



Report

	Date of Meeting: 25 th August 2010
This report is: For decision	Meeting Venue: Staffordshire Fire & Rescue HQ

Report Title:

Future of West Midlands Regional Management Board

Report Author:

Sue Phelps
Clerk to the Regional Management Board

Summary:

The recent announcement by the Fire Minister Bob Neill has given the opportunity to review the need for a formal Regional Management Board in the West Midlands.

This paper provides options to aid debate.

Recommendation(s):

1. That consideration be given to the future of the West Midlands Regional Management Board;
2. That Members indicate which option they wish to pursue.

For further information, please contact:

Sue Phelps
Clerk



0121 569 3195



0121 569 3130



sue_phelps@sandwell.gov.uk

1. Background Details:

1.1 The West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) was established in 2004 in response to the Fire White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service 2003" and in compliance with the requirements of the first Fire and Rescue Service National Framework (FRSNF) which required each FRA to participate in the setting up of Boards with robust decision making powers charged with responsibility for the effective regional co-ordination and delivery of 6 specified strategic functions:

- 1 CBRN resilience
- 2 Specialist support services eg fire investigation
- 3 Regional Control Rooms
- 4 Regional Procurement
- 5 Regional Training
- 6 Regional Human Resources Management

1.2 In some instances the FRSNF imposes mandatory requirements such as the requirement to set up a company to manage the Regional Control Rooms and in others the requirements were advisory only.

1.3 The WMRMB, which comprises the 5 Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands was constituted under Section 102(1)(b) Local Government Act 1972 without full delegated powers under a written framework agreement to act on behalf of the FRAs and to bind them on decisions involving the discharge of the 6 strategic functions subject to the restriction that the Board cannot make decisions involving the closure or relocation of individual FRA properties facilities or services without ratification by FRAs whose activities would be affected by such decisions. An individual FRA may terminate its participation in the Board by giving one years notice to expire on 31st March of the next following year after the expiry of 12 months. The Board has no employees or assets so in a mutual consent situation the process of winding up ought to be straightforward subject to the authorisation of the Secretary of State. The Board may also wish to consider varying the Agreement to engineer a shorter notice period, this would need the approval of constituent FRAs but a dissolution date of 31st December 2010 may be appropriate.

2. Options

A number of options for the future of the RMB are set out in Appendix One

3. Legal Implications:

3.1 Provision is included in the WMRMB Agreement to vary the Agreement with the consent of all constituent authorities and this process could be invoked to bring about the disbanding of the WMRMB more rapidly if that is the wish of the Board.

4. Financial Implications:

There will be varying financial implications depending on whichever option Members choose to follow

5. Background Papers:

WMRMB Agreement
WMRMB Programme Plan
Statement made by the Minister of State for Fire

6. Attachments:

Appendix One attached
