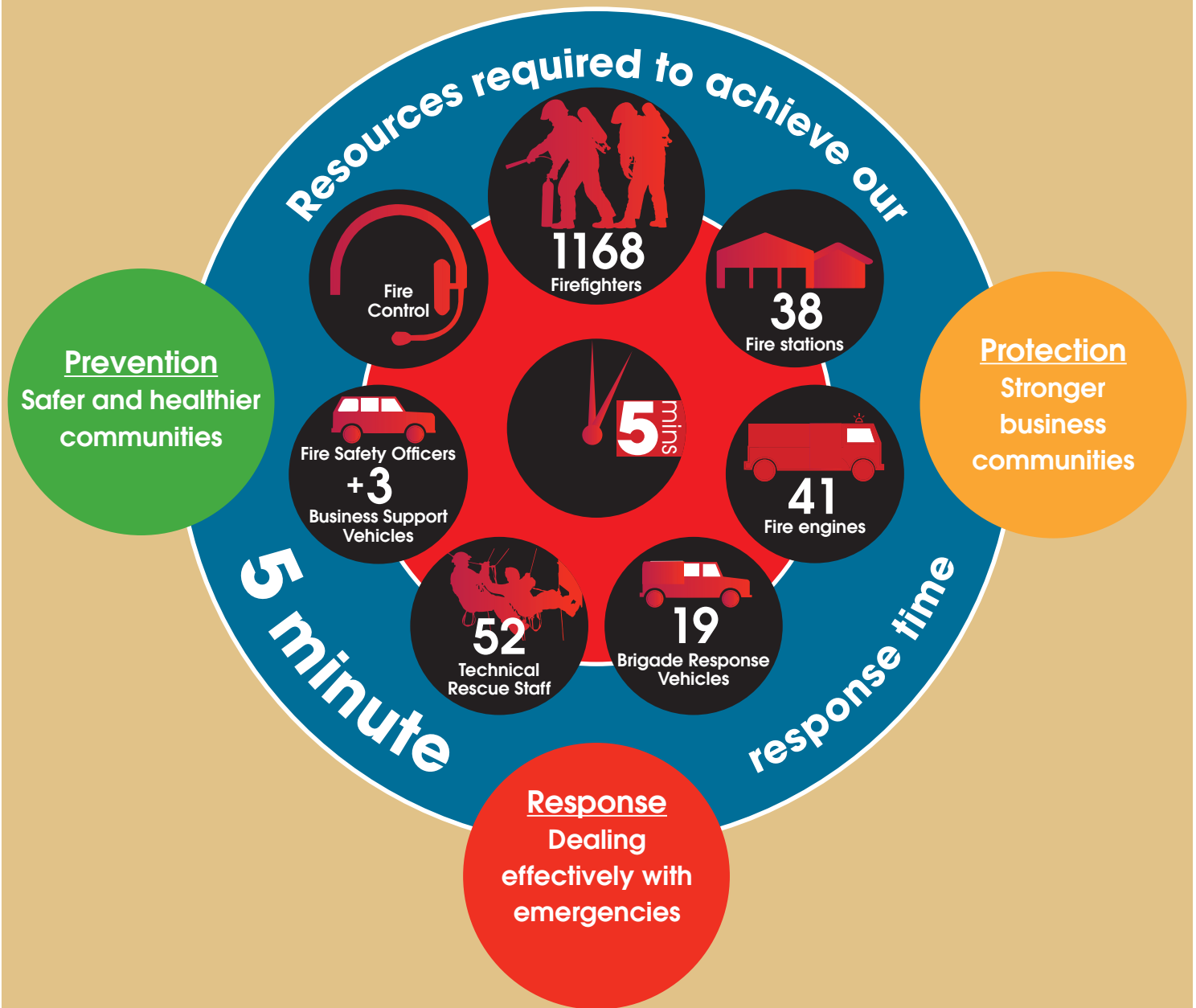


The Plan 2016-2019

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier



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Foreword from Chair and Chief



Councillor John Edwards

Chair, West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority



Phil Loach

Chief Fire Officer, West Midlands Fire Service

Thank you for reading this document, 'The Plan 2016-19'. The following pages will give you a real flavour of what we do and why. It sets out our priorities, how we decide on and achieve them, and – most importantly – the difference this will make to the lives and successes of our residents and businesses.

The role of a 21st Century firefighter in the West Midlands goes way beyond responding to emergencies in fire engines with sirens on and blue lights flashing.

Of course, helping people who need us quickly is still at the heart of what we do. We're as committed as ever to getting to the most serious incidents in a five-minute, risk-based attendance time.

But, to truly reflect the full range of services we provide, we have changed our guiding vision statement, which is now 'Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier'. We believe that we have an important role to play in helping people live safer, healthier lives and supporting West Midlands businesses and the economy to thrive.

We work with partners and the community to identify risks across the West Midlands and use this evidence as the basis of our Community Safety Strategy. This, in turn, informs how we distribute fire stations, fire engines, equipment and – most importantly – emergency response staff across the West Midlands. We call this our Service Delivery Model.

Providing a service that is considered excellent drives everything we do, in spite of multi-million pound reductions in the money we get from Whitehall. By 2019/20, our Core Funding provided by Government will have been reduced by £38 million since the cuts began in 2011. This is an unprecedented reduction, in the region of 50%.

We have maintained and built upon a strong collaborative relationship with other blue light services, Local Authorities and other partners throughout the West Midlands. Our relationship with the health sector has been a critical success factor in the way we have made progress in reducing emergency response demand, and reducing the likelihood of having an emergency by taking preventative action in many different ways. These include the Safe and Well check, road safety education, school visits and working with businesses. Many more examples are highlighted on our website www.wmfs.net

There will be even greater opportunities for collaboration, following the launch of the [West Midlands Combined Authority](#). Nationally, fire and rescue services now report into the Home Office, which maintains our close working with West Midlands' Police and Crime Commissioner.

It all makes for a challenging but exciting new landscape in which we operate and want to influence - so we can be sure we're providing the best possible service to the communities of the West Midlands, to make them safer, stronger and healthier.

Priorities, objectives and outcomes

We have a legal duty to provide an efficient, safe and effective fire and rescue service.

When we draw up our [priorities and outcomes](#), we base them on our detailed [Community Safety Strategy](#). That's where we set out our analysis of risks across the West Midlands, as well as the resources we need - like firefighters, emergency vehicles and equipment - and the best places to locate them.

We use and target our resources to try to prevent incidents from happening in the first place. And we locate them so that, when emergencies do happen, we can respond in an assertive, safe and effective way.

Serious incidents, where life or property is at risk, need a quick response. It could be a fire or a car crash. We aim to get there on average within five minutes, because this reduces injuries and damage, and increases a person's chances of survival.

Our [five-minute attendance standard](#) lies at the heart of our [Service Delivery Model](#). The model shows how our staff, based mainly at fire stations, provide our core [prevention](#), [protection](#) and [response](#) services to make the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier.

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier

Prevention priority	Protection priority	Response priority
Safer and healthier communities	Stronger business communities	Dealing effectively with emergencies
What are our prevention priorities?	What are our protection priorities?	What are our response priorities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities targeted to those at risk will reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured as a result of fire • Activities will support a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads • Supporting communities and partners to promote and advise on safer, healthier lifestyles in their homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business communities will become safer through working in partnership with Fire Safety teams to protect their people, organisation and property • Business communities will become stronger through flexible approaches of working together and receiving proportionate and consistent advice • The Service Delivery Model will be more resilient and the impact of automatic fire alarms decreased through innovative approaches to call reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life risk emergencies will be attended on average within 5 minutes • Risk to life and property is reduced through operational excellence and the delivery of assertive, safe and effective emergency response resulting in enhanced community and business continuity • Community support and reassurance will be provided through our specialist rescue teams responding to both local and national emergencies

Effective delivery through collaboration

How do we deliver our priorities with fewer and effective resources?

Value for money outcomes	People outcomes	ICT outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding reductions are met and our Service Delivery Model is maintained • Flexible and sustainable funding opportunities are identified and secured • Assets are used as effectively and efficiently as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and personal accountability at all levels will be empowered to effectively deliver change. • Developing an environment of wellbeing through supporting the personal resilience of our workforce so that they are responsive to opportunities of change • The service will achieve diversity, Inclusion, cohesion and equality outcomes for its diverse community and workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency 999 systems to mobilise and enable rapid response when and where it is needed • The right level of information is provided to our communities and our mobile workforce at the right time • Secure and reliable data sharing with partner agencies enables cost effective joined up services to the most vulnerable within our communities

Our Core Values



About us

At West Midlands Fire Service we pride ourselves on delivering an excellent emergency service to all of our communities through our prevention, protection and response work.

We are the second largest fire and rescue service in the country, serving 2.8 million residents across seven local authority areas (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils).

The West Midlands has a diverse and multi-cultural population, spread across 902 square kilometres. It includes areas with the highest risk in England outside of London, presenting a range of socio-economic and health and wellbeing challenges.

Just over 70% of the population is White (includes White Irish and White other), nearly 19% Asian or Asian British and 6% Black African/Caribbean or Black British. Our other residents are of mixed or other origin. You can read more about how we value diversity, inclusion, cohesion and equality by [clicking here](#).

We work within the [Fire and Rescue Services National Framework](#), which sets out the Government's expectations of all Fire Authorities in England. Our statutory duties and powers are set out in the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#).

There are other laws and guidance that influence how we deliver our services.

[The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) Order 2007](#) guides how our highly-trained firefighters would support national arrangements during major incidents. Others include the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#), the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#).

These pages set out how we respond to these legislative responsibilities by analysing and addressing risks in the community. Central to that work is having a clear understanding of what leads to social inequality and how we can help all of our residents, but especially the most vulnerable, to live safely and healthily.

[West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority](#) (WMFRA) members are drawn from the seven councils in the West Midlands conurbation. Our senior managers form our [Strategic Enabling Team](#), and they work together with WMFRA to set the direction for our service. They:

- set the budget and the amount paid to the service through council tax
- agree plans and objectives for our service delivery
- consult the public on service priorities and allocation of resources
- monitor the performance of the service
- work with partners on community safety, protection and response

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier

West Midlands Profile 2016

Area (sq km): **902**

People per sq km: **3,114**



Population: **2,808,400**



Homes: **1,119,704**



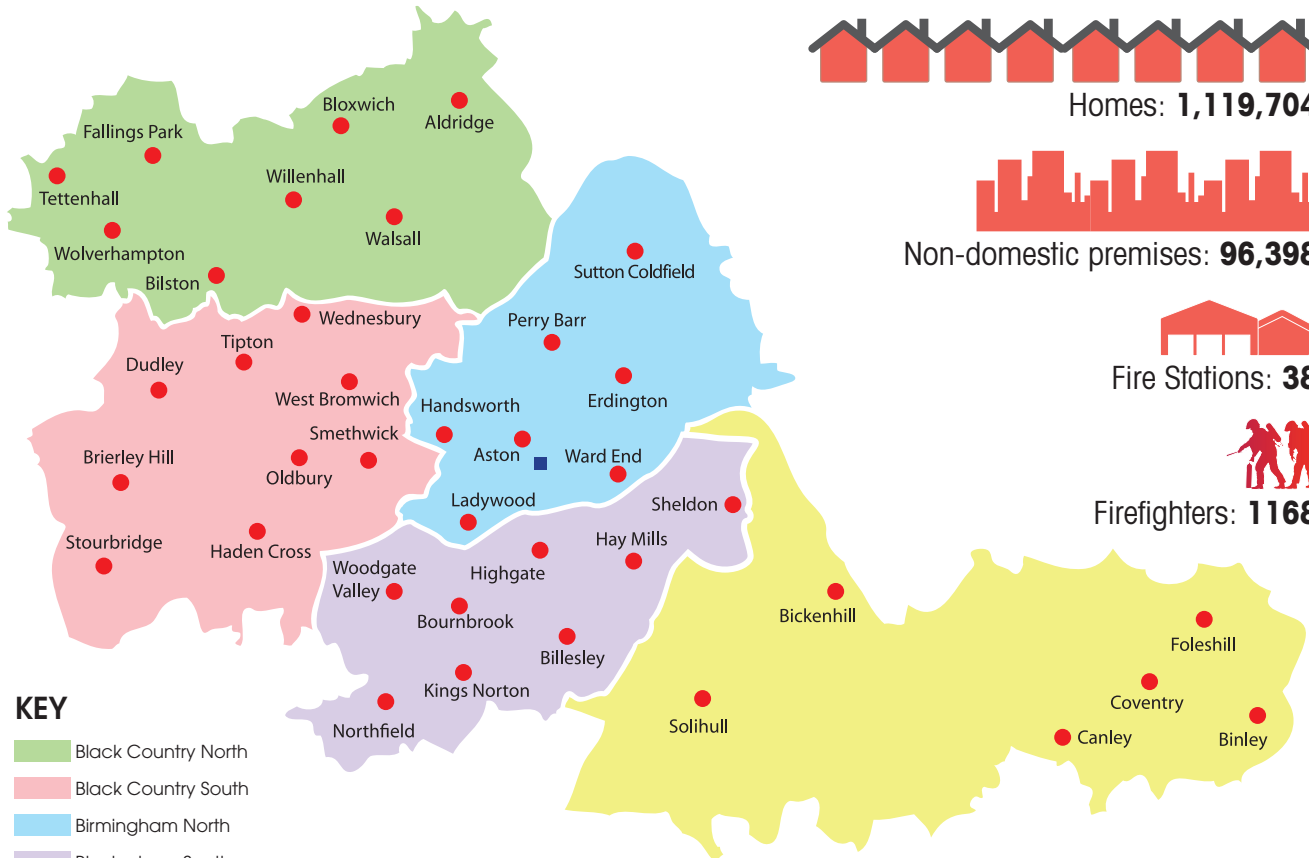
Non-domestic premises: **96,398**



Fire Stations: **38**



Firefighters: **1168**



KEY

- Black Country North
- Black Country South
- Birmingham North
- Birmingham South
- Solihull and Coventry

(Source: The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)

We serve a diverse population:

White (Includes White Irish and White Other) **70.1%**

Asian or Asian British **18.8%**

Black African/Caribbean or Black British **6%**

Mixed Origin **3.5%**

Other **1.6%**

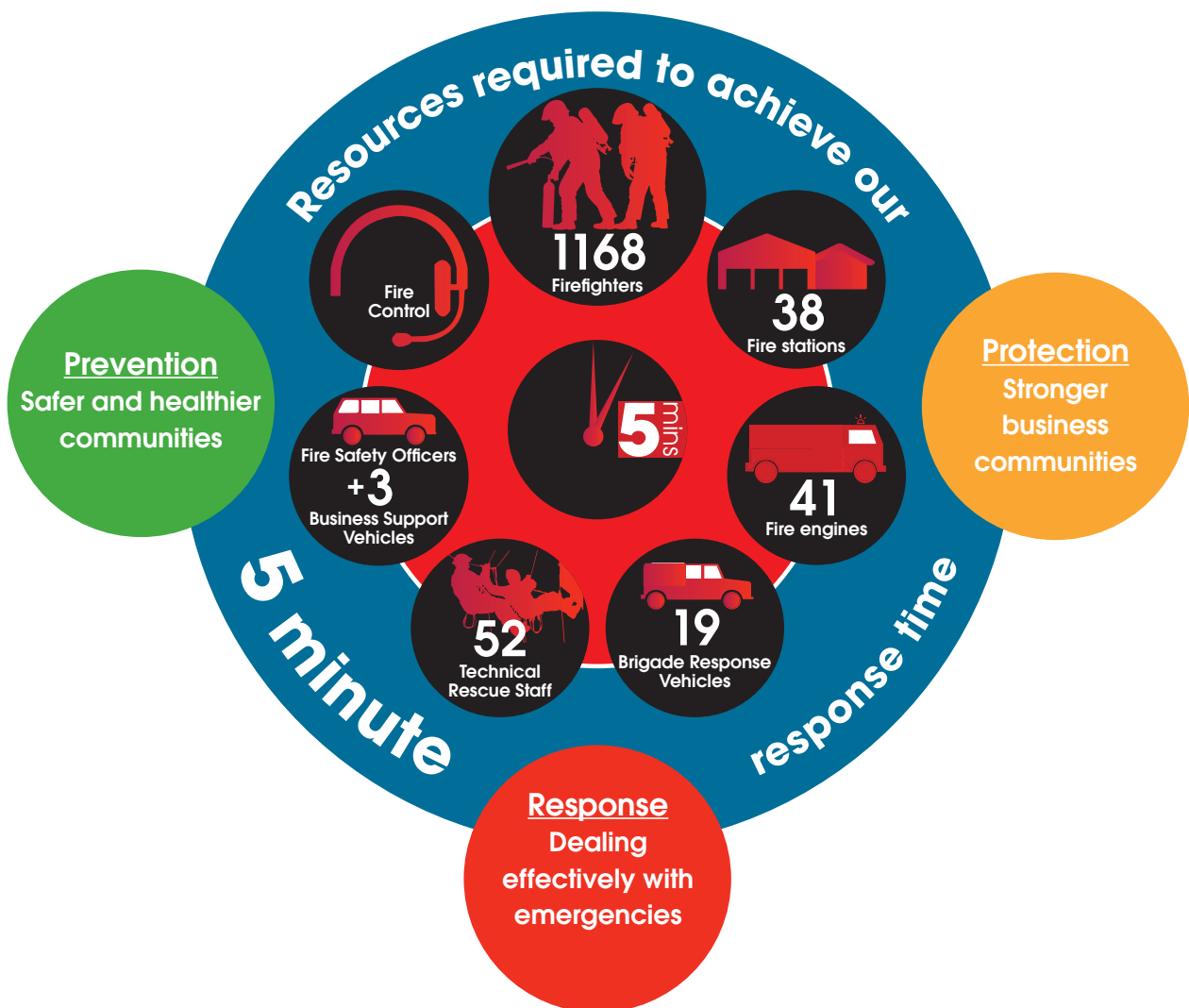
(Source: The Census 2011)

Service Delivery Model

To ensure that we respond to emergencies in the most assertive, safe and effective way, we use a risk-based approach to everything we do.

Seconds count, and we aim to get to incidents posing a high risk to life or property on average within five minutes.

Our ongoing analysis lets us create a detailed map of the West Midlands and where most incidents are likely to occur. We split these into categories, the most serious including house fires or serious road traffic collisions. We then locate our resources accordingly.



How we spend our time

Thanks to the commitment and professionalism of our workforce we have been able to continue to deliver a world-class service to our communities. We are committed to continuously improving the way we work but, in the face of reducing budgets, must look at different ways of delivering our services.

Thanks to new and more flexible approach to how we staff our fire stations, we continue to meet our average five-minute attendance time for more serious incidents. This is in spite of having fewer operational staff. We are committed to this attendance standard.

We are exploring how we can make further savings and work more closely with our partners, such as the Police and Crime Commissioner, the recently formed West Midlands Combined Authority and regional fire services. This includes looking at shared support services and greater use of integrated technology.

We are also looking at new ways to raise income in a way that benefits and makes our communities safer and healthier – for example, through initiatives that have a direct and positive impact on the West Midlands' public health and wellbeing.

Do something great

By becoming one of our Community Members, you could make a real difference to making the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier. Your involvement will help to improve the services we offer.

[Please click here to find out more and sign up!](#)

www.wmfs.net/your-fire-service/community-membership/

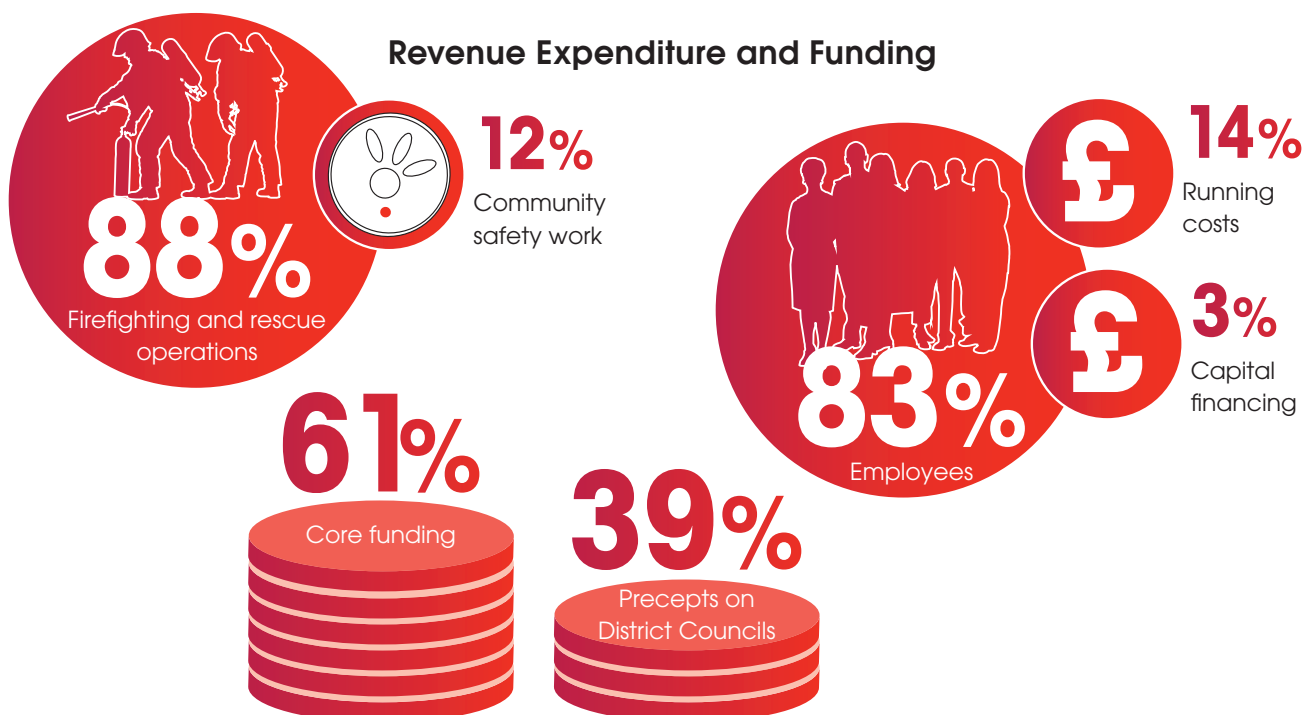
Alternatively, you can e-mail communitymembership@wmfs.net or call 0121 380 7322

Financial Summary 2016/17

The total net budget requirement for the Fire Service in 2016/17 is £97m. This mainly relates to firefighting and rescue operations and community fire safety work, the majority of which covers employee costs.

The £97m comes in the form of core funding from the Government (£59m) and Precepts on District Councils collected through Council Tax (£38m).

Revenue Expenditure and Funding



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 2016/17 the Authority assumed no significant movement in general balances. The actual level of general balances at 31 March 2015 was £9.231m. The Authority holds general balances as funding to meet any unforeseen events to which it may need to respond. 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 31 March 2015 was £36.266m. Interest is earned on any balances until expenditure is committed against the demands identified.

Financial Summary 2016/17

In 2016/17, the Authority plans to spend £6.5 million on capital projects.

A planned capital expenditure analysis is shown below:



Resources to fund the capital programme in 2016/17 will be through the application of capital grants of £1.0m, capital receipts of £1.1m and estimated revenue balances of £4.4m.

The Fire Authority did not undertake any borrowing to help purchase assets during 2015/16. Borrowing in earlier years meant that as at 31 March 2015, the Authority had total loans of £40.751m (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 31 March 2015, which the loans had helped fund, was £139m of which approximately 94% related to land and buildings and 6% to vehicles and equipment.

Medium-Term financial plan

The cost of delivering the service was considered as part of the Authority’s 2016/17 budget-setting process. The medium-term financial plan supports this and enables managers to develop their own plans for a four-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.

Cuts in public sector budgets will continue during the life of this Plan. In February 2016 the Government made an offer of a four-year funding settlement to 2019/20, which results in a reduction to core funding of approximately £10m. This will have a severe impact on the fire and rescue service we currently provide.

Flexible Funding through business development

West Midlands Fire Service is facing its toughest financial challenge ever. To continue to deliver excellent services to our communities, we know we need to consider alternative funding opportunities.

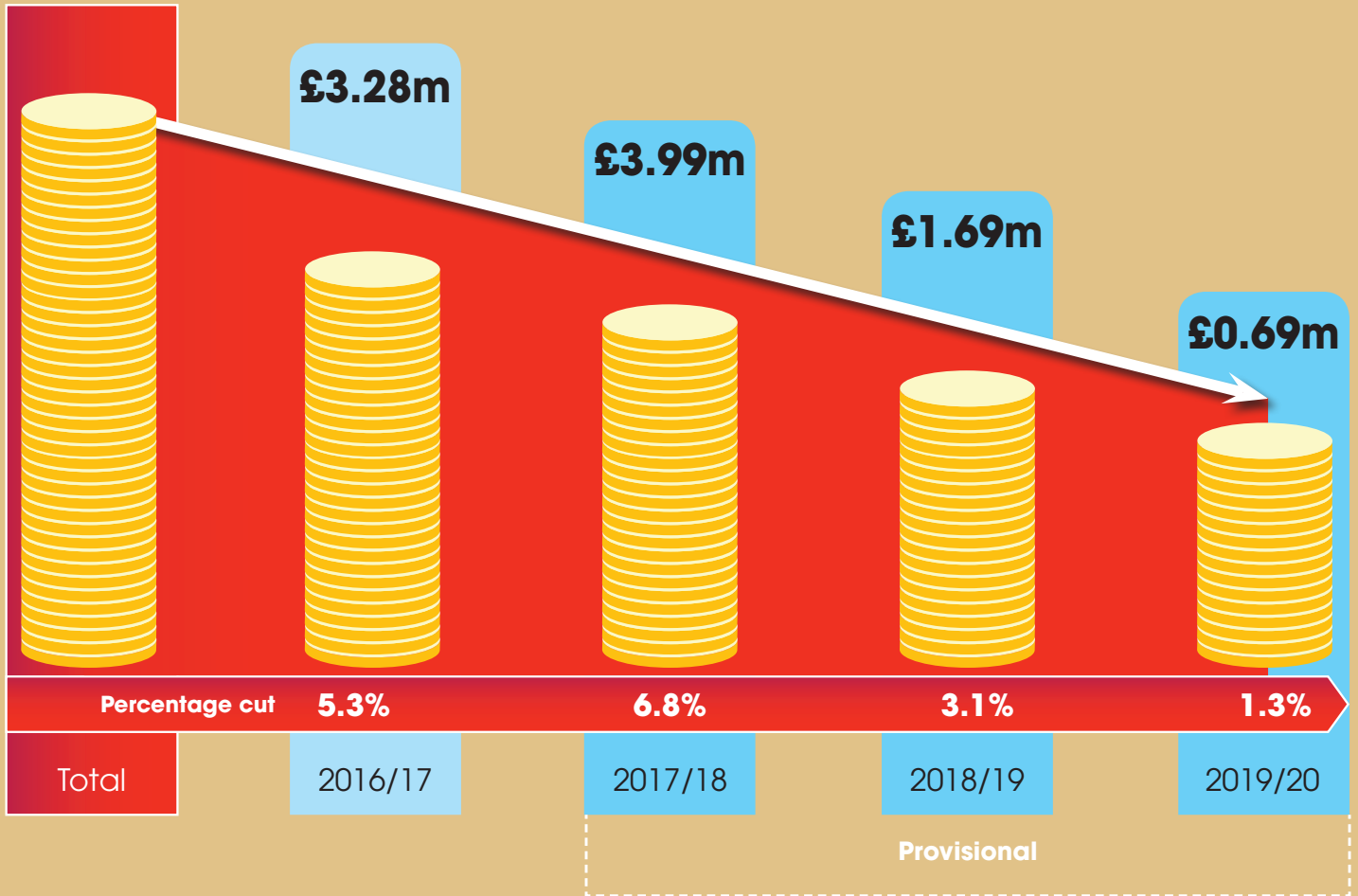
We have set ourselves a challenging three-year target of generating £2m through what we are calling 'flexible funding'.

Our flexible funding services will be delivered through the Business Development team as part of our existing establishment, alongside our core services. There are three key areas of focus for attracting flexible funding:

1. Commissioning activity
2. Sponsorship and increasing social value
3. Income generation

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier

Estimated core funding



Subject to submission and approval of an Efficiency Plan

Prevention

Helping you to stay safe

Our prevention services focus on public involvement and education, working with our partner organisations, and targeting schools, communities and vulnerable people with advice and guidance. We place a particular focus on social inequalities.

We want to improve the safety of communities we know are at risk from fire. This includes providing [Safe and Well Checks](#) to our most vulnerable residents.

Working with our partners (like councils, the health sector and voluntary groups), we provide a wide range of health and wellbeing advice and practical support. It reduces people's overall risk of being hurt or having an accident, not just from fire.

We educate road users and pedestrians about the risks and consequences of dangerous driving. We provide fire safety education in hundreds of schools and colleges and at our two [Safeside](#) educational centres. We influence how people behave at home, and also when they're at work or out and about.

Our success in prevention means that demand for our services is changing. For example, there are far fewer house fires than there were a decade ago, so we get called out to them less often.

West Midlands Fire Service has a 'can do' reputation and expertise that means we can deliver services to reduce risk, accidents and injuries in a wide range of circumstances and environments.

Like most public sector organisations, we are having to meet the challenge of significant and continuing reductions in [the money we get from the Government](#) through innovation and alternative funding models. We will continue to work, and look for opportunities to collaborate more, with other public and emergency service providers. We aim to do it as efficiently as we can by working with our partners to reduce demand on other public services such as the health sector and local authorities.

Prevention

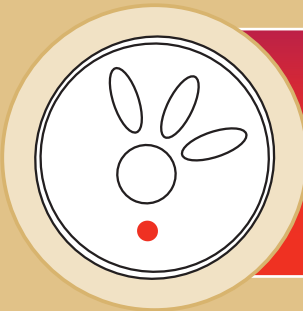
Helping you to stay safe



Safe and Well visits - daily delivery of home-based fire, health and wellbeing advice to individuals or families. Identifying the most vulnerable and, by working with partners, further reducing risk.

27,163 Safe and Well visits completed.

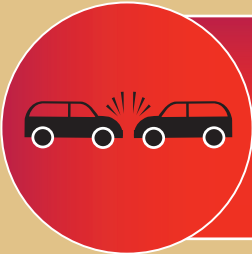
24,195 smoke alarms fitted.



Supporting the deaf and hard of hearing community by education and fitting specialist equipment.

1,003 fitted

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier



Road Safety - delivering safety awareness training to the community, including drivers, passengers and pedestrians. 41,812 individuals have received road safety engagement

Vulnerable Persons Officers - specially trained staff supporting people with more complex lifestyles



Safeside - an educational village educating Children and Young people in all aspects of their daily lives.

11,000 adults, **5,000** secondary school pupils and

11,750 primary school pupils have received safety education

Engaging with Children, young people and their families using a variety of programmes and activities.

1,842 engaged

Protection

Supporting, informing, advising and enforcing

Our fire safety teams work in partnership with business to ensure their people, organisation and property are safe from fire. Through working with businesses in a proportionate way, we are able to support economic growth and allow a greater understanding of where improvements can be made.

We prioritise our time by working with the organisations that need us the most, using a risk-based approach to identify where we will add most value. This also means that we use our resources more effectively and reduce the burden on those organisations that need less of our support.

We further support economic growth by establishing Primary Authority Schemes and advising on fire-engineered solutions and building design.

Protection

Businesses are at the heart of our economy and we help ensure their people, organisation and property are safe from fire. We will support any organisation to help them operate in a safe and effective way. We proactively work with those at greatest risk from fire, we do this by:

We have dedicated fire safety officers working for us supported by our operational firefighters



Advising all businesses on fire safety issues from the large to the small

Supporting businesses to meet their legal needs



Consulting on building projects to ensure they are safe from the start

Helping reduce the impact of false alarms



Helping you understand why improvements need to be made

creating partnerships to help you operate more efficiently



As a last resort we will take legal action to ensure public and employee safety

Response

Getting to you quickly, when you need us

We protect life, property and the economy of the West Midlands by delivering assertive, safe and effective firefighting in response to a wide range of emergencies.

Response will always be our priority because, despite our efforts to prevent fires and reduce their impact, they and other emergencies will continue to happen.

Key to our response work is our commitment to an average five-minute attendance standard, because we know it makes our communities safer.

Full-time professional firefighters, who are always available and ready to respond, are key to the success of our [Service Delivery Model](#) and our other core work of [prevention](#) and [protection](#).

We've worked with a number of academic experts to evidence that our arrival at house fires within five minutes of a 999 call is critical to increasing the occupiers' chances of survival.

We conducted a series of house fire tests that showed in a lounge fire that if the door was closed (prevention) and a working smoke alarm is fitted (protection), our current response times can let us rescue someone before smoke and heat affects their chances of survival.

Research and analysis undertaken in partnership with leading doctors and medical experts evidences that a five-minute response to serious road traffic collisions is key to survivability. Even a small delay could heighten the chances of death or more serious injury.

Half of the people who die after being trapped in vehicles do so within minutes of the collision, so our rapid attendance is critical. Our staff are the only emergency service personnel trained in the expert use of specialist cutting equipment to rescue people quickly, so they can be treated at the scene and taken to hospital.

We also respond to significant national incidents such as flooding, chemical incidents and terrorist attacks to keep the community safe and to mitigate the impact of these incidents on the public.

Response

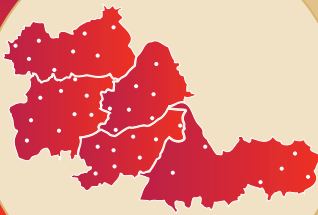
Getting to you quickly,
when you need us

We've got the right
vehicles and equipment,
technology and systems
to let us deliver our
services economically
and efficiently



38 Fire Stations

Stations are spread across the
West Midlands to help us to be
there when you really need us.
We match the resources we
send to emergencies and other
incidents to the risks they present



41 Fire Engines



1,168
Highly skilled, motivated
and dedicated
staff providing an
excellent service



19 Brigade Response
Vehicles



24 Specialist
Vehicles

52 Providing a specialist
rescue capability



3 Business Support
Vehicles

Contact us

If you would like to obtain further information about any aspect of our Plan, please contact us:

Strategic Hub
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

0121 380 6678
strategichub@wmfs.net

Other Formats

We are committed to equality of opportunity but must demonstrate value for money. If you would like our plan in another format or language, please contact us so we can discuss your needs.

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 West Midlands Fire Service, you can contact:

Corporate Communications Team
West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters
99 Vauxhall Road
Birmingham
B7 4HW

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0121 380 7404
(24 Hour answerphone)
contact@wmfs.net