



Annual Report 2006/07

July 2007

Delivering a proactive partnership to the Region's communities that satisfies the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable.

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Introduction



*Cllr Nigel Hartin
Vice-Chair*



*Cllr Richard Hobbs
Vice-Chair*



*Cllr David Hinton
Chair*



*Cllr Derek Davis
Vice-Chair*



*Cllr Godfrey Davis
Vice-Chair*



It gives us great pleasure to introduce to you, the Annual Report 2006/07 of West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB).

WMRMB was formed in April 2004 with the aim of delivering the United Kingdom Government's agenda of reform and modernisation of the fire and rescue services of the West Midlands Region in central England.

It continues to be an honour and privilege for us to lead what, during both 2005/06 and 2006/07 has been officially recognised through the Audit Commission's Performance Assessment Framework as being one of England's top performing regions of Fire and Rescue Services. Achieving such success at a regional level is a tribute to the successful continuing collaborative project working arrangements of WMRMB and a dedicated workforce. This is a great achievement for the Fire and Rescue Authorities in the West Midlands region and we are justly proud of it.

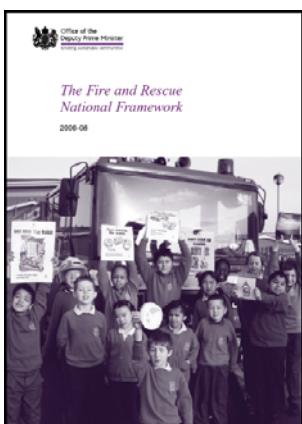
As WMRMB now enters its fourth year, it does so having firmly established its foundations on which to build a safer environment for the collective communities of the West Midlands Region. Our *foundations* are built on tried and tested approaches to collaborative working based on our successes and, on occasion, our failures. Acting as leading regional management board we continue to offer support and guidance to other regions in our collective pursuit of delivering a modernised fire and rescue service to the nation.

July 2007

Executive Summary

The independent review of fire and rescue services undertaken by Sir George Bain identified many recommendations for reform and modernisation. These recommendations have been developed and refined by Government within the initial and subsequent framework documents. The framework documents place responsibilities upon fire and rescue authorities, who through regional collaboration, are required to accomplish modernisation and reform of the fire and rescue services.

The framework documents mandate fire and rescue authorities to establish Regional Management Boards (RMB). Each RMB is required to institute:



- **clear aims and objectives;**
- **delegated powers that are appropriate to those aims and objectives;**
- **plans for meeting the requirements of six key areas identified by Sir George Bain;**
- **provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the capacity - both resources and expertise - to deliver those plans, and**
- **demonstrate continuing and measurable progress towards meeting those plans.**

This Annual Report documents WMRMB progress during 2006/07 for addressing Government's agenda of reform and modernisation of the region's fire and rescue services.

WMRMB's mission is to deliver a proactive partnership to the region's communities that satisfies the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable. WMRMB has a collective vision to realise the full potential of Service collaboration, thereby resulting in the delivery of improved efficiencies and secure enhanced operational resilience across the West Midlands Region. In delivering this vision the region aims to deliver the co-ordinated organisation, direction and implementation of a portfolio of projects and activities that together achieve the outcomes and realise the benefits of a modernised and reformed fire and rescue service.

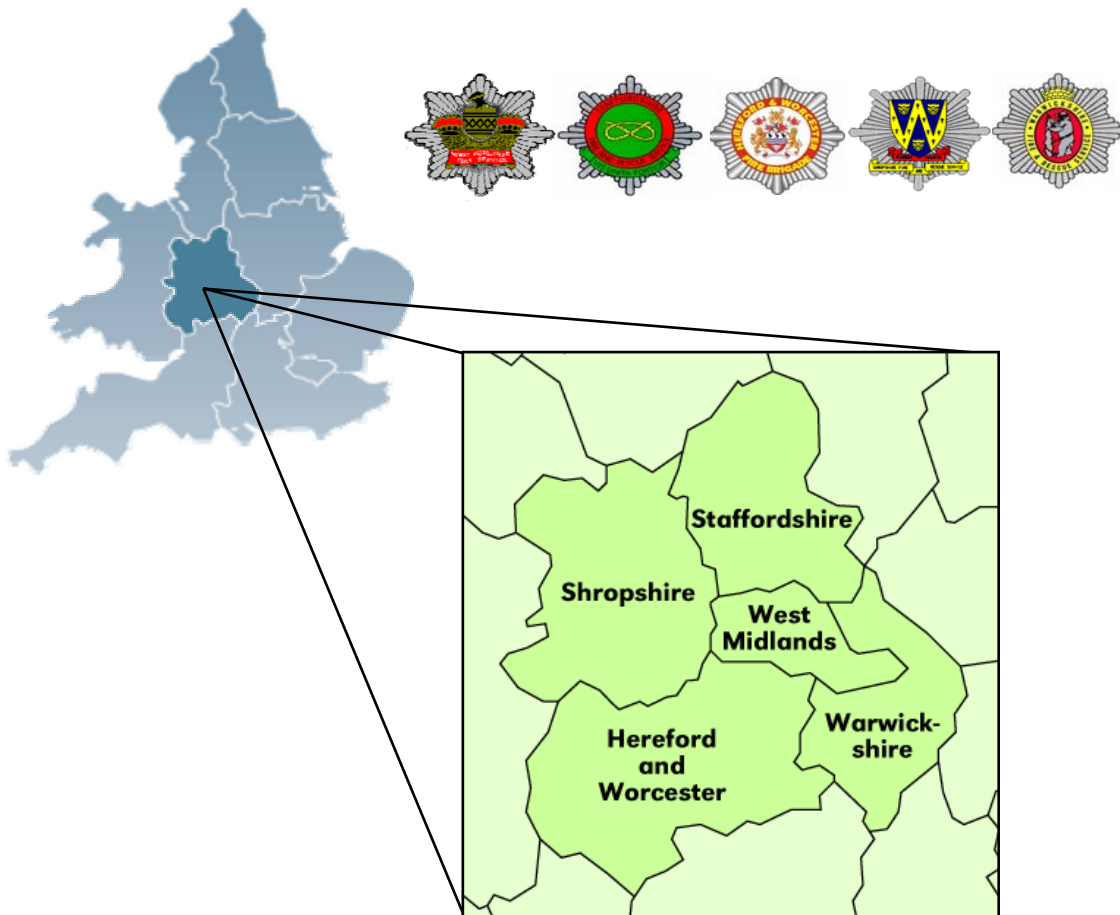
Operating within Government's de facto project and programme management methodologies WMRMB is delivering the change required through seven thematic project boards.

West Midlands Regional Management Board

In the interests of co-operating more effectively the fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) of the West Midlands region formally agreed in March 2004 to the establishment of a **joint advisory committee** under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972. The committee is known as the **West Midlands Regional Management Board**.

The Board consists of 15 elected Members, three from each of the following FRAs:

- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority
- Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Warwickshire County Council
- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority



What is our Vision, Aims & Objectives?

The mission, vision, aims and objectives of WMRMB are:

➤ **Mission Statement**

To deliver a proactive partnership to the Region's communities that satisfies the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable.

➤ **Vision Statement**

To realise the full potential of Service collaboration, thereby resulting in the delivery of improved efficiencies and secure enhanced operational resilience across the West Midlands Region.

➤ **Aim**

To deliver the co-ordinated organisation, direction and implementation of a portfolio of projects and activities that together achieve the outcomes and realise the benefits of a modernised and reformed fire and rescue service.

➤ **Objectives**

WMRMB's primary objective is the implementation and delivery of Government's agenda of reform and modernisation within the fire and rescue services of the West Midlands region. The modernisation agenda is both service critical and time critical to meet Government's framework criteria, and as a consequence, is managed and delivered in accordance with Government prescribed project and programme management methodologies.

During 2006/07 WMRMB has sought to address the following objectives that will deliver improved capability:

- (i) the coordination of all activities through seven thematic project boards to secure the delivery of:
 - a. Integration of common specialist services (e.g. fire investigation).
 - b. Development and implementation of effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies.
 - c. Introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions.
 - d. Development of a regional approach to training.
 - e. Establishment of regional control centre.
 - f. Introduction of regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy.
- (ii) implement and promote a coherent and structured approach to project and programme management within the region that conforms to Government's de facto standards, but moreover facilitates reform and modernisation, and
- (iii) deliver improved capability to the region's resources to enable the achievement of, and contribution to, the targets and priorities of the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)

How we manage our Business

WMRMB operates in an advisory capacity to the region's five fire and rescue authorities, it has addressed its requirement to have **delegated powers** and responsibilities in the following manner:

- (i) the establishment of a joint advisory committee under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- (ii) The creation of a modernisation programme to address regional modernisation and reform;
- (iii) The establishment of a formal Programme Board that provides governance and leadership to the modernisation programme;
- (iv) The establishment of a regional Treasurers' Working Group;
- (v) The introduction of formal programme and project methodologies (MSP, PRINCE2 and MoR) to deliver the modernisation programme;
- (vi) The formal appointment of a Programme Manager;
- (vii) The establishment of a regional Programme Office;
- (viii) The appointment of key stakeholders to all project boards;
- (ix) The appointment of elected Members to act as Senior Responsible Owners to all projects;
- (x) The appointment of Business Change Managers, and
- (xi) The creation of a WMRMB Website acting as a central point of information.

WMRMB holds four public meetings and four Programme Board meetings (closed) per annum. Details of meetings held (and scheduled future meetings) can be accessed via the region's website: www.wmrmb.co.uk

WMRMB's objectives are delivered through a modernisation Programme Plan that is managed and controlled through the region's Programme Board. The Programme is managed in accordance with the Office of Government Commerce's (OGC) Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) methodology, a methodology that provides and maintains a strategic view over a set of projects, aligning and co-ordinating them within a programme of business change in support of both Government's and the WMRMB's specific strategies.

MSP allows WMRMB to organise, manage, accommodate, and control these changes so that the eventual outcome meets the objectives set by the modernisation strategy.

An overview of the Programme organisation within the WMRMB environment is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

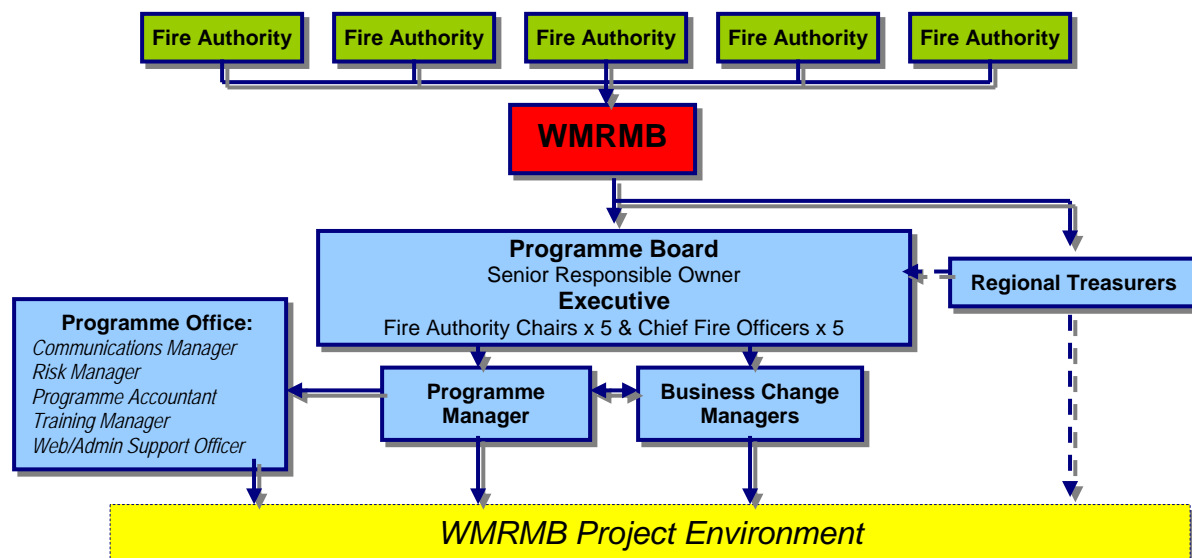


Figure 1.WMRMB Programme Governance & Structure arrangements

The Programme is governed through a formally established Programme Board Executive (Board) representative of the key stakeholders within the Region. The Board's appointed Programme Manager (who heads the Programme Office) undertakes the day-to-day management of the Programme. The Programme Office is core to providing professional support and expertise to the Region's various current and future modernisation projects. Business Change Managers have been appointed from relevant Brigade Managers. Their role is benefits' management together with the implementation and embedding of the new capabilities delivered by the WMRMB's modernisation projects.

The Programme's objectives are addressed by seven thematic project boards. The project boards have been created to focus on the following areas:

- Fire Safety
- Performance
- Procurement
- Resilience
- Fire Control
- Resources (HRM)
- Response

It is vital that the work of each of these thematic project areas is conducted in a uniform and structured manner. In order to promote transparency and accountability within each project, the project's appointed Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) has been secured from an Authority other than the Lead Authority tasked with managing and delivering the assigned project. Elected Members undertake the role of SRO.

An overview of the project organisation within the WMRMB programme environment is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

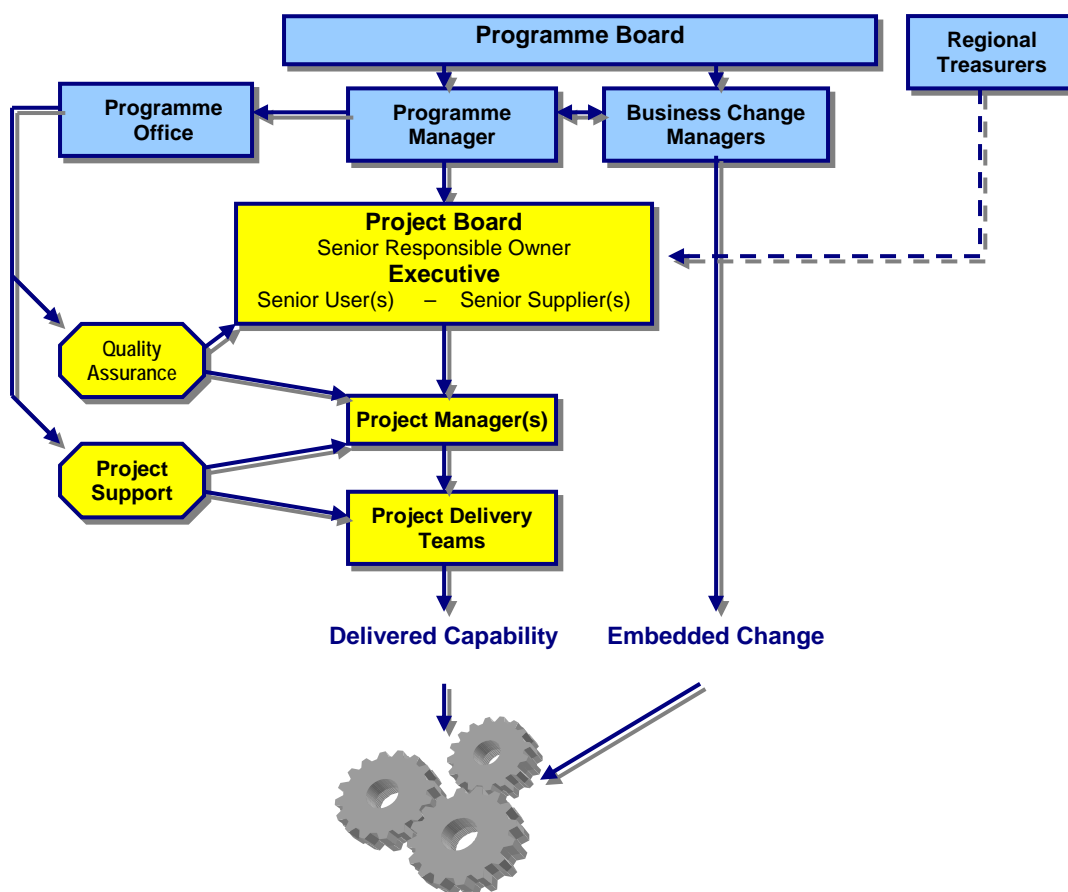


Figure 2. WMRMB Project Organisation

What have we Achieved?

The National Framework 2006-08 sets out requirements for RMBs. Principally, RMBs are expected to address:

- Integration of common specialist services (e.g. fire investigation).
- Development and implementation of effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies.
- Introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions.
- Development of a regional approach to training.
- Establishment of regional control centre.
- Introduction of regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy.

WMRMB has been active in striving to deliver against these requirements through a structured two-year programme of work. Appendix A provides an overview of WMRMB's activities, current and future, to support the delivery of Government's modernisation agenda.

Progress achieved through 2006/07 has been reported on a regular basis to WMRMB, its Programme Board, the Audit Commission and CLG. In November 2006, Angela Smith MP, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at CLG with responsibilities for the Fire and Rescue Service, visited WMRMB.



The Minister received progress presentations on region's initiatives to deliver further modernisation of the region's Fire and Rescue Services. The Minister applauded the efforts of Members and officers in delivering a modernised *Service* noting the positive culture of collaboration and partnership that had been successfully established since the formation of WMRMB.

The Minister pictured with Fire Authority Chairs and Chief Fire Officers from the region. Back row (left to right): Chief Fire Officers: Alan Taylor, William Brown, Frank Sheehan, Alan Doig, Paul Hayden. Front row (left to right): Cllr Nigel Hartin, Cllr Richard Hobbs, Angela Smith MP, Cllr David Hinton, Cllr Derek Davis, Cllr Godfrey Davis.

At the mid point of the WMRMB Programme Plan 2006-08 the progress of the region's seven thematic project boards may be summarized as:

Project	Project Progress		
	0%		100%
Fire Safety	Project Completed		
Performance	Project Completed		
Procurement	Project Largely Completed		
Resilience	Project Completed		
Fire Control	Project delivering to National Programme		
Resources (HRM)	Project Largely Completed		
Response	Project Largely Completed		

Table 1 Thematic Project Progress

The following outcomes/outputs have been achieved during 2006/07.

Integration of common specialist services (e.g. fire investigation)

WMRMB has successfully developed and implemented strategic policy frameworks for IRMP, fire investigation and health & safety. WMRMB has also developed and implemented a regional policy to support the implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order and strategies that address the adoption of CLG and CFA guidance documents for the reduction of false alarms.

Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding has been created for the management of hoax and false fire calls/alarms. These initiatives have contributed to an overall 12 percent regional reduction in malicious calls and an 18 percent regional reduction in false alarms for the period 2005/06 – 2006/07.

Opportunities have also been explored and developed to share specialist resources where appropriate at sub-regional levels, the utilization of fire investigation and principal command officers being such examples.

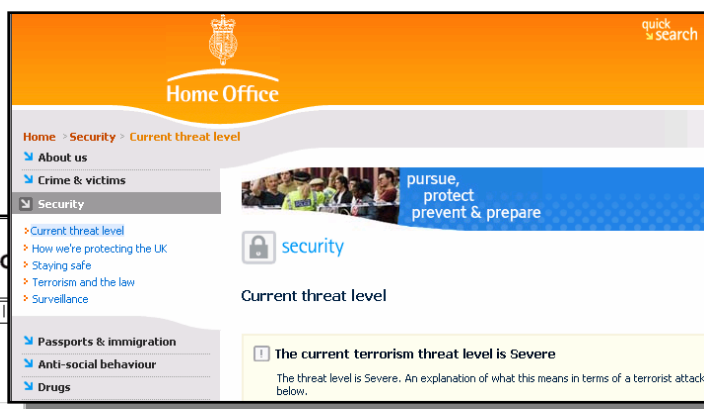
The region's staff involved in performance management have successfully developed and implemented a regional operational service assessment peer review programme in preparation for the CLG led reviews during 2006.



Development and implementation of effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies

WMRMB has overseen the implementation of 9 mass decontamination response units, 5 mass decontamination resilience units, 2 interim urban search and rescue units, 4 high volume pumping units, the introduction of a specialist hazardous material identification team and 96 thermal imaging cameras. In support of Element 1 of Civil Contingencies Act, WMRMB has also identified sources of risk within the region and assessed their likelihood of occurrence and potential impact. The activities of the resilience project board are now fully embedded within the day-to-day resilience arrangements for the region.

Public awareness of the measures to secure and maintain resilience are publicised through the region's website, with advice and links to all key government sources of information provided.



Introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions and development of a regional approach to training

The introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions and development of a regional approach to training represents one of many success stories from the region. WMRMB has been creative in developing and implementing several strategic regional policy documents, but moreover, has combined resources to deliver:

- Common policies for individual personal development records and assessment development centres
- Common policies for the development of firefighters, supervisory and middle managers and workplace assessment
- Regional resourcing strategies
- National recruiting processes
- Community outreach networks

In addition, WMRMB has facilitated the procurement of regionally branded Firefighter Recruitment DVDs, resulting in a collective saving of £6,750.



Establishment of regional control centre. WMRMB's full-time regional Fire Control Project Team is now well established and undertakes a key role in coordinating the region's preparations to ensure the smooth transition to the new Regional Control Centre (RCC), and in parallel, to the controlled migration to the

digital Airwave Service. The region is active in both its support and contribution to the nationally led FiReControl and FireLink projects. In February 2006 the new Local Authority Control Company was incorporated, resulting in the formal establishment of the '*West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited.*' The anticipated transition (cut-over) to the RCC is expected to commence in 2009, with a projected completion scheduled for 2010. During this period the Project Team will coordinate over 2,200 nationally defined transition activities.



Introduction of regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy

WMRMB has been extremely proactive in supporting the establishment of FiReBuy to drive the national procurement strategy, with the region's FRAs actively engaged in FiReBuy call-off contracts. Cooperation within the region has resulted in the implementation of regional procurement arrangements supported by lead procurement officers within each FRA. WMRMB has implemented a regional contracts register that assists in the procurement of operational equipment, hydraulic testing, e-tendering arrangements, regional insurance options, regional utilities contracts and stockholding rationalisation. Collaboration has also been achieved in the areas of technical services and regional occupational health. WMRMB has also established a regional Transport Officers' Group and Estates Officers' Group. WMRMB's initiatives have resulted in £18,000 of regional savings to date. Moreover, WMRMB has created an environment of true collaboration in the context of regional procurement.

Our Expenditure

WMRMB is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money expended to support the region's Modernisation Programme is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

WMRMB is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control (see *Appendix B for the Statement of Internal Control*) which facilitates the effective exercise of the Board's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Board has no direct financial resource that is spent by itself. It relies on an annual financial contribution of £50,000 towards the regional administration costs from each of the five constituent FRAs. Should WMRMB under-spend against this contribution in any one year each individual FRA formalises the future use of this carry-forward for WMRMB purposes as part of its annual closure of accounts.

With regard to the operation of the specific projects and programme that form the regional agenda, these are managed via the appointed WMRMB Programme Board. A specific set of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders has been adopted by WMRMB, which set the framework within which officers involved in the regional projects have to operate. These Financial Regulations and Standing Orders compliment those in existence in each FRA and provide an agreed standard approach to regional activity. The WMRMB appointed Treasurer oversees the financial aspects of its operation.

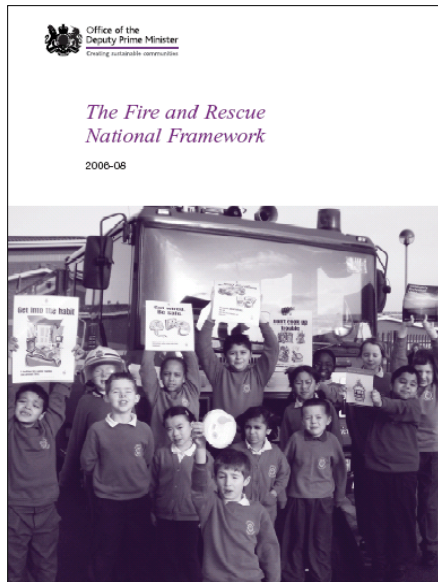
The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of WMRMB's Statement of Accounts which in terms of the Code of Practice on Local Board Accounting in Great Britain, is required to present fairly the financial position of WMRMB at the accounting date and its income and spending for the year. The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of WMRMB's accounting records and of its systems of internal control. Expenditure for the period 2006/07 is shown in table 2 below.

Expenditure Area 2006/07	Budget £'000	Actual Expenditure £'000	Under/ (Overspend) £'000
Programme Office Staff Costs	147.1	65.1	82.0
HRM Project Support	30.0	0.0	30.0
IRMP Project (Consultancy)	20.0	26.0	(6.0)
Resilience Project Manager	66.6	58.9	7.7
External Audit	1.0	1.0	0.0
Conferencing facilities, Web software & licences	5.1	2.5	2.6
	269.8	153.5	116.3

Table 2 - Expenditure for the period 2006/07

The constituent FRAs of WMRMB have recorded; published and submitted their annual efficiency savings for 2006/07 within a regional Annual Efficiency Statement (see *Appendix C for a summary of the Annual Efficiency Statement*).

Outlook for 2006-08



WMRMB reviewed in 2006 the *Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-08* and produced a two-year Programme Plan of activity to deliver further modernisation within the region. The plan is closely aligned to the National Framework, with activity managed through the region's existing seven thematic project boards.

At the mid-point of the Programme Plan three of the region's seven thematic boards have successfully delivered their objectives, with a further three boards scheduled for completion of activities in autumn of 2007. The remaining board – 'Fire Control,' will continue to support the implementation of the nationally driven FiReControl and FireLink projects.

Representatives from the region are actively engaged with CLG in supporting the preparation of the next framework document.

Details regarding the National Framework 2006-08 and WMRMB's Modernisation Programme can be accessed via the region's website: www.wmrmb.co.uk

Glossary of Terms

Business Change Manager	The role responsible for benefits management
Fire Authority	A statutory body established under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
FiReControl	The CLG national project established to oversee the development and implementation of regional fire controls
Firelink	The CLG national project established to oversee the procurement and implementation of national fire service voice and data communications system
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan
New Dimension	The CLG national project established to oversee the development and implementation of contingency measures within the fire and rescue service to mitigate the effects of terrorism
CLG	Communities and Local Government (<i>formally the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</i>)
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
PRINCE2	PR ojects IN a C ontrolled E nvironment (Version 2)
Programme	A portfolio of projects and activities that are co-ordinated and managed as a unit such that they achieve outcomes and realise benefits
Programme Board	The Sponsoring Group established to assist in the direction-setting and leadership of the programme
Programme Manager	The role responsible for the set-up, management and delivery of the programme
Programme Office	The function providing the information and support hub for the programme and its deliver objectives
Programme Plan	The document scheduling the projects, their costs, resources, risks, and transition activities together with the monitoring and control activities
Project	A temporary organisation that is created for the purpose of delivering one or more business products according to a specified Business Case
Project Board	The Sponsoring Group established to assist in the direction-



	setting and leadership of a project
Project Manager	The person given the authority and responsibility to manage the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board
Project Portfolio	A list of all the projects and activities to deliver the required 'future state' described in the programme's 'Blueprint'
RCC	Regional Control Centre
RMB	Regional Management Board
Senior Responsible Owner	The role ultimately accountable for the successful delivery of a project/programme
WMRMB	West Midlands Regional Management Board



Appendix A – Thematic Project Board Activity 2006/07

Fire Safety Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Brigadier Peter Jones, Cllr

Lead Officer: ACFO Jon Hall

Scope of Project

The scope of this project has been to address measures to reduce false alarm calls to the fire and rescue services.

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

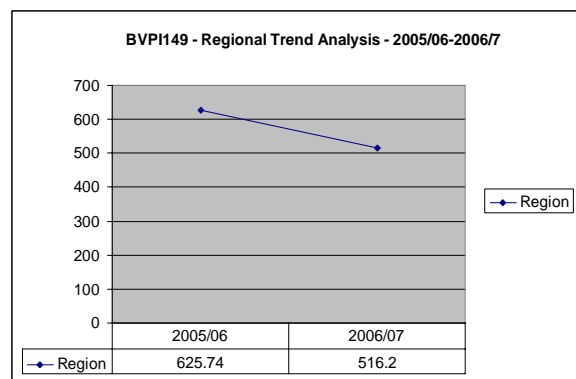
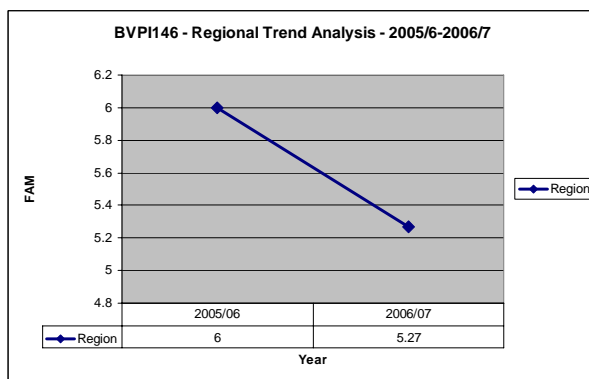
Paragraph from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
3.10	Reducing False Alarms	Regional initiated collaborative activity

Achievements

The Project Board has successfully developed and implemented a regional policy document that addresses the adoption of CLG and CFOA guidance documents for the reduction of false alarms. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding has been created for the management of hoax fire calls. These initiatives have contributed to an overall 12 percent regional reduction in malicious calls (BVPI 146) and an 18 percent regional reduction in false alarms (AFDs) (BVPI 149) for the period 2005/6 – 2006/7.

The tables below illustrate the collective regional reductions in hoax calls and false alarms (AFDs) across the West Midlands region.



On-going work

The project is now completed and closed.

Performance Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Peter Hogarth

Lead Officer: Ged Edwards

Scope of Project

The scope of this project has been to address, through collaborative means, the management of performance within the region.

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

Paragraph from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
8.6	Performance Management	Regional initiated collaborative activity

Achievements

The Project Board has been successful in developing and implementing a regional peer review programme in preparation for the formal CLG Service Assessment led reviews during 2006. The preparatory reviews have contributed to the following Service Assessment scores being achieved:

Fire & Rescue Authority:

Hereford & Worcester
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands

Service Assessment Scores¹

4 = Performing strongly
4 = Performing strongly
4 = Performing strongly
2 = Adequate performance
3 = Performing well

The success of this initiative resulted in CLG adopting the WMRMB certified peer review approach for use by national assessors, with WMRMB being credited for its work in this area.

On-going work

The project is now completed and closed.

¹ Data source: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/fire/>

Procurement Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Richard Chattaway

Lead Officer: Mike Griffiths

Scope of Project

The scope of this project has been to address the requirement to introduce regional procurement arrangements that incorporate nationally led procurement initiatives (e.g. FireBuy). In addition, the Project has explored, and but now suspended, opportunities to secure external funding (e.g. 'PFI' etc.).

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
2.7, 2.16, & 2.21	Procurement	Should/Must do Framework activity
7.16	External Funding Opportunities	Regional initiated collaborative activity

Achievements

The Project Board has been extremely proactive in supporting the establishment of FiReBuy to drive the national procurement strategy. This has resulted in the implementation of regional procurement arrangements supported by lead procurement officers within each FRA. Notably, the Board has developed a detailed three-year (2006-09) procurement strategy.

The Board has also addressed the procurement of operational equipment, hydraulic testing, e-tendering arrangements, regional insurance options, regional utilities contracts, stockholding rationalisation, technical services collaboration and regional occupational health. Also established through the Board, is the regional Transport Officers' Group and Estates Officers' Group. An environment of *true collaboration* in the context of regional procurement has been achieved.

On-going work

The Project Board is now working to embed the three-year strategy as '*business as usual*,' which will enable the project to be brought to a controlled close in the autumn of 2007.

Resilience Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Len Bloomer

Lead Officer: SDO Bob Russell

Scope of Project

The scope of this project has been, through a regional collaborative approach, to deliver a joined-up approach to the implementation of requirements set out within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and FRS New Dimension Programme.

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
4.3	New Dimension	Regional initiated collaborative activity
4.6	Civil Contingencies	Regional initiated collaborative activity

Achievements

The Project Board has supported FRAs within the region to oversee support of the New Dimension Programme. This has led to the implementation of 9 mass decontamination response units, 5 mass decontamination resilience units, 2 interim urban search and rescue units, 4 high volume pumping units, introduction of a specialist hazardous material identification team and 96 thermal imaging cameras. The Board has also, in support of Element 1 of Civil Contingencies Act, identified sources of risk within the region and assessed their likelihood of occurrence and potential impact.

The activities of the resilience project board are now fully embedded within the day-to-day resilience arrangements for the region, with officer working groups/forums addressing the implementation and management of outstanding CLG New Dimension assets and elements of the Civil Contingencies Act.

Public awareness of the measures to secure and maintain resilience are publicised through the region's website, with advice and links to all key government sources of information provided.

On-going work

The project is now completed and closed.

Fire Control Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr David Hinton

Lead Officer: DCFO Peter Dartford

Scope of Project

The scope of this project is to coordinate the region's preparations for the introduction of the new Regional Control Centre (RCC) in conjunction with the implementation of the FireLink digital radio replacement programme.

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
2.7 & 2.13	FiReControl	Must do activity
4.31	FireLink	Regional initiated collaborative activity

Achievements

The Project Board has established a full-time regional Fire Control Project Team tasked with coordinating the region's preparations to ensure the smooth transition to new RCC, and in parallel, to the controlled migration to the digital Airwave Service.

The Board is active in both its support and contribution to the nationally led FiReControl and FireLink projects. In February 2006 the new Local Authority Control Company was incorporated, resulting in the formal establishment of the *'West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited.'*

On-going work

The anticipated transition to the RCC is expected to commence in 2009, with a projected completion scheduled for 2010. During this period the Project Team will coordinate over 2,200 nationally defined transition activities.

Human Resource Management Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Dave Morgan

Lead Officer: ACO Christine Walker

Scope of Project

The scope of this project is to coordinate the region's activities to address, in a collaborative manner, - staff recruitment, development and management arrangements.

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
5.13	Regional HR Strategy	Should do activity
5.19	Regional Equality Strategy	Should do activity
5.37	Occupational Health	Should do activity
6.11	Workforce Development	Should do activity
6.11	Resourcing	Should do activity

Achievements

The introduction of regional personnel and human resource functions and development of a regional approach to training represents one of many success stories from the region. The HRM Project Board has been creative in developing and implementing several strategic regional policy documents, but moreover, has combined resources to deliver:

- Common policies for individual personal development records and assessment development centres
- Common policies for the development of firefighters, supervisory and middle managers and workplace assessment
- Regional resourcing strategies
- National recruiting processes
- Community outreach networks

In addition, WMRMB has facilitated the procurement of regionally branded Firefighter Recruitment DVDs, resulting in a collective saving of £6,750.

On-going work

The Board has an active programme of work underway and aims to deliver the remaining outstanding objectives by the autumn of 2007, leading to a controlled close down of the project.

Response Thematic Project Board

Senior Responsible Owner: Cllr Kath Banks

Lead Officer: ACFO Stuart Smith

Scope of Project

The scope of this project is to coordinate the region's activities to improve regional collaboration in incident preparedness and response.

Paragraphs from Fire & Rescue National Framework 2006-08

Paragraphs from the National Framework relevant to this project are:

Paragraph	Subject	Status
3.15	IRMP	Regional collaborative activity
3.3	Incident Response	Regional collaborative activity
3.16	Collaborative Forum	Regional collaborative activity
3.25	Fire Investigation	Should do activity

Achievements

The Project Board has successfully developed and implemented strategic policy frameworks for IRMP, fire investigation and health & safety. The Board has also assessed the availability of resources for mutual assistance and has prepared an agreement for the deployment of regional assets.

On-going work

The Board is currently appraising IRMP activities within the region, with an assessment undertaken by consultants now the subject of review. This review has included areas where there could be a common regional approach to risk management planning e.g. standards, strategic cover arrangements, optimising resource location and provision, prevention and protection arrangements, and longer term capacity building.

The Board aims to deliver the remaining outstanding objectives by the autumn of 2007, leading to a controlled close down of the project.

Appendix B – Statement on the System of Internal Control

Scope of Responsibility

West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Board is a voluntary arrangement operating on an advisory basis between the 5 Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) of:

- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority
- Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
- Warwickshire County Council
- West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Its purpose is to oversee the regional co-operative working in pursuance of the statutory requirements imposed through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Act has given statutory effect a Fire and Rescue National Framework that sets out expectations for regional management boards and FRAs. The Act requires FRAs to 'have regard' to the Framework when carrying out their functions.

In discharging this overall responsibility, WMRMB is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Board's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Board has no direct financial resource that is expended by itself. It relies on a financial "contribution" towards the regional administration costs from each of the 5 constituent authorities formalised at year-end across those FRAs. As such, the Board relies on the system of internal control within the constituent FRAs where actual monies remain handled.

With regard to the operation of the specific projects and programme that form the regional agenda, these are managed via an appointed WMRMB Programme Board. A specific set of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders has been adopted by WMRMB, which set the framework within which officers involved in the regional projects have to operate. These Financial Regulations and Standing Orders compliment those in existence in each FRA and provide an agreed standard approach to regional activity.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Board's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has operated throughout the year ended 31st March 2007 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and accounts.

The Internal Control Environment

WMRMB has an agreed constitution, which sets out how the Board operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures, which are followed. This includes Standing Orders, delegations and financial and contract procedure rules adopted by the Board for regional working.

WMRMB has adopted political governance arrangements that ensure it is able to respond to a range of internal and external issues and to deliver on its commitment to the key objectives in the regional work plan known as the WMRMB Programme Plan. Decision making processes are open, transparent, accountable and inclusive and as such are in line with Government expectations on strengthening local democracy.

Lead Members have a key role to “champion” specific themes from the Programme Plan and also meet with officers on a regular basis to discuss progress on issues within their theme.

The WMRMB Programme Board, which comprises of the 5 FRA Chairs and Chief Fire Officers. The Programme Board receives regular monitoring presentations from each lead member of the work themes. In addition, a Stakeholder Group comprising Members, Chief Fire Officers and Trade Union representatives regularly discuss the regional agenda.

The Programme Board is responsible for producing the Programme Plan, which outlines the broad strategic direction and priorities for WMRMB to deliver and achieve the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

The Programme Board is supported in its activities by the region's WMRMB Programme Office. The Programme Office provides project and programme management specialist support to those responsible for delivering the Programme Plan.

The Programme Board has no direct budget under its control; the costs of the Programme Office are funded from the agreed equal contribution made annually by the

5 constituent FRAs.

A Treasurers Group meets regularly and comprises the Treasurer of each of the 5 FRAs chaired by the Treasurer to WMRMB. The financial implications of individual projects from the Programme Plan are brought to that Group via the Programme Accountant in the Programme Office. The Group is responsible for determining those project costs/benefits are allocated across the 5 FRAs for recommending to WMRMB.

WMRMB has agreed terms of reference for the Treasurers Group.

Individual Authority Treasurers are responsible for ensuring that gross project costs are incurred within the standing order and financial regulations of their authority where it is the lead authority. They must therefore also ensure that all authorities have agreed the cost sharing arrangements.

During the year, financial management information is reported regularly to both the Programme Board and WMRMB on the Programme Office commitment.

Risk assessments are monitored for each project and a corporate risk log is regularly updated and reported to both the Programme Board and WMRMB

Officers across all 5 FRAs working on regional projects are provided with guidance on the internal control environment in Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, and other procedural documents. These address, amongst others, the processes for financial management, accounting policies, accounting records and returns, financial planning, budgeting, resource allocation, capital programmes, audit, risk management, security of assets, income, expenditure, external funding and partnerships.

Review of Effectiveness

WMRMB has responsibility for ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the Senior Managers within each constituent FRA who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of each internal control environment, and also by the external auditors who will be required to undertake an annual audit of the regional arrangements.

There are various sources of assurance WMRMB has which to underpin the Statement of Internal Control. These include:

The Treasurer

The Board appointed a Treasurer to oversee the financial aspects of its operation.

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of WMRMB's Statement of Accounts which in terms of the Code of Practice on Local Board Accounting in Great Britain ("the

Code”), is required to present fairly the financial position of WMRMB at the accounting date and its income and spending for the year.

Given the unique position of WMRMB the extent of the applicability of the Code to the operation of the Board has yet to be agreed with the external auditors.

The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of WMRMB’s accounting records and of its systems of internal control. Reliance is placed on the robustness of internal audit within each constituent FRA.

Management

Project Managers and Lead Officers are responsible for ensuring:

- WMRMB’s values are met;
- Laws and Regulations are complied with;
- WMRMB’s policies are put into practice including compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Approach;
- Required processes (e.g. Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Financial Guidance etc and various supporting procedures) are adhered to;
- Financial statements and other published information are accurate and reliable;
- Human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively, and
- The Performance Management Framework is adhered to.

External Audit

The work of WMRMB external auditors will include an assessment of the Board’s overall control environment and controls, as well as an examination of the underlying financial accounts. On completion of their work, the external auditors issue an Annual Audit and Inspection Letter to the Board. However, the extent of the auditor’s statutory duty with regards to WMRMB has yet to be determined.

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Chair of the Board

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Treasurer

Appendix C – Annual Efficiency Statement 2006/07

ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT – WEST MIDLANDS REGION

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES

Efficiency Savings ACHIEVED (2006/2007)

Summary

Category	Annual Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)	Cumulative Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)	Annual Non-cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)	Cumulative Non-Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)
Hereford & Worcester	832	1,858	75	138
Shropshire & Wrekin	346	716	-	17
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	670	1,631	505	1,013
Warwickshire	75	466	85	1,232
West Midlands	2,665	7,096	-	-
Total (no double counting)	4,588	11,767	665	2,400

Efficiency Savings PLANNED for 2007/08

Category	Annual Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)	Cumulative Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)	Annual Non-cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)	Cumulative Non-Cashable Efficiency Gain (£k)
Hereford & Worcester	404	2,262	5	143
Shropshire & Wrekin	75	788	-	17
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire	642	642	1,469	1,869
Warwickshire	192	648	157	1,253
West Midlands	632	7,015	-	-
Total (no double counting)	1,945	11,355	1,631	3,282

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Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Cantonese

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Hindi

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

Mandarin

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Turkish

Bu belgenin Türkçe'sini edinmek ya da Türkçe bilen birisinin size yardımcı olmasını istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے میراثی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔