

Minutes of the Executive Committee

21 March 2016 at 1000 hours
Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Idrees (Vice Chair)
Councillors, Atwal Singh, Aston,
Davis, Quinnen, and Shackleton
Cllr. Tranter (Chair of Scrutiny Committee)

Apologies: Cllrs Afzal, Sealey, Douglas-Maul

Observers: Cllrs Clinton, Dehar, Mottram, Skinner

1/16 **Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 14 December 2015**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2015, be approved as a correct record.

2/16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3/16 **Corporate Performance Indicators**

The Committee received a report seeking approval for the Performance Indicators (PIs) and targets for 2016/17 as set out in the report.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Tranter had discussed the Performance Indicators in depth with Assistant Chief Officer (Service Delivery), the Strategic Enabler (People Support Services) and a Team Leader from the Strategic Hub.

Councillor Tranter recommended the Performance Indicators and targets for 2016/17 to the Committee.

In response to a Member's inquiry regarding the target of zero for Arson Vehicle Fires, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that this target had been set as there was a rising trend for Arson vehicles fires. The three year rolling programme was being monitored with the aim to maintain a steady state and to then set a reducing target in future.

In response to a further question on the points system applicable to Safe and Well Checks, the Chief Fire Officer stated that a simplified method of scoring had been approved by Scrutiny Committee and an index of vulnerability was used to achieve the points score.

A further enquiry was made regarding charges for the work of Fire Safety officers. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Authority did not charge at the current time. If a business particularly wanted the Brigade to work with them on a specific area of fire engineering they could be charged by the Brigade

In respect of PI15 it was explained that the aim was for 100% of staff to disclose their status to enable the Brigade to have an accurate picture of the number of staff with a disability. The Chief Fire Officer stated that we can now show that the Authority employs a larger number of staff who are disabled.

It was also explained some disabilities develop over time and some people do not realise that they have a disability, for example, Dyslexia.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that some people choose not to declare a disability but in these cases it would be harder to provide the appropriate support in work related issues an employee may have.

In respect of PI16, it was felt that an overall target of 76 female uniformed staff was an achievable target and the figure was a conversion of a percentage.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service was experiencing an increase in arson calls, but was in line with the numbers being experienced in other Metropolitan Fire Authorities.

The Chief Fire Officer thanked the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee for the work undertaken by the Committee together with the Quarterly Performance Reporting and Performance Indicator meetings.

Resolved that the Corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) and targets for 2016/17 as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved.

4/16 **Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)**

The Committee received a report on the replacement of Airwave mobile communications with the ESMCP which will deliver a new Emergency Services Network (ESN) and were asked to formally agree on behalf of the Authority and note the indicative financial implications associated with the programme. The Chief Fire Officer would sign off the documentation.

It was explained that the ESMCP would replace the existing network provided by Airwave and the contracts were due to expire between 2016 and 2020. New contracts would need to be signed by the government. The ESMCP will enhance usability and will enable data to be sent via emergency services mobile communications.

The Committee were informed that the Service currently uses two radio systems; Airwave and the fire ground radios the latter will not be affected by the ESMCP.

Members were informed that this was a National project that wasn't mandatory, however, if the Authority did not sign up to the Scheme the Service would be unable to communicate with other fire and emergency services and this project was a key component of the national resilience system.

Implementation of the Scheme would take place regionally and a Station Commander from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service would be based at West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters to work on the implementation of the scheme.

£50,000 of government funding would be provided to support the service in the implementation the Scheme, however, in the long term the Scheme would produce annual savings of £150,000 and the Scheme would be more usable.

A formal response indicating whether or not Fire and Rescue Authority's intended to migrate onto the new Emergency Services Network was required from Chief Fire Officers by 25 March 2016.

In response to a Members question, it was confirmed that a risk assessment had been carried out. The Government had run a thorough and comprehensive project over a two year period and they had scoped out and risk assessed the Scheme and had gone out to tender. It was felt that the current provider, Motorola would provide the hardware and EE would provide the network.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the expiry of the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) current contract with Airwave Emergency services mobile communications be noted.
- (2) that the cross-government Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) to replace existing mobile communication services for the emergency services be noted.
- (3) that the sign up of West Midlands Fire Service to the ESMCP be approved.
- (4) That the indicative financial implications associated with the ESMCP be noted.

5/16 **Non Constituent Membership of the WMCA.**

The Committee were informed of the proposal submitted to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) seeking non-constituent membership of the Combined Authority.

The Committee noted the WMCA devolution agreement confirmed on 17 November 2015 by the Chancellor and Secretary of State; and that during December 2015 each of the seven Metropolitan Councils had voted on the devolution agreement at full council and became Constituent members of the WMCA.

Members were informed of the letter of proposal from the Clerk of the Authority which requested Non-Constituent Membership of the WMCA. The subsequent response from the WMCA offered Observer Status. The Observer Status enables full participation in the debate and work of the Combined Authority and requires an annual contribution of £25,000.

Observer status provides the Chief Fire Officer or his substitute a seat on the Officer Programme Team and the Chair or his substitute a seat on the Shadow Board (and the Board after Vesting Day). The Chief Fire Officer is also allowed to attend the Shadow Board.

The Clerk stated that membership of WMCA would allow the Authority to influence the roadmap and help with integration and alignment to WMCA.

Members of the Authority felt this was a good result and would ensure that the Authority continued to be able to put forward a robust case for the future.

The Chair confirmed that the Authority would not be able to vote but that the WMCA worked on a consensus basis and the Authority would be able to play a full part in the Board when WMCA went live in June 2016.

It was confirmed that the membership fee of £25,000 was an annual fee that all non-constituent members were required to pay and it was noted that Constituent members had paid £50,000 to enable the organisation to commence.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Authority would not be able to vote in matters relating to the Devo deal, but would be able to influence the WMCA through the Programme Board Public Services agenda.

Resolved that the proposal submitted to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) seeking constituent membership of the combined authority be noted.

6/16 **West Midlands Combined Authority Consultation**

The Committee acknowledge the Authority's response to the consultation recently run by the WMCA 18 January 2016 – 8 February 2016. The Consultation related to the proposed Combined Authority's role and functions and specifically about the Scheme document that was submitted to the government in December 2015.

Members discussed the recent Local Government Association Conference in Bristol and it was noted that the Fire Minister had been invited to visit Headquarters. It was also noted that the voice of the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities would be invigorated.

Resolved that the response submitted on behalf of the Authority to the WMCA be noted.

The meeting closed at 1030 hours.

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