



THE PLAN

Making West Midlands Safer

2014-2017



Prevention



Protection

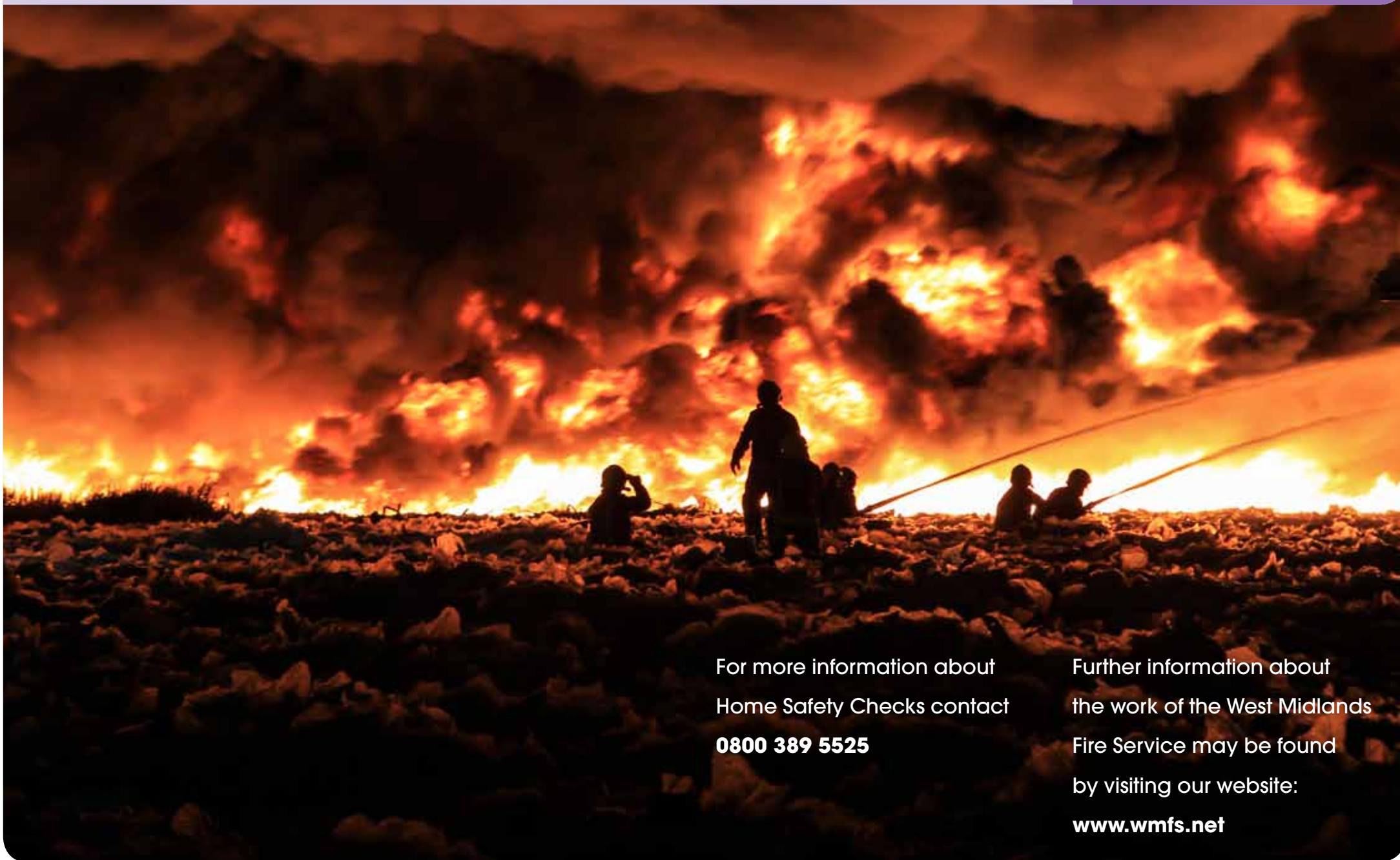


Response

Making West Midlands Safer

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

www.wmfs.net



For more information about
Home Safety Checks contact
0800 389 5525

Further information about
the work of the West Midlands
Fire Service may be found
by visiting our website:
www.wmfs.net

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Introduction and Foreword

This page will be completed following consultation



Councillor John Edwards

Chair, West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority



Phil Loach

Chief Fire Officer, West Midlands Fire Service

PEOPLE

West Midlands Fire Service is the second largest fire and rescue service in the country, delivering emergency services to 2.7 million residents across the seven local authorities within the West Midlands. The population of the West Midlands is made up of the following ethnicities:

White (Includes White Irish and White Other) 70.1%

Asian or Asian British 18.9%

Black African/Caribbean or Black British 6%

Mixed Origin 3.4%

Other 1.6%

(Census 2011 First Release)

The West Midlands communities are highly diverse and we must continue to meet their differing needs to achieve the delivery of our core services of Prevention, Protection and Response. In order to commit to this and efficient service delivery, we continue to work with Community Safety Partnerships to deliver prevention activities and improve outcomes for the West Midlands communities. We continue to work with local authorities, voluntary organisations and the private sector to achieve our vision of 'Making West Midlands Safer.'

A breakdown of the community profiles covered can be found in the 'Equality and Diversity Report and Objectives 2012-2015' which outlines our approach to delivering services to the communities of the West Midlands. Through achievement of these objectives we meet and exceed our public duties in the following key areas:

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

Despite the financial challenges facing the West Midlands Fire Service; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a key priority for us. This is demonstrated through our adoption of the Marmot principles in the way we tackle health inequalities. Our work has been recognised by Professor Sir Michael Marmot and his team at the University College London Institute of Health Equity.

Through this work we aim to achieve Excellence in the Services we deliver to our community. We are committed to achieving the Excellence level of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Equality Framework and through meeting our Equality Objectives. Currently our equality objectives are working to the FRS Equality Framework themes. We are working with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) to change our focus from these themes to the new themes which reflect community outcomes.

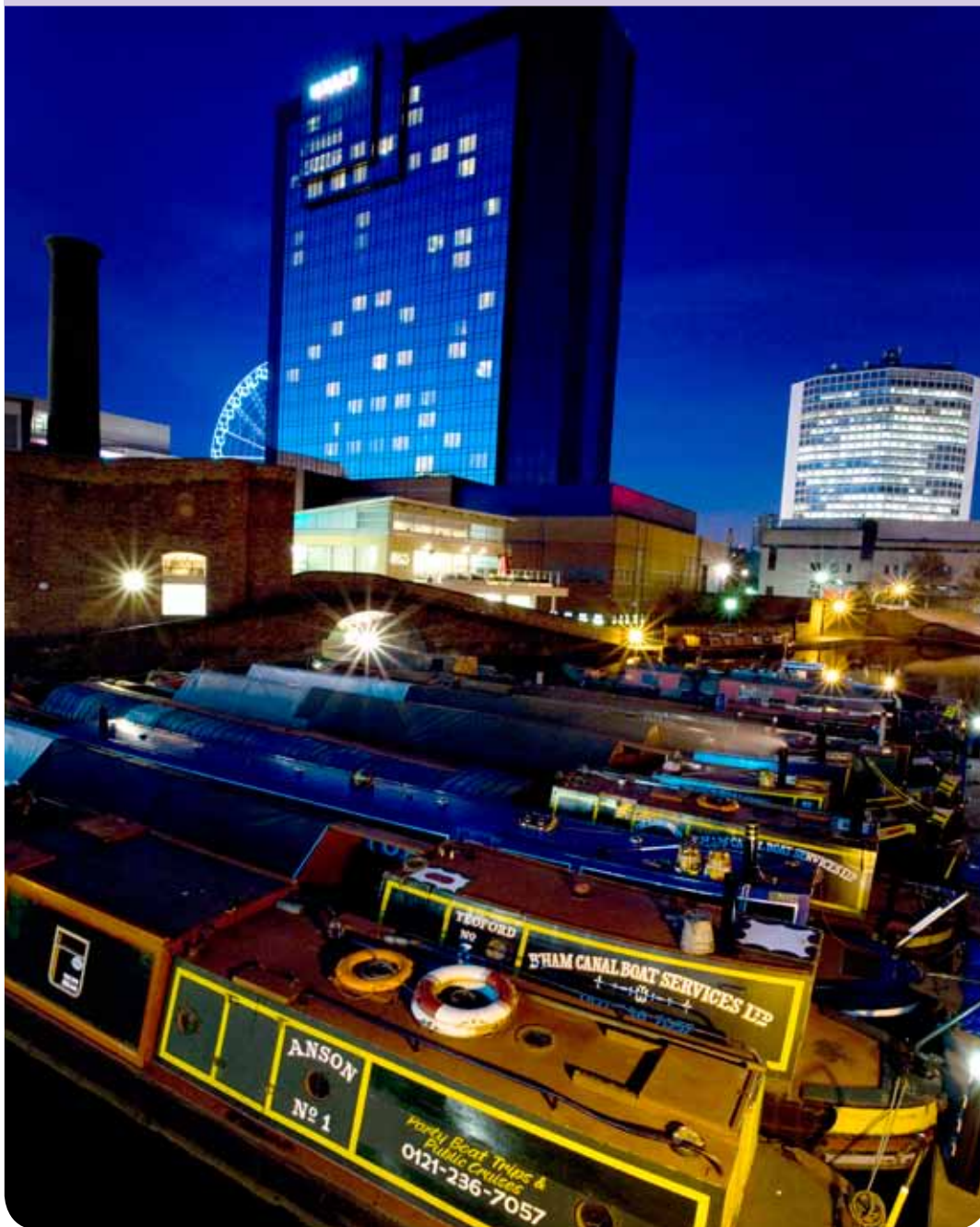
Changes to the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework

Previous themes:

- 1** Leadership and promoting inclusion.
- 2** Accountability.
- 3** Effective service delivery and community engagement.
- 4** Employment and training.
- 5** Evaluation and sharing good practice.

New themes:

- 1** Knowing your communities.
- 2** Leadership, partnership and service commitment.
- 3** Community engagement and satisfaction.
- 4** Responsive services.
- 5** A skilled and committed workforce.



THE PLACE

The West Midlands has both densely populated and Industrial areas. We have excellent transport routes, connected to the UK's busiest road and rail routes; we also have the second largest airport in the UK, Birmingham International. There continues to be significant investment in modernising and changing the face of the West Midlands, providing more commercial opportunities and residential accommodation. An example of this is the Birmingham 'Big City Plan' that aspires to achieve a £10 Billion Investment over 20 years.

The map on the next page highlights how we have distributed our resources in the West Midlands and the priorities set by local authorities to address the needs of the communities they serve. The location of our community fire stations demonstrates the wide geographical spread of our people and other resources.

Walsall

- Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work.
- Improving health including well being and independence.
- Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities – Reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in.
- Improving Safeguarding, Learning and The Life Chances for Children and Young People.

Wolverhampton

- Encouraging enterprise and business
- Empowering people and communities
- Re-invigorating our city

Sandwell

Great People

- Our children: Sandwell's future
- Excellent care for adults
- Changing NHS, Improving health
- Local people, local services

Great Place

- West Bromwich: top town
- Homes that meet people's needs
- Cleaner streets, more recycling and safer neighbourhoods
- Parks and green spaces to enjoy

Great Prospects

- Investing in business, people and jobs
- Activities for all
- A better deal for Smethwick

Great Performance

- The customer is always right
- Excellent people, excellent council
- Getting the money right

Dudley

- Jobs & prosperity
- Health & Wellbeing
- Heritage, culture & leisure
- Environment & housing
- Individual & community learning
- Community safety

Coventry and Solihull

Birmingham North

Birmingham South

Black Country North

Black Country South

■ WMFS Headquarters

Birmingham

- Birmingham is the first sustainable global city in modern Britain. It is a great place to live, learn, work and visit: a global city with a local heart.
- Birmingham people are healthy and enjoy living together.
- Birmingham is a safe, clean and friendly city tackling climate change and enhancing the local environment.
- Birmingham people have high aspirations, skills and the opportunities they need to succeed.
- Birmingham is globally competitive, contributing fully to the thriving, prosperous and sustainable region.

Solihull

Place

- Build on sustainable reductions, reduce victims of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour across the Command and focus partnership effort on areas where things matter most and have the greatest need.

Vulnerable

- Provide targeted support to those that are most vulnerable, building confidence to report crimes, seek support and live life free from harm

Offender pathways

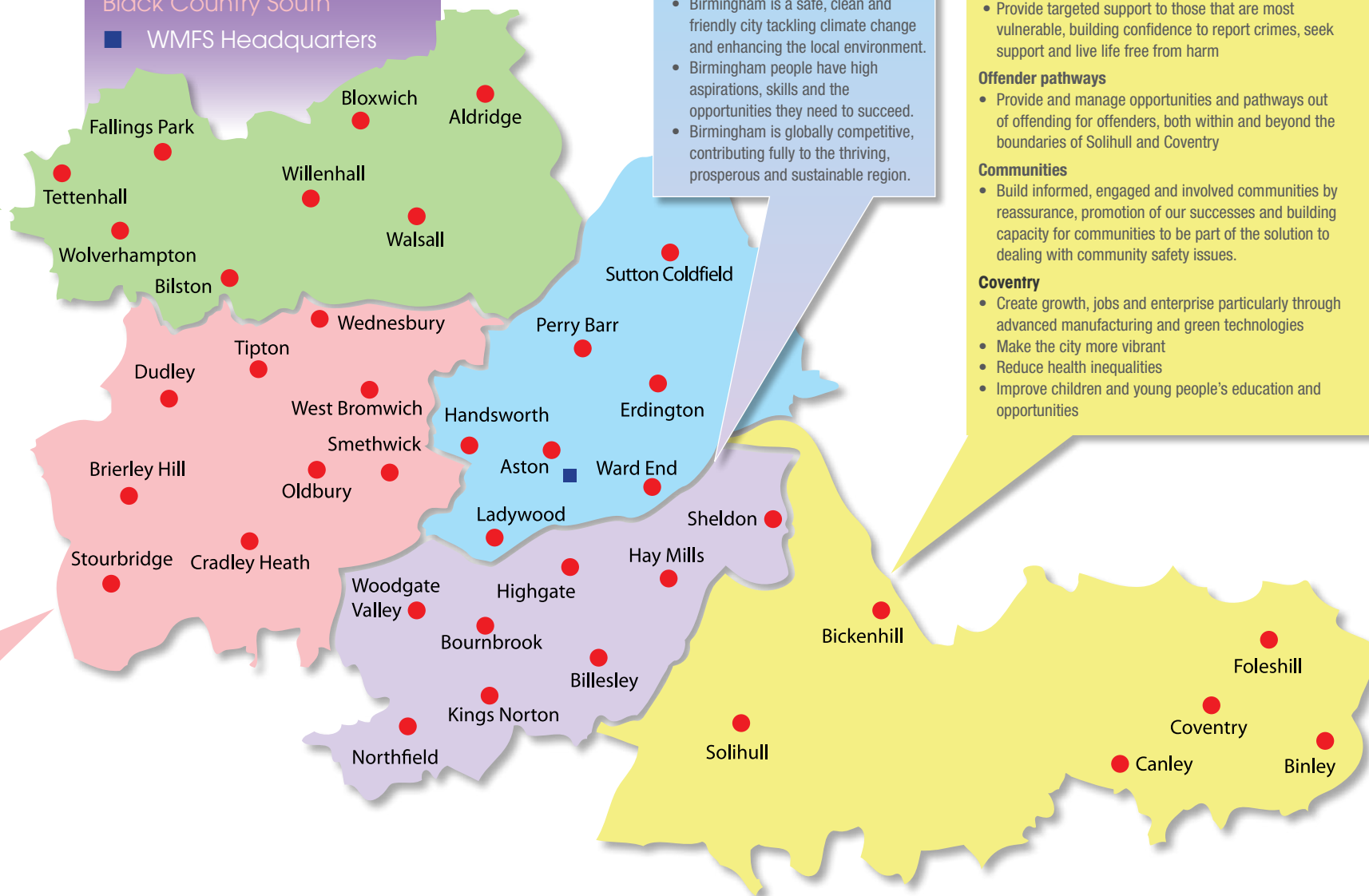
- Provide and manage opportunities and pathways out of offending for offenders, both within and beyond the boundaries of Solihull and Coventry

Communities

- Build informed, engaged and involved communities by reassurance, promotion of our successes and building capacity for communities to be part of the solution to dealing with community safety issues.

Coventry

- Create growth, jobs and enterprise particularly through advanced manufacturing and green technologies
- Make the city more vibrant
- Reduce health inequalities
- Improve children and young people's education and opportunities



West Midlands Fire Service prides itself on its ability to deliver an excellent emergency service to the communities in the West Midlands. We strongly believe we are one of the best fire services in the world and strive to be the best in everything we do.

Our services are delivered in the context of the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework which sets out the Governments expectations of all Fire Authorities in England. This framework is brought about through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 which sets out our statutory duties and powers.

There are a number of key pieces of legislation and guidance that influence how we deliver our services of **prevention, protection** and **response**; these include the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) Order 2007 which influences how we support national arrangements for major incidents.

Whilst recognising our primary duty is to provide a service to the local community we also acknowledge we have some of the best trained firefighters in the world who are also able to support national resilience in the event of major catastrophes. This is reflected in the challenging targets we set ourselves in achieving operational excellence through a culture of personal development supported by continuous and intense training.

Our service is delivered within a framework of other legislation and regulations, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Equalities Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act; these are key influences for us and areas where we are aiming for excellence.

The Plan sets out how we will respond to these legislative responsibilities by addressing risks in the community. Our analysis of the risk in our community is clearly linked to the causation factors that lead to social inequalities. All of our work contributes to the reduction of these factors.

Our **prevention**

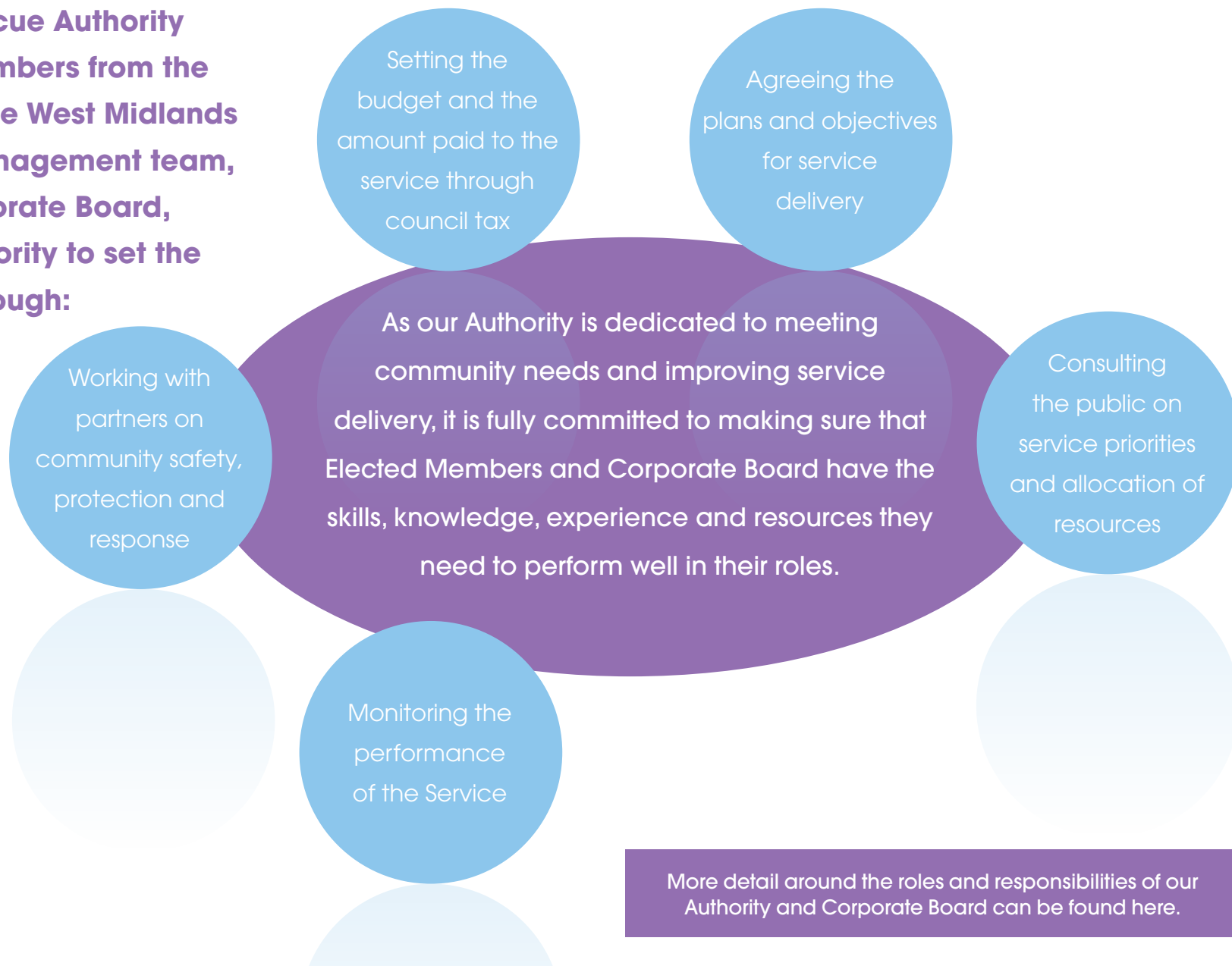
services focus on public involvement and education, engaging with our partners, targeting schools, communities and vulnerable people with advice and guidance, and with particular reference to social inequalities.

Our **protection** service prioritises the risks to the business sector, focusing on the provision of advice and importantly the enforcement of legislation with a mind set of continuing to support the economic wellbeing of the West Midlands.

Our **response** service protects life, properties and the economies of the West Midlands by delivering assertive, safe and effective firefighting through timely response, across a range of emergencies we attend.

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

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA) is made up of Members from the seven Local Authorities in the West Midlands conurbation. Our senior management team, collectively known as Corporate Board, work together with the Authority to set the direction for the Service through:



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Priorities, Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

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

Pages 10 and 11 set out the Priorities, Strategic Objectives and Outcomes which will inform how we will target our resources and activity towards 'Making West Midlands Safer' in each of our four key Priority areas: Communities and Partnerships, Response, People and Value for Money.

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

Communities and Partnerships



People



Response



Value for Money



Our Priorities, Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

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

Our Risk Based Attendance Standards

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To manage our performance in responding to emergency Incidents through an evidence based approach, we ensure that we give greater priority to the most serious calls, allowing us to allocate resources according to risk. We do this by taking into account factors such as life risk and the history of incidents within that location. We use an Area Risk Map (ARM) that shows us where the areas of high, medium and low risk are in the West Midlands. This map is used as part of the basis for planning our emergency response strategy. This helps to categorise all of the incidents we respond to, according to

the level of risk they present. We align these with the risk areas shown on the map and produce a risk matrix. The ARM and risk matrix is continually reviewed to ensure that our approach to emergency response aligns resources with risk in a way that is proportionate and appropriate.

Our Risk Based Attendance Standards sets out our commitment to the communities of the West Midlands, showing that we will respond to incidents in a timely, assertive, safe and efficient manner. This approach will provide less risk to the community, less risk to our firefighters, and incidents will be resolved more quickly, thereby reducing the impact to both the community and the economy.

More detail on the ARM and **Risk Based Attendance Standards** can be viewed in our '**Community Safety Strategy**'. Measured from the point of dispatch of fire appliances to the time of arrival at the incident, we will continue to deliver a risk based five minute attendance standard for the first firefighting resource to incidents where life and property are at risk. Our performance against these standards during 2012 is set

Average time for 1st firefighting resource in-attendance



out below.

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

Our '**Community Safety Strategy**' sets out how West Midlands Fire Service will address risk in the community and make the people of the West Midlands safer throughout 2014-2017. We have developed the Community Safety Strategy, based on Strategic Risk Analysis and through consultation carried out with the public, their representatives, partners and our workforce. The Strategic Risk Analysis identified the key threats and challenges the community and the service faces. This analysis has been carried out to ensure that we are able to continue providing the highest standards of service in the areas of prevention, protection and emergency response. We use this information to plan our activity as outlined earlier in '**Our Risk Based Attendance Standards**' and help set priorities in the strategy.

Our '**Community Safety Strategy**' underwent significant public consultation. We engaged with the public in a more detailed way to look at how we manage risk in the community over a rolling three year period. This provides an opportunity to influence the way we work now and into the future. The consultation included a number of questions based around a plan of how the risk will be managed and mitigated.

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

risks and consequences of dangerous driving.

Our success in prevention means the demand for our services changing. Our emphasis is on addressing the causation factors which have clear links to health inequalities. For example we have managed down our emergency calls by about 60% over the last ten years and there are less accidental fires in dwellings due to effective prevention work. In contrast we are now experiencing an increasing number of calls to road traffic incidents. So despite being successful in reducing the number and impact of emergencies that our communities suffer from; we must continue to focus on reducing the factors that contribute to social inequalities so that we can reduce emergencies further.



Our **protection** services prioritise the business sector, focusing on the provision of advice and the enforcement of legislation through a team of qualified inspectors. We have recently upgraded our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) to an Intelligence Led Audit Programme (ILAP). This covers all known business premises where fire safety audits are required and prioritises these to guide our approach and resources in a more efficient targeted way. This enables us to achieve the greatest impact on safety in the community as well as for our firefighters, should a fire occur. This also supports the economic growth and well being of the business communities in the West Midlands.

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

Deploying resources according to risk is a principle we will continue to apply to our attendance at incidents and the allocation of our resources, both people and equipment. We will continue to challenge calls to automatic fire alarms and non urgent calls to ensure we only respond to a

genuine emergency. Our target for attending high risk incidents within 5 minutes will remain and we will always aim to get to high risk incidents as fast as possible.

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

How We Are Changing For The Future

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

To achieve this, our focus will be:

For Prevention, Protection and Response to develop a new community risk reduction strategy; that provides an integrated approach to target our resources to the most vulnerable people.

To ensure the use of enhanced technology in our equipment and vehicles remains a key component to the delivery of effective, efficient and targeted services.

An updated training model that's based on risk and allows operational crews to remain available in their local area will underpin the Authority's commitment to maintaining 5 minute attendance standard. This continued investment in high quality training and development for staff contributes to the achievement of excellence in individual and team objectives against core activities.

To explore and exploit opportunities to generate income by maintaining and growing what we currently do and identifying opportunities for the future.

To explore further opportunities, for collaboration and sharing of services with other public sector providers, developing an important route to delivering against the priorities we share with other agencies. As an outcome of our collaboration with West Midlands Ambulance Service we will continue to expand across our Prevention, Protection and Response services.

To work with existing and new partners to address joint priorities. Our partnerships bring about benefits for both West Midlands Fire Service and the partnering organisation but most importantly for the communities of the West Midlands. We are working with the Business, Public and Third Sector partners to explore the possibilities of joint community ventures.

Continuing to review the way in which we work to identify efficiencies and better ways of working.

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



Our Performance

How Do We Know We Are Delivering Our Outcomes



We aim to target our activities

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

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

Key performance indicators and targets allow us to monitor progress, make key decisions and improve performance. Our current Corporate Performance Indicators and targets for 2014/2015 can be found [here](#).

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

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

Financial Summary 2014/2015

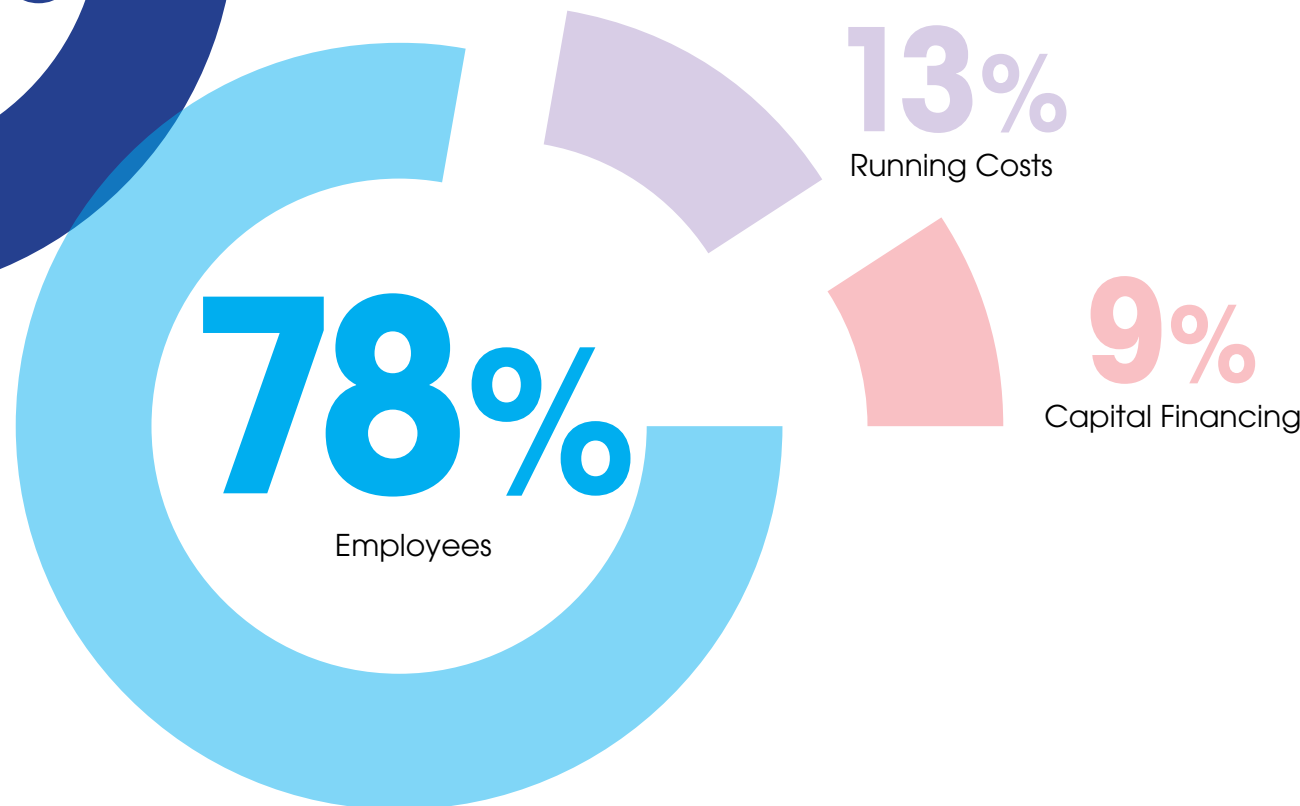
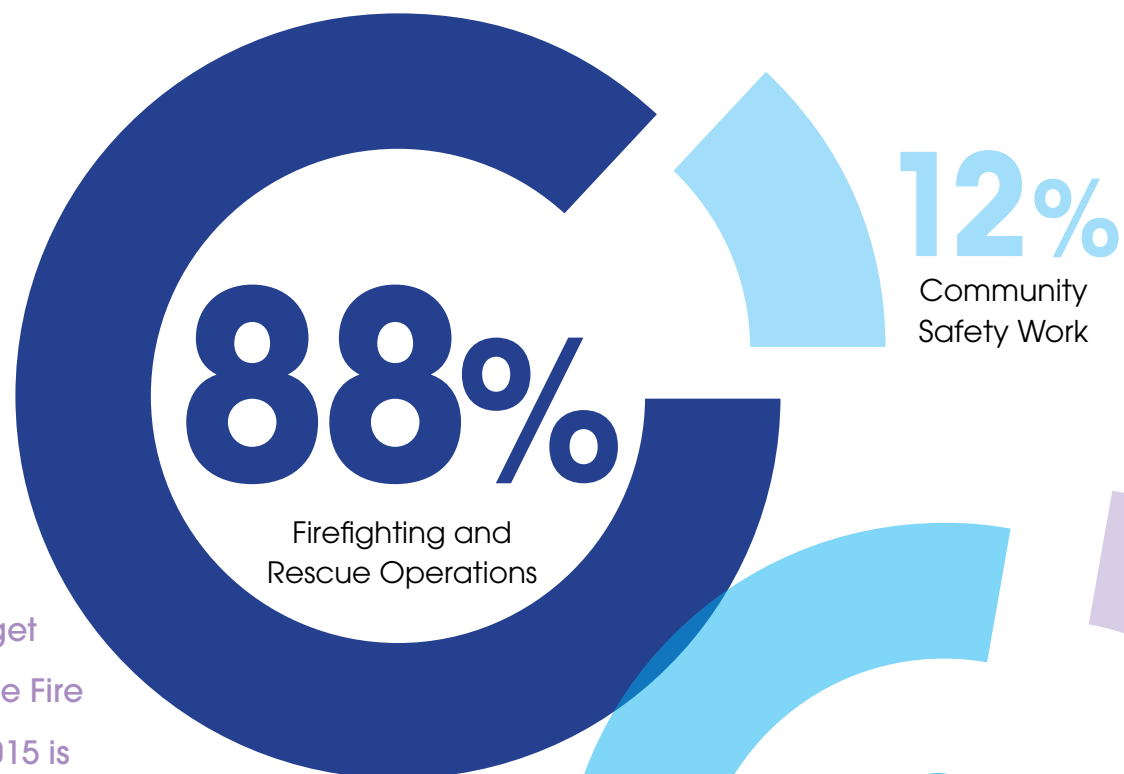
How much will the Service cost in 2014/2015?

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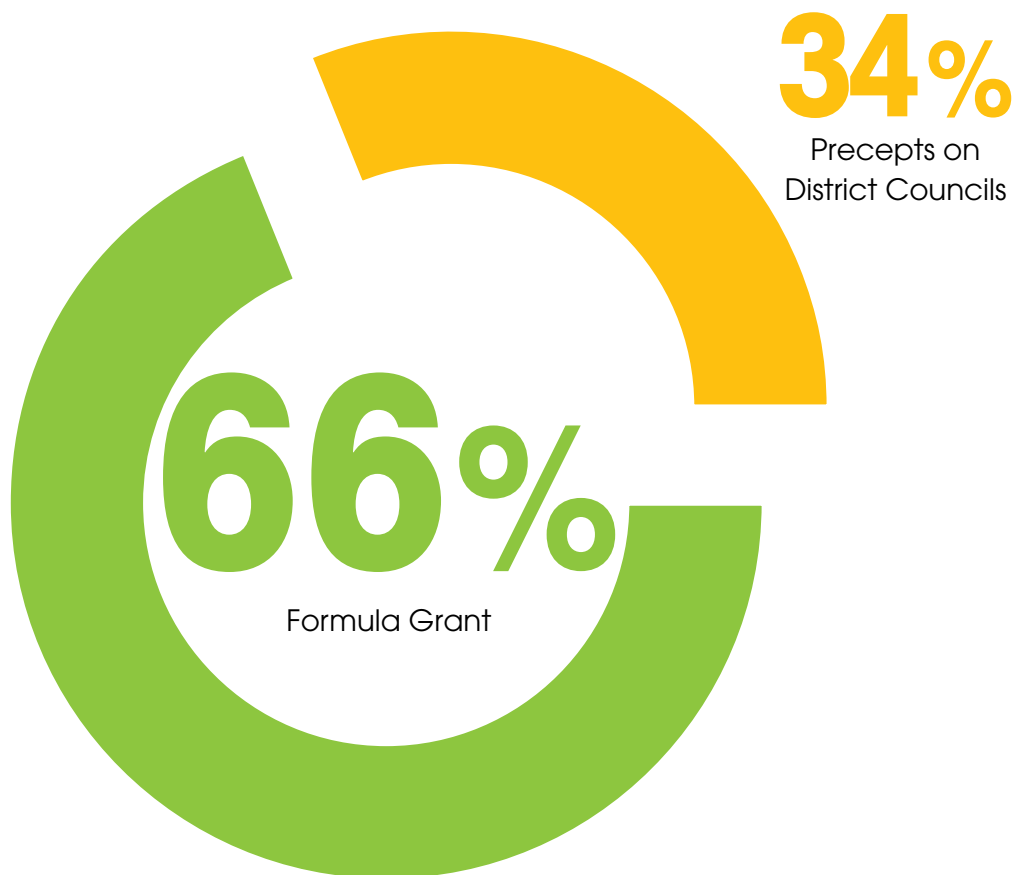
How will the Service be funded in 2014/2015?

The resources to fund the net budget requirement of £103m comes in the form of a formula grant from the Government (£68m) and Precepts on District Councils collected through Council Tax (£35m).

The total net budget requirement for the Fire Service in 2014/2015 is £103m. This mainly relates to firefighting and rescue operations and community fire safety work.



The majority of expenditure relating to the net budget requirement of £103m is mainly employee costs, a further analysis is shown above.



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

In order to set a balanced budget in 2014/2015 the Authority assumed no significant movement in general balances. The actual level of general balances at 31st March 2013 was £8.957m. The Authority holds general balances as funding to meet any unforeseen events which it may need to respond to. Interest is earned on any unused balances.

In addition, as part of the closedown of accounts process, consideration needs to be given to the level of earmarked reserves required. These are amounts set aside to meet specific anticipated future demands. The level of earmarked reserves at 31st March 2013 was £24.609m. Interest is earned on any balances until expenditure is committed against the demands identified.

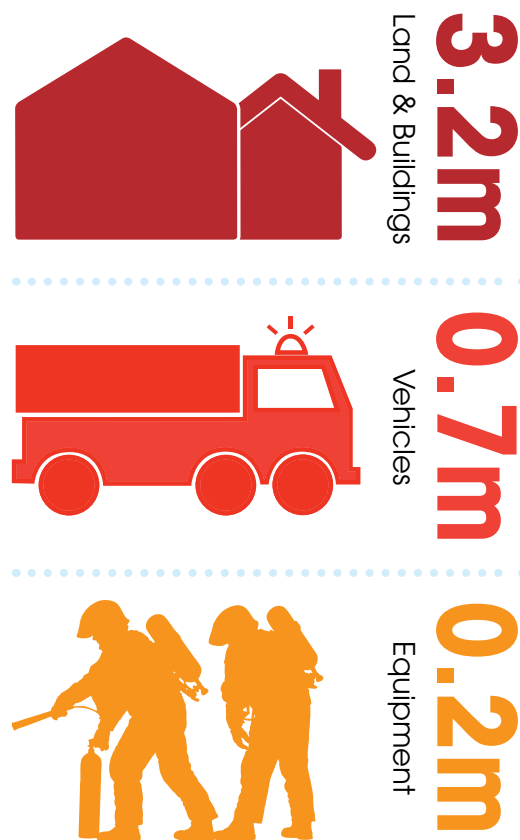
Financial Summary 2014/2015

Capital Expenditure and Funding

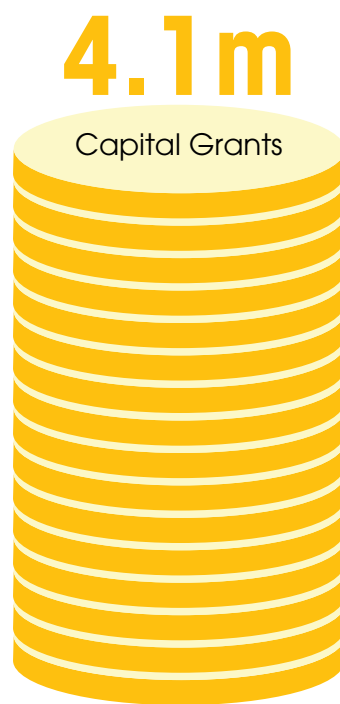
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In 2014/2015, the Authority plans to spend £4.1 million on capital projects.

A planned capital expenditure analysis is shown below:



Resources to fund the capital programme in 2014/15 will be through the application of capital grants of £4.1m.



The Fire Authority did not undertake any borrowing to help purchase assets during 2012/13, borrowing in earlier years meant that as at the 31st March 2013, the Authority had total loans of £43.221m (the interest and principal on any loans needs to be met from future revenue budgets).

The value of fixed assets held by the Authority as at 31st March 2013 which the loans had helped fund was £128m, of which approximately 92% related to land and buildings and 8% related to vehicles and equipment.



Medium Term Financial Plan

The cost of delivering the service was considered as part of the Authority's 2014/15 budget setting process. The medium term financial plan supports this and enables managers to develop their own plans for a three to five year period. The medium term financial plan is refreshed annually for the new business year and allows the Authority to prepare in advance for future events.

Further cuts in public sector budgets during the life of this Plan, already outlined by Government, may have a severe impact on the fire and rescue service we currently provide. In the event the Fire Authority may need to consider whether to carry out a referendum of people in the West Midlands to allow you to have your say about the level of service you want.

Contact Us



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

Principal Officer Support Team
West Midlands Fire Service
Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

0121 380 6678

POST@wmfs.net

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

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

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

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

contact@wmfs.net

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

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

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Prevention Protection Response

Making West Midlands Safer