

<p><b>Notes of the Policy Planning Forum</b></p>
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**14th November 2005 at 10.00 a.m.**  
**at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham**

**Present:**        **Members of the Authority**

Councillors S Davis, Douglas-Maul, Eustace,  
Jones, Hinton, Hogarth, Howard, Hussain, Idrees,  
Jackson, Ryder, Singh, Tagger, Underhill,  
Wallace and Ward;  
Mr Topliss.

**Officers:**        **West Midlands Fire Service**

Chief Fire Officer – F Sheehan;  
Assistant Chief Officers – A Brandon,  
J Brown, R Hulland and M Park;  
M Griffiths, A Parsonage and A Rotchell.

**Clerk to the Authority**

N Summers and G Wythes.

**Treasurer to the Authority**

L Bateman.

**Apologies:**    Councillors Birbeck, Bowen, Matchet, Mulhall, Pitt and  
Ross;  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer – V Randeniya.

25/05    **Councillor Trudi Bowen**

The Chief Fire Officer reported that Councillor Bowen had been admitted to hospital. Members expressed their best wishes for her speedy recovery.

26/05    **Home Fire Risk Checks**

Further to Minute No. 7/05 of the Appeals Committee, the Director [Human Resources] reminded Members of the rationale behind the inclusion of Home Fire Risk Checks in the Authority's Integrated Risk

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Management Plan, and set out revised policies designed to address the concerns of the Fire Brigades Union [FBU] about the process of carrying out these checks, which were an integral part of the Authority's policy to engage with hard-to-reach groups. The Authority was currently only reaching 50% of the target for carrying out home fire risk checks and there was an underspend on resources made available by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for this purpose.

Members were satisfied that the proposed process was compliant with the Local Government Association guidelines on cold-calling.

A report proposing adoption of the new process would now be submitted to the Authority on 5th December, 2005, and in the meantime consultation on this matter would be commenced with the FBU.

### **27/05 Headquarters Relocation Project Review**

Further to Minute No. 66/05 of the Executive Committee, the Director [Technical Services] reported on progress with the relocation of Headquarters. The terms offered for the acquisition of the preferred premises for the relocation had not been favourable to the Authority, and the Project Team had accordingly sought alternative premises. Three potential sites had now been identified, and a further report would be submitted to the Authority early in 2006.

### **28/05 Industrial Relations Update**

The Director (Human Resources) updated Members on the current dispute regarding consequential issues arising from the implementation of the new duty systems and shift patterns.

The FBU had now given notice to the Authority of three occasions on which it was intended to take industrial action. Negotiations were continuing in an attempt to resolve the trade dispute.

(Meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.)

<p><i>Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121 569 3791</i></p>
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