

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

11TH FEBRUARY 2008

1. CORPORATE STRATEGY ACTION LIST; MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN; ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN CONSULTATION OUTCOMES AND PROPOSED RESPONSES AND THE ACTION PLAN OF THE ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN

Joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the Authority approves the three year Corporate Strategy Action List set out as Appendix 1 to the report.
- 1.2 THAT the Authority approves the Medium Term Financial Plan which is aligned to the three year Corporate Strategy Action List set out as Appendix 2 to the report.
- 1.3 THAT the Authority approves the responses to the consultation replies received as part of the twelve weeks' consultation process about the Action Plan items of the Annual Service Plan set out as Appendix 3 to the report.
- 1.4 THAT the Authority approves the Action Plan section of the Annual Service Plan as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted for the Authority to approve the Action List which will form part of the Corporate Strategy document 2008-2011; to approve the alignment with the Medium Term Financial Plan; to approve the consultation responses in respect of the Annual Service Plan Action Plan, the proposed responses to those replies and finally to agree the Action Plan section of the Annual Service Plan.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 12th February 2007 the Authority approved a fundamental change to the business planning process. It agreed the production of a three year rolling Corporate Strategy that would set out the Action List for that period and show the alignment with the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 3.2 It also approved the production of an Annual Service Plan setting out in detail the proposed prevention, protection and response options the Service would be pursuing in the subsequent financial year. This document also includes the Integrated Risk Management Action Plan section which has been subject to the statutory twelve weeks' public consultation. This satisfies the requirements of the National Framework document which is given statutory power by the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act.
- 3.3 Since the production for the first time last year of the three year Corporate Strategy and the Annual Service Plan, an officer group known as the Corporate Strategy Working Group has been meeting regularly to fulfil its terms of reference. These are:
- To speak to their Director for their strategy steer regarding the inclusion of items in the Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Plan.
 - To speak to staff in their Directorate, Command or Station to identify items to be included in the Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Plan.
 - To periodically communicate drafts of the Corporate Strategy to their Director and staff in their Directorate, Command or Station to update them as to items being included in the Corporate Strategy and Annual Service Plan.
 - To understand the links between the various plans and processes. In particular, the Corporate Strategy, Annual Service Plan and the financial planning process.
 - To explain the linkages referred to in the fourth bullet point above, to staff in their Directorate, Command or Station.
 - To regularly scan the future and consider what may impact on the Service.
 - To risk assess those items that may impact on the Service in the future and determine whether or not they should be included in the Corporate Strategy.
 - To record those items that, after risk assessment, it is decided not to include in the Corporate Strategy and the reasons why.

- 3.4 Again the opportunity has been taken to use the Annual Service Plan and Corporate Strategy as a means of enhancing communication with our staff. The draft Corporate Strategy has been circulated internally for staff consultation and to invite involvement in its development. The Annual Service Plan has been created in a style designed to capture the attention of our staff in particular, as well as the public. The intention has been to clearly explain our aims and objectives so that all of our employees are able to identify their role in contributing to the delivery of our service to the community.
- 3.5 Because the requirement to produce a Best Value Performance Plan including details of performance indicators, targets and outcomes has been removed, it has been decided to approach target setting in a new manner. Although the final figures for each year's indicators will not be known until the end of April, officers' ability to predict informed final outcome figures is resilient enough to be able to set targets in the forthcoming year's Annual Service Plan. This better aligns the planning process with what the Service is aiming to achieve in terms of its performance measures. These will be set in conjunction with the Lead Members for performance management.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIAs)**

The Action List will be described in more detail in the Departmental and Command Action Plans. The Action Planning template prompts authors to consider the equality impact assessment of individual Action Plan items and if necessary to complete initial or full EIAs.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The National Framework document for 2005-08 is given statutory power by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Section 1.4 of the Framework requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to "produce Annual Action Plans in which they have fully consulted their local communities, allowing twelve weeks for consultation".

6. **TRADE UNION CONSULTATION**

The Trade Unions have been specifically consulted about the contents of the Action Plan of the Annual Service Plan as part of the statutory 12 weeks period of consultation.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Medium Term Financial Plan is part of the three year Corporate Strategy. The planning assumptions and target setting process is timed to coincide with the budget setting process, ensuring that tactical and financial plans are aligned. The costs of printing the plans can be met from within existing budgets.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-2008
Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
Agenda Item 8, WMFRA meeting 12th February 2007
Minute 5/07 refers

F. J. E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

L. BATEMAN
TREASURER

Corporate Strategy – Action List

**KEY PRIORITY 1: COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

1.1 Educate, inform, target vulnerable groups

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
1	We will continue to reduce death, injury and the impact of property damage on our communities as a result of preventable fires in the home.	Operations	H	✓	
2	Ensure the build of a new community safety facility – ‘Safeside at Eastside’ within the new HQ site	Technical Services	H	✓	
	Develop and implement the Safeside facility and function at the new HQ site	Operations Support	H	✓	
	Develop and implement a strategy to deliver community safety education at Safeside in partnership with public and private sectors	Operations Support	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 1: COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

1.2 Ensure our services meet the needs of diverse local communities

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
3	To scan the potential for research into the installation of sprinklers and other automatic fire suppression systems judged necessary to protect life and property in both domestic and non domestic premises	Operations Support	L		✓
4	To relocate Headquarters and Fire Control from Lancaster Circus to Vauxhall Road	Technical Services	H	✓	
5	To develop an Asset Management Portfolio	Technical Services	H	✓	
6	To implement Firelink prior to HQ move	Technical Services	H	✓	
7	To implement a new regional Fire Control centre	Technical Services	H		✓
8	Procure and implement a new Command and Control system to be available at the new Headquarters	Operations Support	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 1: COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

1.3 Advice and enforcement

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
9	Review business processes, Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) and staffing arrangements in the Fire Safety Centres	Operations Support	M	✓	
10	Create and develop a strategy for ensuring compliance and support with the Local Better Regulation Office, both at strategic and local levels	Operations Support	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 1: COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

1.4 Combat arson and fire crime

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
11	We will continue to minimise the impact of arson on communities, businesses and local authorities by working with partners to prevent deliberate fires, through education, development of good practice and provision of support for other agencies.	Operations	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 1: COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

1.5 Work with partner agencies to achieve our common objectives

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
12	We will work with our partners to fulfil our statutory duties and community responsibility to achieve successful community outcomes through Local Area Agreements (LAA) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP).	Operations	H	✓	
13	We will work with partners to influence reductions in the numbers of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in line with the following national indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NI 47 people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions NI 48 children killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions 	Operations	H	✓	
14	Review and develop data-sharing protocols and systems with other agencies. To review and validate the current security arrangements relating to corporate data	Corporate Planning & Support	M		✓
15	Research opportunities and implement actions where identified to collaborate with regional partners. Where appropriate develop Service Level Agreements in the delivery of emergency response services	Operations Support	H	✓	✓

**KEY PRIORITY 2: RESPONSE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

2.1 Deploy appropriate resources

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
16	Develop the operational intelligence capacity to support improvements in the effectiveness of emergency response, fire safety and community safety services.	Operations Support	H	✓	
17	Lobby for the removal of acetylene from the workplace and investigate alternative methods of dealing with incidents involving acetylene cylinders	Operations Support	L	✓	✓
18	Undertake a feasibility study to develop current water support capability into a water rescue capability	Operations Support	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 2: RESPONSE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

2.2 Deal effectively with incidents

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
19	Develop strategy and tactical guidance to ensure that the proposed benefits are realised from the introduction and operational use of Targeted Response Vehicles	Operations Support	H	✓	✓

**KEY PRIORITY 2: RESPONSE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

2.3 Provide appropriate vehicles, equipment and information

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
20	We will have in place effective arrangements for gathering and using operational risk information.	Operations	H	✓	
21	Introduce flexible servicing and maintenance of WMFS fleet to support full availability of front line appliances	Technical Services	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 2: RESPONSE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

2.4 Develop civil resilience and planning

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
22	To develop and implement an ICT security strategy	Technical Services	H	✓	
23	To further embed risk management principles and then develop and implement appropriate processes within the organisation	Corporate Planning & Support	H		✓
24	Co-ordinate and consolidate capacity for resilience and Business Continuity Ensure the Service has the capability to meet requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 – Local Resilience Forum and National Mutual Assistance	Operations Support	H	✓	✓

25	Carry out planning and preparations for the Olympics 2012 and other major events	Operations Support	H	✓	✓
26	Develop a radiation strategy to include the issue of CLG equipment	Operations Support	M	✓	
27	Lead the Service in carrying out integrated risk management planning and developing proposals that will improve the effectiveness of service delivery. Incorporate evidence from district/regional development plans and predicted demographic/social change into risk analysis and forecasts. The planning should provide proposals related to Emergency Response, Fire Safety and Community safety work	Operations Support	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

3.1 Developing leadership capacity

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
28	To support the development of staff within the organisation to ensure our managers develop and demonstrate excellent leadership skills	Human Resources			
29	To support the organisation in attracting and retaining people with excellent leadership skills	Human Resources			

**KEY PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

3.2 Developing the organisation

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
30	To implement revised brand identity incorporating a marketing strategy	Corporate Planning & Support	H	✓	
31	To carry out a communications audit including consultation processes	Corporate Planning & Support	H	✓	
32	To produce a long-term media strategy incorporating press office cover	Corporate Planning & Support	H	✓	
33	To further enhance the integrated action planning template utilising ICT	Corporate Planning & Support	M		✓
34	To implement a new Incident Recording System within the Statistics section	Corporate Planning & Support	H	✓	
35	To identify and address the HR implications to facilitate the changeover to a Regional Control Centre	Human Resources	H		✓
36	To review the Equality Impact Assessment process and training. Implement any appropriate changes	Human Resources	H	✓	
37	To work towards attaining the new level 3 Equality Standards for Local Government award	Human Resources	H	✓	
38	To review the provision of equality training in the organisation. To implement new courses as appropriate	Human Resources	M		✓
39	To improve the framework for consultation and communication, and review processes for the resolution of employee relations issues	Human Resources	H	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

3.3 Developing the skills and capacity of our workforce

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
40	Using IPDS we will provide development for all staff across Operations to enable them to perform their roles competently, supported by sustainable and integrated development programmes.	Operations	H	✓	
41	Develop a second facility for Fire Behaviour training	Human Resources	H	✓	
42	To develop a quality assurance process regarding the technical rescue station	Human Resources	H	✓	
43	To develop and deliver a programme to ensure all command officers receive command training and assessment	Human Resources	H	✓	
44	Continued development of IPDS to support skilled and competent workforce Determine and support personnel skill requirements in line with IRM/National Framework	Human Resources	H		✓

**KEY PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

3.4 Resourcing the West Midlands Fire Service

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
45	Introduce medium to longer term workforce planning (3-5 years) - provide sufficient staff with appropriate skills to achieve necessary staffing levels for appliances, Fire Safety Centres and all other workers	Human Resources	H	✓	
46	To produce workforce plan to enable effective succession/capacity planning	Human Resources	M	✓	
47	Undertake a functions audit to identify and generate internal departmental efficiencies to be realised on relocation to the new Headquarters	Operations Support	M	✓	

**KEY PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

3.5 Reward and Recognition

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
48	Ensure the organisation's recruitment, retention, reward and development strategies and practices deliver the skilled workforce needed in the medium to long term	Human Resources	H	✓	
49	To support the development of reward and recognition structures that deliver value for money	Human Resources			

50	To develop flexible working practices to support performance improvement and provide employment conditions that suit our diverse workforce and the needs of the organisation	Human Resources	H	✓	
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**KEY PRIORITY 3: PEOPLE
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

3.6 Promoting the health and well-being of the workforce

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
51	We will continue to care for the health, safety and well-being of all our staff and create a culture of full attendance at work.	Operations	H	✓	
52	Continue to promote and support a positive health and well-being culture	Human Resources	H	✓	
53	To provide high quality health and fitness education for all employees to enable them to look after their own health and well-being	Human Resources			
54	To provide access to relevant employee benefit schemes that will promote the West Midlands Fire Service as an employer of choice				
55	To work with managers to reduce the number of days lost due to sickness absence and rehabilitate employees at the earliest opportunity				
56	Developing and delivering a programme of thematic Health and Safety audits and system reviews	Operations Support	H	✓	✓
57	Scan research into climate change and potential impact on service demand. Lead the development and implementation of the environmental strategy that reduces the Service's carbon footprint	Operations Support	H	✓	✓

**KEY PRIORITY 4: VALUE FOR MONEY
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

4.1 Budget to demonstrate Value for Money

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10- 2010/11
58	The partnerships officer will develop appropriate partnerships with relevant governance aimed at achieving Value for Money	Finance	H	✓	
59	Budget holders will ensure the funding they are responsible for achieves Value for Money	Finance	H		✓
60	Monthly budget monitoring reports will be produced detailing appropriate comparison information of expenditure against available funding to enable pro-active management of the Authority's resources	Finance	H		✓
61	High levels of service performance will be maintained whilst restricting annual council tax increases to below 5%	Finance	H		✓
62	The Authority's Efficiency Statements will be produced to demonstrate Value for Money	Finance	H		✓

**KEY PRIORITY 4: VALUE FOR MONEY
IMPROVEMENT, PEOPLE, DIVERSITY, SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

4.2 Ensure continuous improvement

No.	Action	Responsible Director	Priority (H – High M – Medium L – Low)	Completed by	
				2008/09	2009/10-2010/11
63	We will improve the systems and operational resources that are used to deliver prevention, operational preparedness and learning and development activities in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make more effective, efficient and economical use of our resources • minimise the environmental impact of those activities 	Operations	H	✓	
64	We will develop asset plans that identify the facilities required by our staff and communities and which take account of the environmental impact of our buildings and activities	Operations	H	✓	
65	We will improve our business support systems and increase efficiency by creating a suite of standardised business process across Operations	Operations	M	✓	
66	Review and examine our current vision of 'Making West Midlands safer' to make find out if it still meets our key objectives	Chief Fire Officer	H	✓	
67	Support, improve and refine Operations performance management arrangements	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H	✓	
68	To mainstream and embed a performance management culture and to support, guide and develop performance champions	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H		✓
69	To capture organisational knowledge and make it available when required	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H	✓	
70	Working with functions developing and implementing cross functional service critical performance measures	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H		✓
71	Undertake themed performance reviews/audits to address future expectations of the fire service, community needs and value for money	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H		✓

72	Develop a forward looking Route Map that will provide a positive focus with an emphasis on preparing for Direction of Travel, Value for Money and Use of Resources assessments	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H	✓	
73	Scope the requirements that are necessary to drive forward the organisation's response to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	H		✓
74	Co-ordinate through the Corporate Strategy Working Group and action planning process the requirements of the 'Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-2011'	Corporate Planning & Support	H	✓	

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

As part of its medium term planning strategy the Authority has produced a three year Medium Term Financial Plan covering the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. The purpose of this plan is to illustrate the potential affect the 2008/09 to 2010/11 budget has on future years' precepts. Information is provided on the estimated revenue expenditure and the three year Capital Programme.

- To identify the cost of the Service to enable the Authority to calculate the amount of funding that needs to be raised through Council Tax.
- Forms an integral part of the Authority's performance management system and is the benchmark against which actual financial performance is measured.
- To provide details of the Authority's approved capital investment plan for the next three years. This plan forms part of the overall Corporate Strategy and the schemes included within it support the Authority's Key Priorities.

The Authority recognises the importance of ensuring the service to the community represents value for money. All budget holders are required to consider value for money and efficiency when determining budget estimates. One of the most obvious ways that the Authority demonstrates how the service has delivered Value for Money is through the production of Annual Efficiency Statements.

Financing of the Fire and Rescue Service

This section provides a summary of how much the service costs along with details of how the money is raised.

How much does the Service cost?

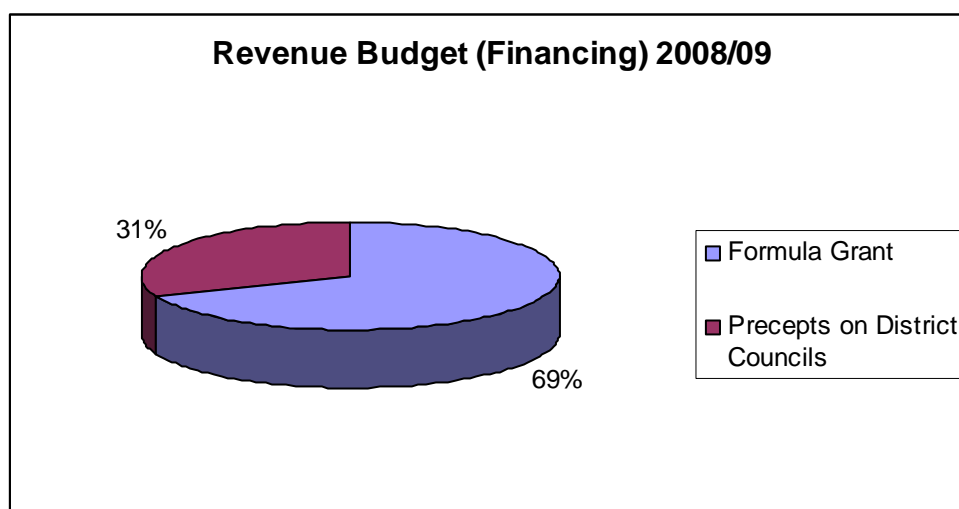
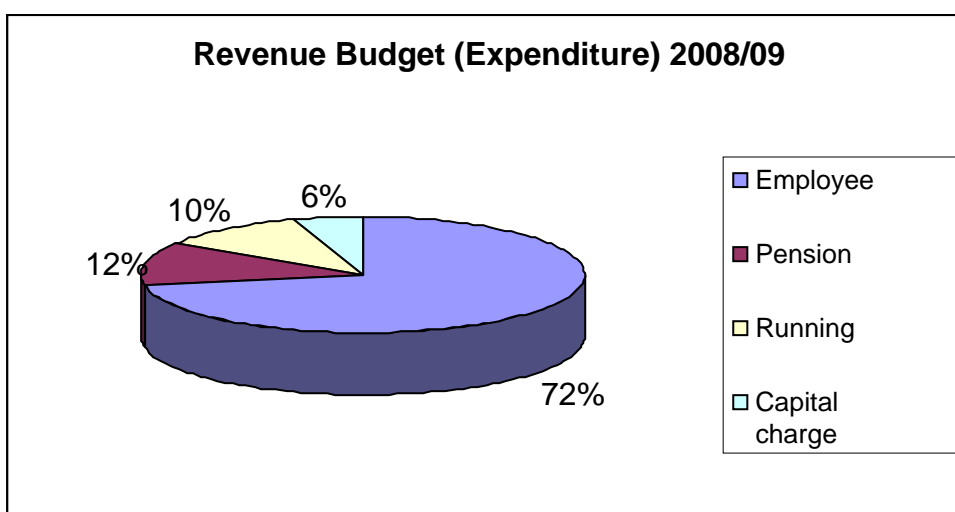
The table below details the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority's revenue budget for the financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09:

	2007/08 (£m)	2008/09 (£m)
Gross Expenditure	100.920	105.414
Income	2.574	3.633
Net Expenditure	98.346	101.781
Pensions	13.804	13.629
Total Budget	112.150	115.410

How is the budget spent?

This table and chart show how the budget is planned to be spent in 2008/09:

Expenditure:	(£m)
Employees	83.687
Pensions	13.629
Running Costs	11.540
Capital Financing Charges	6.554
Total	115.410



Who pays for it?

This table and chart show how West Midlands Fire Service is funded. By far the largest source of income is from Central Government in the form of Formula Grant.

The Authority's net revenue budget for 2008/09 is £115.410m financed by:

Financing:	(£m)
Formula Grant	78.977
Precepts on District Councils	36.433
Total Budget	115.410

Revenue Budget 2008/09 to 2010/11

The table below details the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority revenue budget for the financial years 2008/09 to 2010/11 in Best Value format and shows the potential impact of precept levels on District Councils. In 2008/09 approximately 69% of the Authority's expenditure will be funded by Government grant.

Revenue Budget 2008/09 to 2010/11

The table below details the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority revenue budget for the financial years 2008/09 to 2010/11 in Best Value format and shows the potential impact of precept levels on District Councils:

	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s	2010/11 £000s
Firefighting and Rescue Operations	101,987	104,000	106,000
Community Fire Safety	15,479	15,260	15,530
Corporate and Democratic Core	1,501	1,550	1,600
Emergency Planning and Civil Defence	402	410	420
Net Cost of Services	119,369	121,220	123,550
Appropriations and Interest	(3,959)	(4,080)	(4,200)
Total Budget	115,410	117,140	119,350
Financing:			
Formula Grant	78,977	79,900	80,813
Precept on District Councils	36,433	37,240	38,537
Total Financing	115,410	117,140	119,350
Potential impact on precept levels	2.95%	3.0%	3.5%

Three Year Capital Programme 2008/09 to 2010/11

The following table provides detail of the Fire Authority's approved Capital Programme and financing arrangements for the next three years:

	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s	2010/11 £000s
Buildings	5,056	1,960	240
Vehicles	2,369	2,270	2,152
Equipment	1,003	-	-
Total Expenditure	8,428	4,230	2,392
Funded by:			
Borrowing	3,967	4,431	4,559
Revenue Financing	1,949	-	-
Capital Receipts	2,512	135	-
Total Funding	8,428	4,566	4,559
Surplus	-	336	2,167

Annual Service Plan 2008-2009 Summary of Consultation Responses

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
Aerial Appliance Cover	12	A number of consultation responses expressed concerns regarding the reduction of the Hydraulic Platform (HP) vehicles to four. Specific concerns related to major incidents and resource shortages due to simultaneous demand. They felt there may not be enough resilience to meet demands and in the event of breakdown.	<p>Analysis of even simultaneous demand for such vehicles shows that the Brigade has more than enough resilience by retaining 4 such appliances. The Brigade take account of the experience of other Fire Services; however, judgements are made in the context of the risk within the West Midlands and our own resource levels.</p> <p>One HP and one Pump Rescue Ladder will be replaced with the Pump Rescue Water Tower that provides an additional water tower facility in addition to the HPs, whilst still fulfilling the function of a standard fire engine.</p> <p>There are still spare appliances that can be made available and there is the water tower capability of the Pump Rescue Water Tower, in addition to the HP fleet.</p>
	14	Several responses set out concerns regarding why it was proposed the vehicle should be based at Ward End Fire Station and that the nature of the area, with many narrow streets would mean the vehicle's manoeuvrability and its ability to access confined areas may be problematic. Concerns were also expressed regarding its braking ability and about the vehicle's rear overhang.	<p>As with any station area, there are likely to be some streets where access is difficult. The performance of the vehicle both mechanically and operationally will be monitored.</p> <p>Whilst the analysis of the usage of HPs shows that the Service can meet demand levels with fewer HPs, placing a water tower facility on the east side of the Brigade provides a central and eastern capability there in addition to the HP fleet.</p> <p>The Pump Rescue Water Tower has met the full requirements of EN1846 the European specification that includes the vehicle's braking/stopping/capability. The vehicle also meets the British JCDD specification which is more stringent.</p> <p>There is an overhang at the rear of the vehicle but it is within the legal limits for the Department of Transport Certification and Use Regs.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
	6	Some respondents expressed concerns in respect of personnel issues including the number of trained personnel; crews spending longer at incidents; crewing arrangements for the Pump Rescue Water Tower.	<p>The Brigade will ensure that there are sufficient trained personnel. Many of the issues raised will be dealt with as part of workforce planning and Personal Development Reviews.</p> <p>Trained personnel will crew the vehicle. A programme of training relevant station personnel has been commenced.</p> <p>The crewing and mobilisation protocols for the vehicle will need to be agreed prior to its introduction.</p>
	6	Respondents queried the Authority's intentions in respect of standardising the HP fleet. The timing of this and the respective costs of an HP versus the Pump Rescue Water Tower. They also queried the weight of the vehicle as a "first strike" vehicle.	It is intended to standardise on the SS263H type of HP, this could happen by approximately winter 2010. The Pump Rescue Water Tower costs £360k compared to approximately £400k for a HP. The vehicle is heavier than a fire engine but is considered suitable to respond immediately to incidents.
	13	Respondents asked about the relative efficiencies of the HP versus the Pump Rescue Water Tower; the ability to carry out rescues with the latter; when the vehicle will be commissioned and the design features of the vehicle.	<p>The Pump Rescue Water Tower's jet is more efficient than an HP's in volume and it can pump in multiple directions as it is fitted with a double monitor.</p> <p>The Pump Rescue Water Tower has a capability to provide an anchor point for rope rescue but it does not have a platform. If such a facility was required, which is rare, there is sufficient resilience in the HP fleet.</p> <p>If the Authority approves the proposals and once the personnel are trained and competent, it will be commissioned as soon as possible.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs)	18	Many responses on this issue focused on concerns regarding the crewing level for the vehicles and the type of incidents they would be attending. The concerns related to the practicalities of usage, safe systems of work and the lack of detail about type of vehicles to be purchased and what equipment would be carried.	<p>TRVs will be crewed from within the pool of personnel covering the late shift, with a crew of 3 personnel – 1 Crew Commander and 2 Firefighters. The TRV will, in the main, respond to minor fires involving rubbish, grass and the like. Depending on the nature of the equipment on the vehicles their role may be expanded in time.</p> <p>Before any decisions are taken on the exact nature of response provided, full risk assessments will be conducted, as required.</p> <p>Whenever there is a need for additional resources for whatever reasons at an incident, the initial dynamic risk assessment will result in the recognition of this fact by the Crew Commander, who will request appropriate resources.</p> <p>The crewing will come from the posts freed up by the removal of the HP at Ward End Fire Station. It is not intended to use dual or switch staffing for these appliances, which will operate as part of the late shift.</p> <p>The Service will always try and provide risk appropriate vehicles and equipment dependent on the scale and type of demand.</p> <p>It may be that an off-road capability is desirable in some areas, and this is something that will be considered at the specification stage.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
	2	Specifically the Service was asked what the rationale was for the proposed location of the vehicles and would it be at Ward End Fire Station. Additionally, the impact on response times was questioned.	<p>The detail of where the TRV will be based has yet to be determined though it is planned to base one within East Birmingham, covering a number of station areas, to include Ward End.</p> <p>The Service has considered the issue of response times and fire losses. The TRVs will primarily respond to many secondary fires, e.g. grass and rubbish many of which are small and do not result in significant fire losses.</p>
	6	Some respondents asked if it was the intention to replace fire engines with the TRVs.	<p>There are no plans at the moment for the TRVs to replace any fire engine. These are additional vehicles into the fleet.</p> <p>The Service will always try and provide risk appropriate vehicles dependent on the scale and type of demand.</p>
	2	Respondents asked if they could have feedback in the future about the usage of the TRVs and the environmental impact of extinguishing means, e.g. foam.	<p>Data will be provided if requested. It is customary to review the impact of any changes made to the response fleet and to report on this as necessary.</p> <p>Any extinguishing means will be assessed for environmental impact, prior to introduction.</p>
	1	Respondent strongly supported the introduction of such vehicles arguing it would reduce the incidence of small fires.	<p>This is part of the intention of the purchase of the TRVs as they will help free up fire engines for larger emergencies or more prevention based activity.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
Fire and Emergency Response Cover Birmingham	1	One respondent suggested that the late crew appliances would be better sited at quieter two pump stations as it creates greater life risk at busier stations.	Having late pumps operating from stations so that pump availability matches incident demand does not appear to have created additional life risk based on the data since they were first introduced.
	1	One respondent asked what the Service would do if there was significant opposition to the proposal from the FBU.	The FBU and all the representative bodies have been invited to respond during the consultation process. The Service would discuss with the Representative Bodies any concerns they had.
	2	Two respondents felt that the risk in the area warranted the retention of the second fire engine and that its loss would reduce the amount of PBA work undertaken.	The risk profile of the Bournbrook area is not as high as some surrounding areas. PBA work in the area can be supported by other stations if required.
	3	Respondents supported the proposal to make the second fire engine at Highgate 24 hour cover.	The Authority noted the response.
	1	One respondent questioned where the appliance would be based so that a more informed response could be given	The additional fire engine will be based at Coventry Fire Station.
	1	One respondent felt that the second fire engine already based at Coventry Community Fire Station should revert to 24 hour cover.	The availability of fire engines throughout the area is designed to match demand with more availability when the number of calls is higher.
Coventry			

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
Sandwell	10	Several respondents replied expressing concerns regarding the reduction in fire cover in the area between 2300-1100 hours when the second fire engine was not crewed. Additionally, there were concerns about the workload on the remaining 24 hour cover vehicles.	<p>Analysis shows that when demand is at lower levels, between 2300-1100 hours normal demand levels can be met by having just one fire engine at West Bromwich. The station has a number of other fire engines nearby should they be required.</p> <p>There may well be an increased workload on remaining appliances and crews, in support of more efficient and effective deployment of resources.</p> <p>Fire Control will continue to make cover moves as required, based on accepted practices that are guided by our knowledge of risk in the area and professional judgement.</p>
	7	A number of responses expressed concern at the loss of skills and depletion of availability of the Major Rescue Unit (MRU) between 2300 and 1100 hours.	<p>There will be a smaller pool of dedicated MRU personnel at West Bromwich, though there will still be crews with specialist skills for MRU at reinforcing stations such as Dudley, Solihull, Canley as well as the Technical Rescue Station personnel at Bickenhill.</p> <p>Should it be necessary for a second MRU-trained crew to be mobilised, then Fire Control will send a crew from one of the supporting MRU stations, or from the Technical Rescue Station.</p> <p>There is adequate coverage available overnight, when demand is lower, from surrounding stations.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
Wolver-hampton	59	Many respondents expressed concern regarding the increased risk in the Tettenhall area that would arise because of not crewing the fire engine from that station between 2300-1100 hours.	<p>By making the second fire engine at Wolverhampton a 24 hour pump rather than a 12 hour pump, and given the cover also provided by Fallings Park Fire Station, attendance times into Tettenhall can still be achieved. At the moment because Wolverhampton's second appliance is not available for 12 hours a day (1100-2300 hours) response times for the second appliance in the central Wolverhampton area, where the risk is higher, are slower because such a response has to come from another station. The level of risk is significantly higher in Wolverhampton City and Bilston, especially during the hours from 2300 to 1100 hours. It is on the basis of risk management that the proposal has been put forward.</p> <p>The Service is to provide exactly the same number of fire engines in Wolverhampton but to deploy them on a more risk appropriate basis, providing a better service to the public.</p> <p>With much of Tettenhall's area still capable of being reached by appliances in nearby stations in an average of 5 and 7 minutes it is not considered to be weakened cover. It is considered to be more risk appropriate cover.</p> <p>Our analysis shows that at even 30 mph appliances can cover large parts of the Tettenhall area in an average of 5 and 7 minutes. It is considered better to have available appliances nearer to where the risk is higher.</p> <p>Our analysis shows that the risk created by emergencies is greater between 1100-2300 hours when all the fire engines in Wolverhampton would still be available. The risk in terms of the nature of the areas and based on incident demand is greater in Wolverhampton Centre than in Tettenhall.</p> <p>It is considered to be a more risk appropriate response as both incident demand and demographic risk are higher in Wolverhampton Centre as opposed to Tettenhall.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
	27	Petition from Tettenhall Residents requesting station not be closed.	It is considered to be a more risk appropriate response as both incident demand and demographic risk are higher in Wolverhampton Centre as opposed to Tettenhall.
	8	Some replies expressed concern that Council Tax increases continue but the Service is not as good.	The Service is to provide exactly the same number of fire engines in Wolverhampton but to deploy them on a more risk appropriate basis, providing a better service to the public.
	10	Respondents felt that the proposal was the first step to the complete closure of Tettenhall Fire Stations.	Tettenhall's Fire Station will remain open during the hours of 1100-2300 hours and will be a base for fire engines and personnel during those hours. There are no plans in this Annual Service Plan to close Tettenhall Fire Station.
	19	Responses dealt with a range of practicalities of not crewing the Tettenhall fire engine between 2300-1100 hours and locating it at Wolverhampton during that period. These included: reduced PBA work; support to existing work commitments; transient crewing; support staff concerns; accommodation issues.	<p>HFSC and Prevention Based Activity (PBA) work are paramount in reducing risk in the community.</p> <p>It is appropriate that we target our prevention activities at the areas of greatest risk, in a similar manner to our response resources.</p> <p>Supporting existing work commitments is an issue that would need to be addressed internally. Providing a risk appropriate response for the communities served by the Authority is paramount and forms an essential element of the work to be managed by the local command team.</p> <p>Support staff will still work at the station. Following the concerns expressed about garaging the fire engine from Tettenhall at Wolverhampton between 2300-1100, when it is off the run, it has been decided leave it garaged at Tettenhall during those hours and will start and finish each shift at that station</p> <p>In response to concerns expressed over local ownership of community issues, the Brigade will actively explore ways to provide a dedicated late shift crew.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
	7	Respondents expressed concerns about security at the station with no personnel there overnight and possible vandalism.	It may be necessary as part of the accommodation changes to consider additional security arrangements.
	7	Some respondents believed that taking the fire engine off the run between 2300-1100 hours was just about economics.	It is not about economics. It is about matching supply to demand both in terms of the number of incidents and risk.
Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)	1	One respondent queries the response to houses of multiple occupation.	Places where people are present as a sleeping risk are exempt from call challenge.
	1	One respondent stated that the proposal would place undue pressure on the staff and they would rather that industry and commerce drive down such calls.	A working group, including Fire Control staff, has monitored the impact of the pilot previously approved by the Authority. The staff responsible for call challenge have successfully reduced the number of attendances without reporting undue pressure on staff. The proposals are also being pursued in conjunction with industry and commerce.
	1	One respondent referred to an increase in call handling times; the need for early detection and firefighter safety.	When calls are challenged and premise owners are asked to verify whether or not an AFA call is a genuine emergency then it may take time to obtain that detail. Once verified or if in any doubt Fire Control will mobilise fire engines immediately.
	1	One respondent referred to the recording of calls that are challenged but turn out to be genuine fire calls.	During the pilot, there have been some AFAs that have been challenged and subsequently been confirmed as genuine fires. Following confirmation of a fire, attendance was made in every instance. As the previous data has suggested these fires have been relatively minor in the nature.

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
	16	The majority of respondents expressed concern that extending the pilot from 12 hours to 24 hours would add risk to existing fire cover response arrangements.	<p>Automatically responding appliances to AFAs in itself creates risk. If a caller can safely identify that an alarm is false then risk is reduced and the engine is still available to deal with a real emergency.</p> <p>The vast majority (98%) of these calls turn out to be false alarms. Where a response is required it is usually self evident. Staff will follow a set protocol to ensure that a prompt response is made in the small number of cases where this is necessary, or where there is doubt.</p>
	2	Respondents suggested alternative approaches, e.g. motorcycles or fast cars.	This is an idea that has been tried in some parts of the country. It may be an area for further investigation.
General	4	Concerns were received generally expressing doubts as at cutting back on frontline vehicles, e.g. the HP; the response to AFAs. It was suggested the proposals were just cost cutting.	<p>At the moment there are 62 pumping appliances serving the West Midlands Fire Service area between 11am and 11pm and 49 overnight 11pm to 11am. This is considered a risk appropriate response based on demographic and incident risk. The proposals in the Annual Service Plan are considered to better match supply to demand. Large fires like Shannon's Mill are rare and there are neighbouring Brigades to support us, just as much more frequently we support them. Management costs are always kept under review for efficiency savings.</p> <p>All the proposals are considered to be more risk appropriate. It is considered more efficient to better match supply to demand. The proposals are not driven by any desire to save money. They are to provide the most appropriate risk based response to the communities of the West Midlands.</p> <p>The package of measures proposed here does not represent cuts to the service- the number of emergency vehicles is increasing and there are no staffing reductions.</p>

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
			The whole basis of the Annual Service Plan is that it is based on reducing risk in the community and making sure that resources are available at the right place, in the right time, of the right specification and the right quantity. It is not about reducing costs; in fact the financial aspects of the proposals in this plan are broadly cost neutral.
	1	Respondent asked what was happening in respect of Sedgley Fire Station.	Due to a recent discipline case Sedgley has recently had no retained crews available and the Sedgley area has been covered by surrounding stations. Changes in respect of Sedgley Fire Station are not part of the Annual Service Plan.
	1	Respondent queried the different forms of data format and charts used in the consultation document.	<p>The charts were not intended for direct comparison from one to another, as they are describing different elements of our proposals, or the background data that underpins them.</p> <p>However, it is recognised that there is a benefit of standardising the format of data for comparison purposes.</p>
	1	Respondent felt it was inappropriate to cut resources and responses in the light of terrorist threats.	<p>The package of measures proposed here does not represent cuts to the service – the number of emergency vehicles is increasing and there are no staffing reductions.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in the resources provided to respond specifically to any terrorist threat.</p>
	1	Respondent said that there was a need to take into account what neighbouring Brigades are doing.	This is taken into account in determining the response of this Authority to risk management. Consultation with other fire authorities is taking place to ensure that our plans are compatible with theirs.
	1	Respondent asked if preventative and protective measures were considered.	Yes. Prevention, protection and response are all part of the Brigade's strategy for reducing risk in the community.

Subject Area	Quantity of Comments	Summary of Comments	Authority Response
	1	Respondent said there was no reference to Safeside.	Reference to the Safeside building will be included in the Annual Service Plan but is not part of the Action Plan proposals that have to be subject to 12 weeks consultation.
	2	Respondent said more reference should have been made to partnership opportunities.	Again this will be referenced in the Annual Service Plan but is not part of the Action Plan that has to be subject to 12 weeks consultation.
	3	Some respondents felt the plan should have been more comprehensive with additional information to enable informed judgements.	Any additional available information could and would have been provided on request. The Authority has to balance telling the public and staff in clear simple terms what our proposals are without over complicating the wording.
	2	Respondents felt the consultation process was insufficiently transparent.	Consultation processes are undertaken in accordance with Fire Service Circular advice and in line with Cabinet Office guidelines on such practice.

OUR PROPOSALS FOR INCLUSION INTO OUR ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2008-2009

- **Recommendation One:**
Aerial appliance cover (Hydraulic Platforms)

The Hydraulic Platform at Ward End Community Fire Station is removed.

The Pump Rescue Water Tower is introduced into the vehicle fleet.

- **Recommendation Two:**
Targeted Response Vehicles

We introduce one Targeted Response Vehicle in the East of Birmingham and one in the Dudley area.

- **Recommendation Three:**
Fire and emergency response cover

(a) Birmingham area

The second fire engine at Highgate Community Fire Station is changed from providing cover for 12 hours (11am – 11pm) to one providing 24 hour emergency cover.

The second fire engine at Bournbrook Community Fire Station (providing 12 hour cover 11am – 11pm) is moved into the Coventry area. This fire engine will provide 12 hour cover (11am – 11pm).

(b) Coventry area

Resources across the Coventry area are increased to provide eight fire engines. Six will provide 24 hour cover and two will provide 12 hour cover (11am – 11pm).

(c) Sandwell area

We maintain one fire engine at West Bromwich Community Fire Station providing 24 hour cover with the second fire engine at that station providing 12 hour cover (11am – 11pm).

(d) Wolverhampton area

The second fire engine based at Wolverhampton Community Fire Station (currently providing 12 hour cover 11am – 11pm) is changed to provide 24 hour cover to enhance resources in the city.

The existing fire engine at Tettenhall Community Fire Station (currently providing 24 hour cover) will be changed to provide 12 hour cover (11am – 11pm).

- **Recommendation Four:**
“Call Challenge”: Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)

We expand our call challenge initiative to cover the full 24 hour period with regard to Automatic Fire Alarm calls. This may mean that we will not respond immediately to some AFA calls. This will be assessed on a risk appropriate basis.