue to deliver a risk based five minute attendance time for the first fire fighting appliance to incidents where life and property are at risk. Our performance against these standards during 2012 is set out below.

### Average time for 1st pump in-attendance

Incident Category	High Risk Area	Medium Risk Area	Low Risk Area	Overall
1	04:42	05:05	05:31	05:05
2	05:23	05:39	05:43	05:37
3	05:27	05:24	05:52	05:32
4	05:29	05:37	05:58	05:41
5	05:17	05:35	06:07	05:41

### Percentages of 1st pump in-attendance meeting targets

Incident Category	High Risk Area	Medium Risk Area	Low Risk Area	Overall
1	60.60	53.49	47.34	53.80
2	84.30	80.49	76.54	80.03
3	96.42	96.04	94.69	95.80
4	100.00	99.72	99.85	99.80
5	99.74	99.81	99.69	99.77

## MEETING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

It is vital for us to provide services that meet our communities' needs and expectations. Our focus therefore remains clear on the delivery of our core services and the management of risk across all our activities.

Our '[Community Safety Strategy](#)' sets out how West Midlands Fire Service will address risk in the community and make the people of the West Midlands safer throughout the period 2013-2016.

We have developed the Community Safety Strategy, based on a Strategic Risk Analysis and through consultation carried out with the public, their representatives, partners and our workforce. The Strategic Risk Analysis identified the key threats and challenges the service faces. This analysis has been carried out to ensure that we are able to continue providing the highest standards of service in the areas of prevention, protection and emergency response. We use this information to plan our operational activity as outlined earlier in '[Our Risk Based Attendance Standards](#)' and help set priorities in the strategy.

Our recent 'Community Safety Strategy' consultation undertaken during December 2012, aimed to engage the public in a more detailed look at how we intend to manage risk in the community over the next three years, providing an opportunity to influence the way we work now and into the future. The consultation posed a number of questions based around a plan of how this risk will be managed and mitigated. The detailed outcomes of this consultation can be found [here](#).

Our focus on improving the safety of our communities at risk from fire will continue through effective and targeted prevention based activity. Public involvement and education have proven successful as an approach to influencing behaviours in the home and workplace. One area of focus, through working with our partners, will be to continue educating the public about the risks and consequences of dangerous driving.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Grand Plan', <http://www.longbridgebirmingham.co.uk/grand-plan.html>

Our protection services prioritise the business sector, focusing on the provision of advice and importantly the enforcement of legislation through a team of qualified inspectors. The Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) covers all known business premises where fire safety audits are required and prioritises these to guide our approach and resources in a targeted way. This enables us to achieve the greatest impact on safety for the community as well as our fire fighters, should a fire occur.

Our response service protects life and properties across the range of emergencies we attend and will always be a priority. Despite all efforts to prevent fires and reduce their impact, fires and emergencies will continue to happen and, as highlighted earlier in this document, we strive to deliver the highest response standards possible.

Deploying resources according to risk is a principle we will continue to apply to our attendances at incidents and the allocation of our resources, both people and equipment. As part of this, challenging calls to automatic fire alarms and non urgent calls ensures we will only respond to a genuine emergency. Our target for attending high risk incidents within 5 minutes will remain and we will always aim to get to high risk incidents as fast as possible.

Our successes in prevention means the demand for our service is changing. For example, we have managed down our calls by about 60% over the last ten years and there are less accidental fires in dwellings due in part to effective prevention work. In contrast we are now experiencing an increasing number of calls to road traffic incidents. So despite having great successes in reducing the number and impact of fires, we must continue to focus our resources to address other emerging risks and the demands these place on our resources.

The Outcomes and Strategic Objectives detailed earlier in this Plan provide an outline of how we aim to deliver against these outcomes through our key priorities.



# HOW WE ARE CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE

As the government continues to reduce the centrally funded grant provided to fire and rescue services, West Midlands Fire Service will focus on the delivery of this Plan to meet changing expectations, the demands these place on our services; and to maintain efforts in driving down the suffering and loss caused by fire and other emergencies in our communities. To achieve this our focus will be:

- Continuing to review the way in which we work to identify efficiencies and better ways of working. Changes are already taking place in areas such as administration, fire safety and as part of the management structure.
- Investing in high quality training and development for staff, supporting the achievement of excellence in individual and team development objectives against core competencies.
- To ensure the use of enhanced technology in our equipment and vehicles remains a key component to the delivery of effective, efficient and targeted services.
- To explore further opportunities for collaboration and sharing of services with other public sector providers, developing an important route to delivering against the priorities we share with other agencies.
- To work with existing and new partners to address joint priorities. Our partnerships bring about benefits for both West Midlands Fire Service and the partnering organisation but most importantly for the communities of the West Midlands.
- To explore and exploit opportunities to generate income by maintaining and growing what we currently do and identifying opportunities for the future.

Our challenge is to maintain this approach whilst continuing to assess fire and rescue related risks, which could affect our communities.

### Communities & Partnerships

- We will improve the safety of our communities at risk from fire
- We will improve road safety through targeted action
- We will improve the quality of life and economic prosperity of local communities
- We will advise and enforce on fire safety issues across the West Midlands to comply with fire safety legislation

### People

- We will develop a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce reflective of our community, who are focused on continually improving the services we provide to our community

CORE VALUES

IMPROVEMENT

CORE

OUTC

PRIOR

High levels of public satisfaction and confidence in our services so people feel safer



COMMUNITIES & PARTNERSHIPS

Deliver services in a responsible and sustainable way to reduce the impact of our work on the environment

Reduce the number of malicious calls and false alarms

PEOPLE



Deliver Value for Money and improve our services by making best use of all of our resources

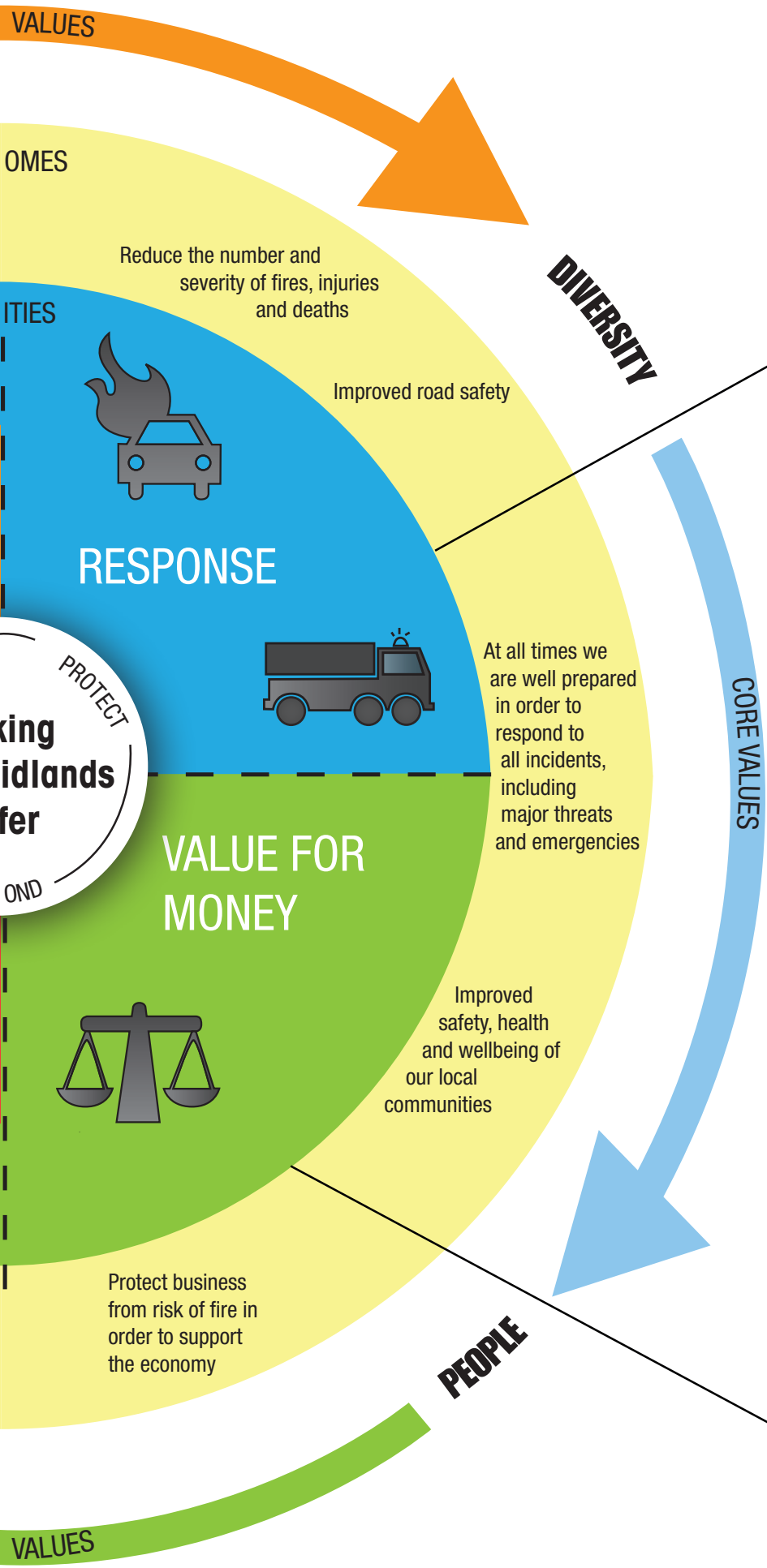
SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

CORE

PREVENT

Make  
West M  
Sa

RESP



**Response**

- We will deliver a safe, economic, efficient and effective emergency response service

**Value for Money**

- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to providing a high quality, value-for-money service.

## OUR PERFORMANCE

### How Do We Know We Are Delivering Our Outcomes

We aim to target our activities where we perceive the greatest risks are to the community. It is important we measure and evaluate our performance to understand how we are achieving this and to drive continuous improvement.

Our performance reporting framework provides consistent review of our achievements (our outcomes) to ensure we are performing in the most effective, economic and efficient way. We review progress against this Plan on a regular basis. The Authority's Scrutiny Committee are responsible for monitoring and scrutinising performance of the Service.

Key performance indicators and targets allow us to monitor progress, make key decisions and improve performance. Our current Corporate Performance Indicators and targets for 2013/2014 can be found [here](#).

The targets we set represent our goals for improved performance. To better understand expected (most likely) outcomes in performance and target resources effectively, we will increasingly use forecasting techniques. This provides a realistic overview of performance, helps to better inform the targets set and acceptable variations in performance over time.

Those strategic risks impacting on the Authority's ability to deliver the strategic objectives are identified and managed within the Corporate Risk Assurance Map. These are continually reviewed and evaluated to ensure our risk management arrangements remain effective. Corporate Risk is reported into the Authority's Audit Committee who has responsibility for ensuring audit and governance arrangements are in place and effective.



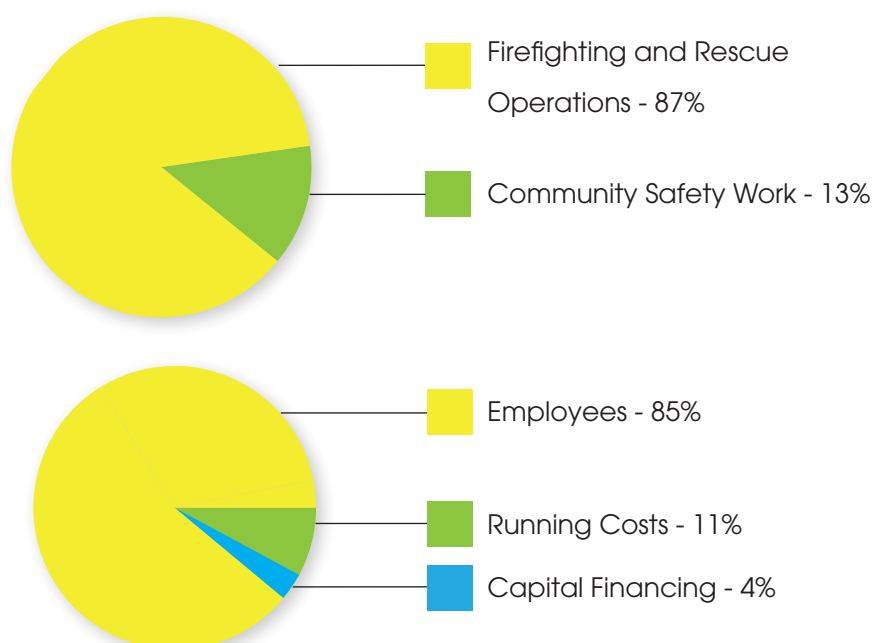
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2013/2014

### How much will the Service cost in 2013/2014?

The total net budget requirement for the Fire Service in 2013/2014 is £107m. This mainly relates to firefighting and rescue operations and community fire safety work.

The majority of expenditure relating to the net budget requirement of £107m is mainly employee costs, a further analysis is shown below.

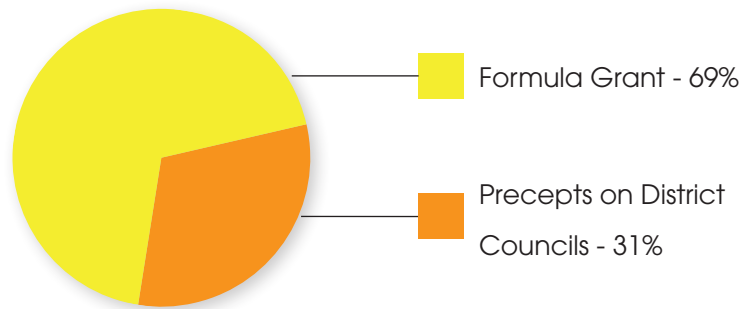
#### Expenditure



### How will the Service be funded in 2013/2014?

The resources to fund the net budget requirement of £107m comes in the form of a formula grant from the Government (£74m) and Precepts on District Councils (£33m).

## Financing



## Balances and Reserves

The Fire Authority must consider the level of general balances it wishes to maintain before it can decide the level of Council Tax to charge in any year.

In order to set a balanced budget in 2013/2014 the Authority assumed no movement in general balances. The actual level of general balances at 31st March 2012 was £6.720m. The Authority holds general balances as funding to meet any unforeseen events which it may need to respond to. Interest is earned on any unused balances.

In addition, as part of the closedown of accounts process, consideration needs to be given to the level of earmarked reserves required. These are amounts set aside to meet specific anticipated future demands. The level of earmarked reserves at 31st March 2012 was £23.067m. Interest is earned on any balances until expenditure is committed against the demands identified.

## Capital Expenditure and Funding

In 2013/2014, the Authority plans to spend £6.2 million on capital projects.

A planned capital expenditure analysis is shown below:

	£m
Land & Buildings	4.8
Vehicles	0.9
Equipment	0.5

A forecast of resources to fund the capital programme in 2013/2014 is shown below:

	£m
<b>Capital Grants</b>	5.8
<b>Revenue Funding</b>	0.4

The Fire Authority did not undertake any borrowing to help purchase assets during 2011/12, borrowing in earlier years meant that as at the 31st March 2012, the Authority had total loans of £44.644m (the interest and principal on any loans needs to be met from future revenue budgets). The value of fixed assets held by the Authority as at 31st March 2012 which the loans had helped fund was £142m, of which approximately 92% related to land and buildings and 8% related to vehicles and equipment.

### Medium Term Financial Plan

The cost of delivering the service was considered as part of the Authority's 2013/14 budget setting process. The medium term financial plan supports this and enables managers to develop their own plans for a three to five year period. The medium term financial plan is refreshed annually for the new business year and allows the Authority to prepare in advance for future events. Future restrictions in public sector expenditure and Government grant will have an impact on how this plan supports the delivery of service objectives.

## CONTACT US

If you would like to obtain further information about any aspect of this Plan, please contact us, using one of the methods shown below:

Strategic Planning Improvement and Risk Team  
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters  
99 Vauxhall Road  
Birmingham  
B7 4HW

**0121 380 6678**

**SPIRiT@wmfs.net**

If you have access to the Internet, **www.wmfs.net** provides everything you need to know about the services we provide, our performance, fire safety advice and recruitment.

For further information about your Fire Service, you can contact our customer care service by:

Public Relations Team  
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters  
99 Vauxhall Road  
Birmingham  
B7 4HW

Customer Care Hotline – **0121 380 7404**  
(24 Hour answerphone)

**contact@wmfs.net**



## OTHER FORMATS

The Authority is committed to equality of opportunity but must demonstrate value for money. All requests for our leaflets and publications to be reproduced in alternative formats and languages will be considered, however due to cost implications we may seek other methods of communication.

Please call **0121 380 6678** (24 hour answerphone).

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Making West Midlands Safer