

OUR STRATEGY 2024-2027

OUR PLAN TO MAKE
THE WEST MIDLANDS
SAFER, STRONGER
AND HEALTHIER

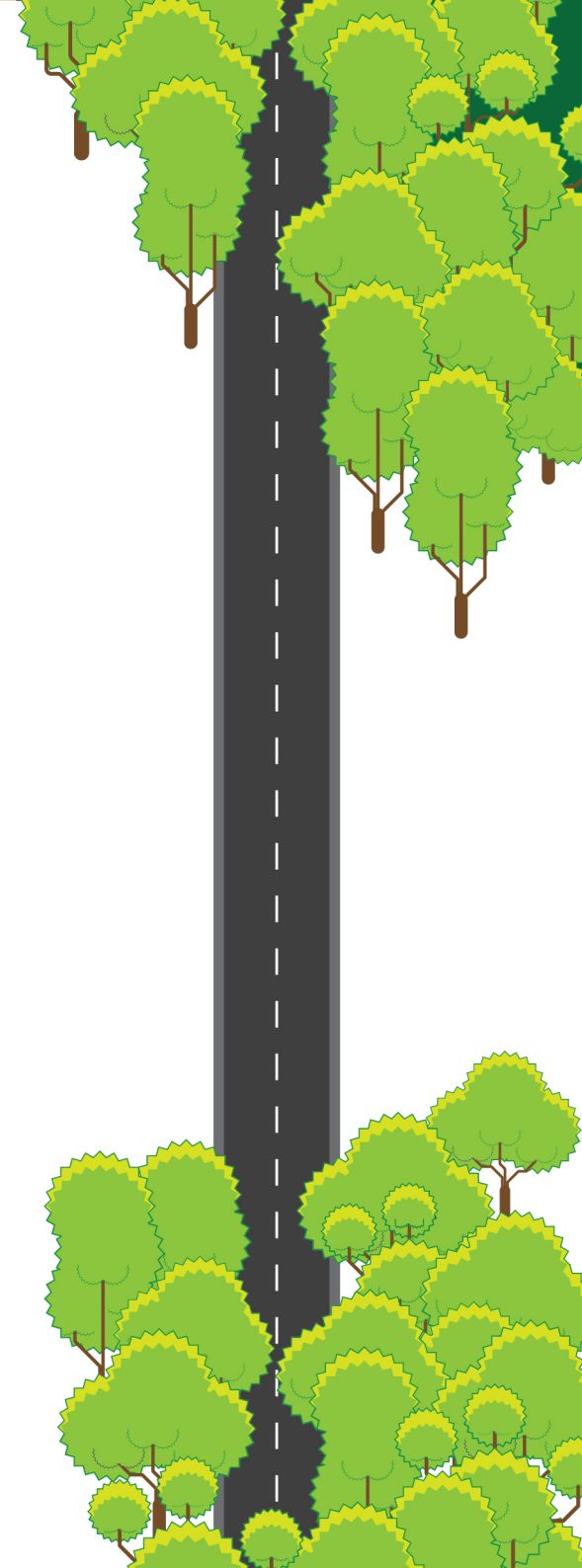


WMFS
West Midlands
Fire Service



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Foreword – WMFRA Strategy

Welcome to the WMFRA Strategy 2024-2027, our plan to make the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier.

As a public-funded emergency service we are here to serve you, and so our strategy has been designed for you and with your input.

It draws on your responses to our consultation undertaken in Summer 2023, where almost 6,000 of you told us your priorities, where we can do more, and the issues that matter to you most. You told us that you have high levels of trust in our service, and that you rated our services as excellent or good.

You also told us you wanted more community engagement, more safety advice, and a focus on new areas such as climate change. We have reflected these priorities within our strategic goals, alongside other commitments to ensure our services are effective and efficient.

This strategy sets out more clearly than ever what we will do to deliver against your priorities and our vision, and what you can expect from us. It gives you the information to understand how well we are delivering against our goals across every part of what we do.

We are rightly proud of what this service has achieved, from recognition of our “outstanding” approach to risk by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), to twice being crowned the Inclusive Employers’ UK’s Most Inclusive Employer.

This strategy provides the direction for the service to continue improving and building upon that success.



Oliver Lee OBE

Chief Executive Officer
West Midlands Fire Service

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver Lee".

Councillor Greg Brackenridge

Chair of the West Midlands Fire
and Rescue Authority

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G Brackenridge".

Introduction

We are your fire and rescue service, and we are here when you need us. We are hugely proud of what we do and what we have done to get here.

This strategy document sets out what we are going to do next to keep improving. It builds on and replaces our previous three-year rolling strategy, which we called 'Our Plan' and published annually. This new approach is designed to be more clearly forward looking, and to show you not just what we aim to achieve, but how we will deliver it and how we will measure success.

Starting from our vision of Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier, we have set 17 strategic goals for the next three years, each with at least one Key Performance Indicator which will help us determine whether we are achieving that goal. We will report on our progress every year through an Annual Report, in which we will highlight our successes and explain where we need to do more.

We have organised our strategic goals into four areas, aligned to the way we organise our service. However, while these are a convenient way to arrange our goals, everyone in our service has a responsibility to deliver against them and contribute to our intended outcomes.

All our strategic goals and performance measures then come together to form a 'balanced scorecard' which will be a simple, visual representation of our strategy for the next three years, all in one place. We'll keep this live on our website, where you'll be able to track our progress, as well as access wider performance data.

How we are going to deliver against each of our strategic goals is explained in more detail in our service delivery plans, and there are links to each provided within the relevant sections of this document. These are more detailed plans covering a specific area of our business, such as our Inclusion Action Plan or our Efficiency and Productivity Plan. Each will also have its own goals and measures but will always be contributing to the delivery of the overall strategic goals of the service.



The strategic goals we have set ourselves, and this strategy as a whole, inform and are informed by our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which is in turn informed by your views and opinions as shared through our 2023 public consultation. The CRMP is an assessment of the foreseeable challenges and risks facing our communities and what needs to be done to meet them. We use this analysis to inform the strategic goals, as well as to determine the specific projects we will undertake to achieve those goals and address the risks.

You can read our CRMP document on our website [LINK](#) and explore the data and information that informs it. Also on our website, you can find out about the outcome of our consultation, and how that informed our planning.



ABOUT WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE



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West Midlands Fire Service is the second largest fire and rescue service in England, serving an area of 902km² and a population of over 2.9 million people. We serve one of the most diverse and multi-cultural communities in the country, spread across seven local authorities – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

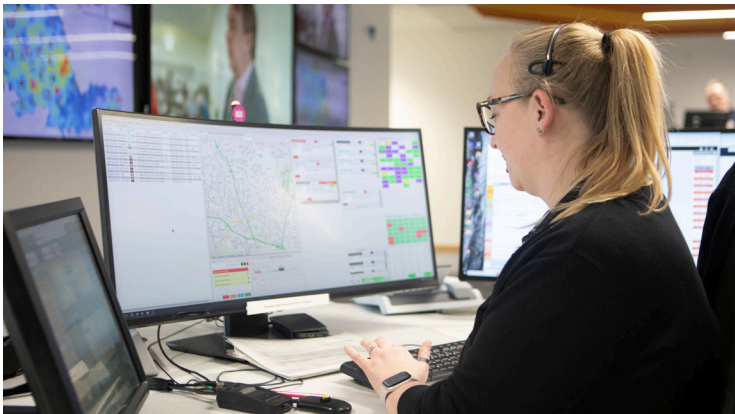
Our region contains some of the most deprived communities anywhere in the country, where socio-economic and health factors mean the risk of fire and other emergencies is particularly high. At the same time our major urban centres and industrial areas contain some of the highest risk infrastructure in the UK.

We have 38 fire stations situated strategically across the West Midlands, as well as our headquarters based in central Birmingham. These are staffed by over 1,350 firefighters and officers, supported by over 55 staff in West Midlands and Staffordshire Fire Control, and 370 specialist support staff.

We make use of a blended fleet of 70-plus different vehicles to ensure we are able to respond to emergencies, including fire engines (Pump Rescue Ladders/PRLs), Brigade Response Vehicles and specialist vehicles such as aerial hydraulic platforms.

Rescues, road traffic collisions and other emergencies now making up a bigger proportion of our 999 responses than fires.

You can find out more about our stations, equipment and the services we deliver on our [website](#). You can also explore the risk picture and recent incident data from across the conurbation using our [Risk Explorer Tool](#).



The West Midlands Conurbation



Population
2.9 million people

Serving an area
of **902km²**

50 YEARS
of West Midlands
Fire Service

OUR VISION



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Everything we do is connected to our vision - the reason we exist and what we always strive for:

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier

Our mission statement

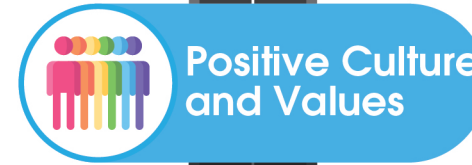
Our vision is where we want to be. Our mission statement summarises how we will shape our organisation to ensure we get there:

We set up our people to succeed so we can serve our communities with professionalism and pride.

Our strategic commitments

The goals that we set as a service may change from year to year, or even week to week, as we adapt to the challenges and risks that we face. However, as a fire and rescue service and a public body we have several strategic commitments we will always deliver for the people of the West Midlands. These derive from our statutory duties and the public's expectation of the service. Our communities always be reassured that:

- we are working with our communities and partners to make them safer and healthier through prevention of fires and other emergencies
- we are working to protect life and property to make communities safer and businesses stronger
- we are delivering an assertive, safe, and effective emergency response to fires and other emergencies
- we are safeguarding our people, planet, and future by delivering a sustainable service
- we are promoting positive culture and values to maintain the trust of our communities and ensure that West Midlands Fire Service is a safe and welcoming place for everyone to work
- we are providing value for money by delivering our services efficiently and driving improved productivity in everything we do.



Our Four Areas of Focus

We divide our work into four areas, through which we will align our strategic goals for the service and measure our success:



Although we choose to organise our goals , every part of the service has a responsibility for delivering against all our strategic goals. Ultimately, everything we do should contribute towards delivering our vision, either directly or indirectly.

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION



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We refer to some of our services and the individuals who provide them as 'community risk reduction' because they directly reduce the likelihood (risk) of a fire or other emergency occurring in our communities. These services are grouped into the following categories:

- **Prevention - *Delivering activities which support safer and healthier communities.***
By focusing on those most at risk, our prevention work improves our communities' quality of life through reducing their risk of fire, supporting them to lead healthier lives and educating them on how to be safer on our roads.
- **Protection - *Protecting life and property to make businesses stronger and communities safer.***
We inspect high-risk and tall buildings, including residential flats, hospitals, schools and businesses, to keep safe the people who live and work there. We also advise companies on fire safety legislation, to keep their staff and customers safe and help their businesses to grow. Where necessary we can go further and take enforcement action, including prosecution, where we feel the risk is significant.
- **Response - *Dealing excellently with incidents.***
Our response to fires and other emergencies continues to be graded 'outstanding' by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. We respond locally, nationally and internationally, saving lives, preventing harm, and safeguarding homes and businesses with the resources you need, when you need them.

There are several teams that deliver our response function:

- **Operations** - The largest number of people employed by the service, each with a critical role on the frontline delivering prevention, protection, and response services to our communities through our network of community fire stations across the West Midlands
- **Fire Control** - From assisting with safeguarding our most vulnerable community members to co-ordinating our response to our largest incidents, fire control sits at the heart of our service.
- **Emergency Planning** - meet the organisation's statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). As a Category 1 Responder we have six duties, including carrying out risk assessments, business continuity and putting in place emergency plans, as well as leading our multi-agency work.

To find out more any of the areas mentioned above please visit our [website](#).



Strategic Goals and Performance Indicators

<p>We will protect you by inspecting businesses and residential dwellings, and by educating building owners and responsible persons, to minimise harm and disruption to our communities.</p>	<p>The number of accidental fires in non-domestic premises</p> <p>The number of false alarm calls due to faulty fire alarm equipment in dwellings and non-domestic premises</p> <p>The number of deliberate fires in derelict buildings</p>
<p>We will target our prevention activities to those in our communities most vulnerable to fire and other emergencies, whilst supporting all our communities to lead longer, safer, and healthier lives.</p>	<p>The number of Safe and Well points achieved by the service (with average point score as a sub-PI)</p> <p>The number of accidental dwelling fires</p>
<p>We will be ready to respond to fire and rescue related incidents locally, nationally and internationally by leading rescue operations to save lives and reduce the impact.</p>	<p>Risk-based attendance standard. (Call handling time as sub-PI)</p>
<p>We will collaborate with other emergency services and organisations to enhance the service we provide.</p>	<p>The percentage of Safe and Well visits referred by our partners.</p>
<p>We will build resilience into our service to minimise the impact of disruptive events in the face of dynamic challenges and uncertainties.</p>	<p>% Up to date and reviewed Business Continuity Plans</p>



Explaining our measures

Safe and Well Points are a measure that the service uses to determine the relative risk of a home we visit. The higher the point score, the more risk factors that are present and therefore the higher the risk presented by the home.

How will we achieve this?

Read more about our plans to deliver against these strategic goals, and our more detailed plans for prevention, protection and response in our Community Risk Reduction Plan.



PEOPLE



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OUR VALUES

Our People are our greatest asset and a thriving, engaged workforce is crucial to our success. We put great focus on our employee experience, creating a positive work environment that promotes wellbeing and work/life balance. We continue to be an employer of choice for our communities, through our commitment to building a diverse workforce reflective of the rich fabric of our society.

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive culture where all our staff understand and live by our values, and where poor behaviour is robustly challenged and effectively dealt with.

We take pride in the support and development we invest in our people. Ensuring our staff are healthy and highly skilled allows them to provide the best possible services to each other and our communities.

Strategic Goals and Performance Indicators

We will ensure our workforce reflects at all levels the diverse communities it serves.	Percentage Black and minority ethnic uniformed staff/all staff Percentage female uniformed staff/all staff
We will create an environment which enables everyone to thrive at work.	Percentage of Staff trust in the service. Percentage of completed IPDRs
We will ensure everyone knows how they contribute to the delivery of excellent services.	Percentage of Staff reporting understanding of our core values
We will prioritise wellbeing to make WMFS a safe and healthy place to work for all.	Total number of injuries/total number of RIDDOR injuries The average number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness – uniformed/all staff
We will champion and continually develop the skills, competencies and behaviours of our workforce	Percentage of Core CRA compliance



Explaining our measures

RIDDOR Injuries are the most serious injuries that have to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Staff will be asked to report their degree of trust in the organisation – reflecting how comfortable they are at work, their faith in service leadership and our various policies and processes.

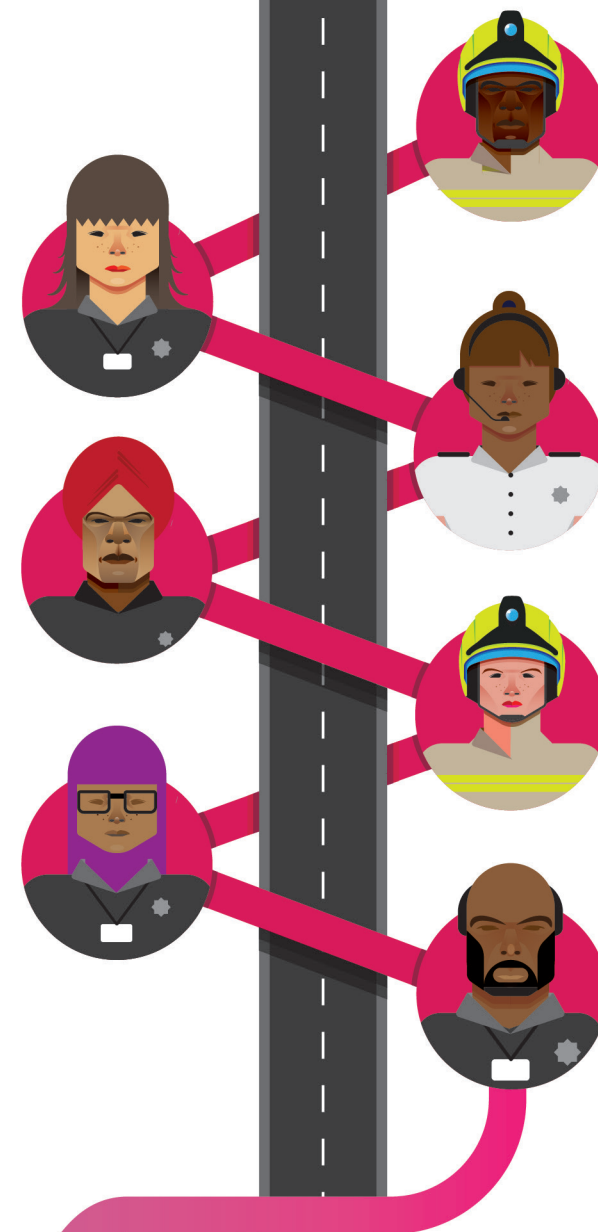
An IPDR (Individual Performance and Development Review) should be undertaken at least annually with all staff, to help ensure their continuing development and provide evidence of core skills and competence.

We will also measure staff understanding of core values through regular staff surveys, with staff tested to ensure they can demonstrate knowledge of the values and how they apply to their work.

Competency Risk Assessment (CRA) is how the service determines that each member of staff has the required knowledge and skills to undertake their job, be they a firefighter, member of fire control, or one of our support staff.

How will we achieve this?

You can read more about our plans to deliver against these strategic goals and our specific plans in areas such as inclusion, data reporting and staff engagement in our Inclusion Action Plan.



ENABLING SERVICES



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Designed to facilitate and accelerate delivery of key business goals, Enabling Services play a pivotal role in supporting WMFS to deliver its strategy and make the West Midlands safer, stronger and healthier.

Collectively, Enabling Services provide additional expertise to achieve the service’s vision by partnering with our community-facing teams to help them be more effective in their roles.

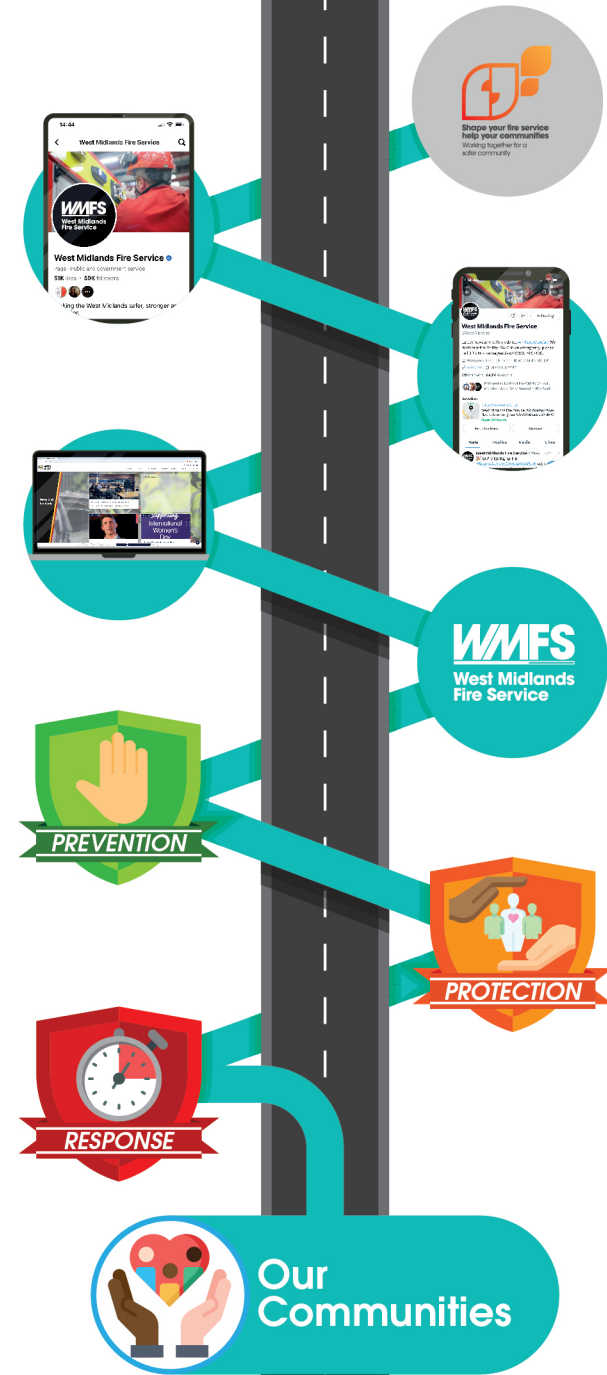
Finance, Procurement and Sustainability drive efficiency and value for money alongside supporting resource allocation to enable the delivery of key priorities and transformation.

Communications and Engagement lead on engagement both within the service and with our communities, enhancing public awareness of the service, what we offer and our key safety messages.

The Digital, Data and Technology team leverage technology to enable streamlined operations, data-driven decision making and enhanced service delivery.

Strategic Goals and Performance Indicators

We will deliver the best outcomes for our communities by ensuring we maximise technology, data and insight to enhance and futureproof our services	Combined IT and Data Operations availability, performance, and reliability metric
We will keep your data safe by enhancing security and gaining accreditation for our systems	Cyber Standards Compliance
We will provide our staff, communities and partners with informed communications and engagement that can be trusted.	Percentage Public and Staff trust in service communications



Explaining our measures

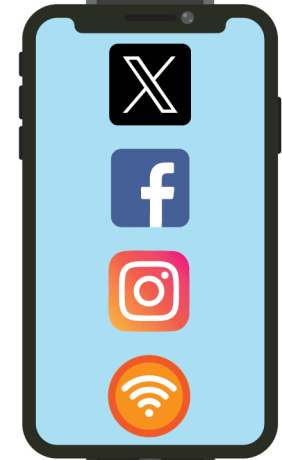
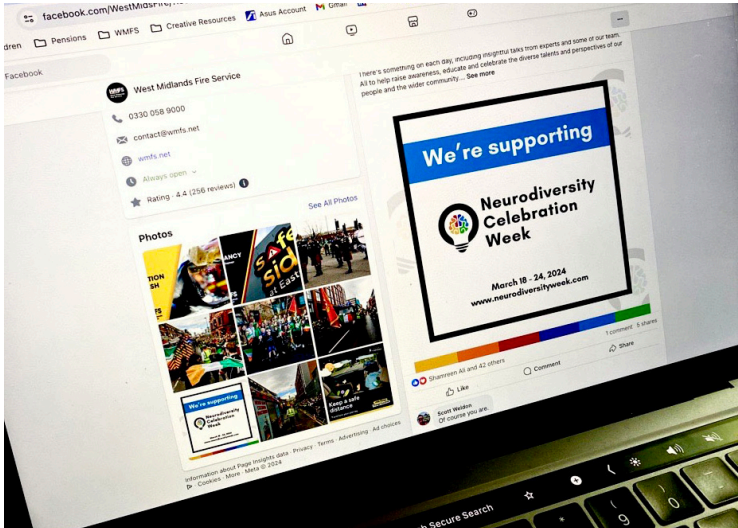
Cyber Essentials Plus is a government-backed, industry-supported scheme which helps organisations protect themselves against online threats. By aiming for the 'Plus' standard, WMFS will be subject to a hands-on technical verification, providing extra assurance of our cyber security.

Our Communications Trust Survey is a six-monthly survey carried out with our staff, partners and communities to assess the trust they have in our communications and engagement, including areas such as our safety campaigns and social media content.

How will we achieve this?

You can find out more about how we will deliver our goals for technology, data and cyber security by reading our Digital and Data Strategy.

Our Corporate Communications Strategy provides more information on our approach to effective communications and engagement.



VALUE



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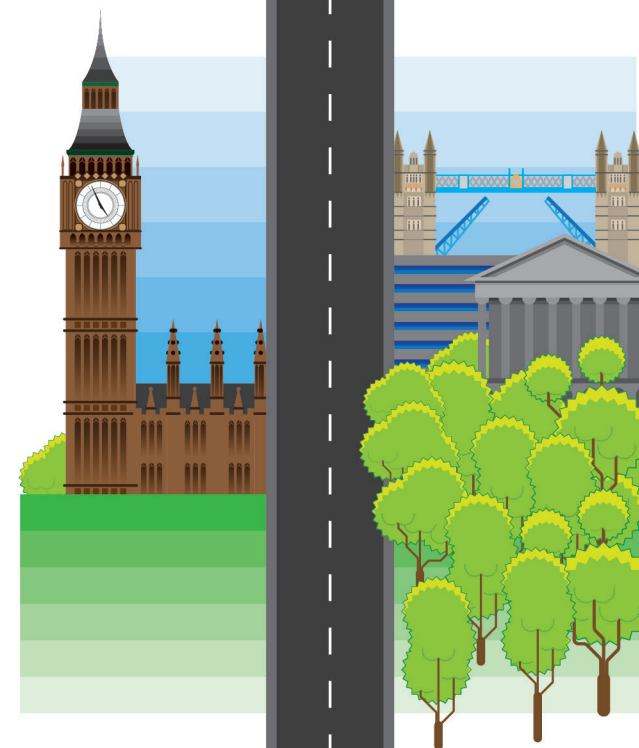
As a publicly-funded service, we are committed to ensuring our services are not only effective but efficient, too, delivering value for money and providing the best return on your investment in us.

Like all local authorities, we are subject to a Duty of Best Value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which (our) functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”

Improving efficiency helps us to invest in the people and service we provide to you and helps us to drive continuous improvement.

We must also meet expectations set by central government of the fire and rescue sector as a whole to improve productivity. We need to ensure that our crews and our support staff are making optimal use of their time and achieving the maximum benefit from the resources and money we invest in various activities such a prevention and training.

Of course, we must deliver value in a way that is sustainable for our people, communities and the planet – be that in the products we purchase, the vehicles we use, or how we heat and maintain our buildings – with the ultimate aim of achieving the West Midlands-wide ambition of net-zero by 2041.



Strategic Goals and Performance Indicators

We will be financially sustainable, effectively planning how we use our resources and maintaining affordable levels of spending.	Achieving balanced budget
We will deliver efficiencies to improve value for money and maintain services.	Delivery of in-year efficiency target
We will continue to improve the productivity of all our staff to deliver more positive outcomes with our investment.	<i>Overall Service Productivity</i> <i>Economic and Social Cost of Fire</i>
We will enhance sustainability and operate our service ethically, as we continue our journey towards net zero.	Total service carbon footprint/output Service Gas and electric usage

Explaining our measures

Total carbon footprint is measured in terms of tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions either produced directly by the organisation from things like heating and fuelling vehicles (called Scope 1), or indirectly from the energy we buy (Scope 2). CO₂ equivalent is a measure designed to take account of all types of greenhouse gases but provides a consistent measure in terms of the environmental impact they have equivalent to a standard measure of CO₂, the most common greenhouse gas.

How will we achieve this?

You can read more about our approach to meeting our efficiency and productivity targets in our annual [Efficiency and Productivity Plan](#), which is updated every March. This report is produced at the request of the Home Office and sets out how we will meet the targets set for us by Government and reflected in our goals above. [Our Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#) are agreed and published every February and will provide further detail on how we will deliver our efficiency goal and achieve a balanced budget.

You can also read more about how we will deliver on our commitment to achieving Net Zero within our Sustainability Strategy.

Our balanced scorecard

Our balanced scorecard brings together in one place the goals from each of our areas of focus and our Key Performance Indicators. We publish a live version of this on our [website](#) so that we can be held to account for how we are delivering against our goals.

Our Fire Authority receives and scrutinises six-monthly reports on our Key Performance Indicators and agrees the targets that are set for all of them. You can read those reports and the minutes of those meetings on our [West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority](#) pages.

Alongside the live dashboard and the quarterly authority reports, the service publishes an Annual Report to look in more depth at our performance and the reasons why we met, missed or exceeded our targets.





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#WeAreWMFS

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