

<p>Minutes of the Executive Committee</p>
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**5 November, 2012, at 10.00am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Idrees (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Aston, Clinton, Davies, Davis, Douglas-
Maul, Finnegan, Foster and O'Neill.

Observers: Councillors Singh Atwal, Eustace, O'Reilly, Quinnen,
Spence, Tranter, Wright, Ward and Yardley.

Apology: Councillor Walsh.

**21/12 Consultation Responses – Guidance on Statements of Assurance
and Protocol on Government Intervention Action**

The Committee was advised that the Department of Communities and Local Government had launched consultations on proposed guidance on Statements of Assurance and a Protocol on Government Intervention Action for fire and rescue authorities in England. The closing date for responses was 15 November 2012.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England set out the requirement for all fire authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters to show they had due regard to the requirements of the Framework and the expectations set out in their own integrated risk management plans. The consultation document set out proposed guidance on the content of the annual statement of assurance although the format would be a matter for individual authorities.

The Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers' Association had been lobbying against the requirement to produce statements of assurance as this would be an additional burden placed on fire authorities alone, and would duplicate existing assurance arrangements. A draft response was submitted for consideration which

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reflected this national view.

Section 23 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 required an intervention protocol to be prepared to which the Secretary of State would have regard in the exercise of his powers of intervention if he was of the view that a fire and rescue authority was not acting in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework. The draft Protocol set out the arrangements between the Secretary of State, the Local Government Association and the relevant fire authority should formal intervention be considered necessary, and was now subject to consultation.

The Committee was advised that the draft Protocol was clear on respective roles but a single framework applying across the local government sector would have been preferred, rather than singling out the Fire Service. It was also suggested that the Protocol would benefit from greater involvement of the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers' Association, reflecting the important role of these bodies as sector representatives. Closer alignment between the Protocol and the existing Local Government Accountability System Statement, which already covered fire and rescue authorities, was also suggested to avoid duplication.

A proposed response setting out these views was submitted.

Resolved that the consultation responses now submitted be approved for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

(Meeting ended at 10.17am)

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