

**Notes of the Policy Planning Forum**

**21<sup>st</sup> May, 2007 at 10.00 am**  
**at Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham**

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

Councillors Alden, Birbeck, S Davis, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Foster, Gazey, Hinton, Howard, Hussain, Idrees, Jackson, Ryder, Spence, Tagger and Ward;  
Mr Topliss.

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

Deputy Chief Fire Officer - V Randeniya;  
Assistant Chief Officers – John Brown, Martin Clark and Doug Tweddle;  
Bob Deeks, Mike Griffiths and John Llewellen.

**Clerk to the Authority**

N Sharma, S Phelps and G Wythes.

**Treasurer to the Authority**

L Bateman.

**Apologies:**        Councillors Mulhall and Stevenson;  
Chief Fire Officer.

9/07        **Introductions and Announcements**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer referred with sadness to the recent death of Joe Hamilton, a retired firefighter who had served with the Brigade for thirty years, latterly as Divisional Commander for C Division. Mr Hamilton's funeral had taken place on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2007 and had been well attended by colleagues.

Members stood in silent tribute.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer also referred to a letter of appreciation from a member of the public reported in the Birmingham Post following a home fire safety check; and to the difficult circumstances in which

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fire crews had conducted themselves in an exemplary manner following a recent bus crash and fatality in Dudley.

### 10/07 Sprinkler Update 2007

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer outlined the latest position with regard to the introduction of sprinkler systems in the West Midlands.

Sprinkler systems were still not obligatory in all buildings, but there was a growing acceptance of their efficacy. There were still barriers to be overcome in increasing their use in public and private sector buildings, focusing around ensuring sprinklers were incorporated into planning and design of new and refurbished buildings, education about the benefits of such systems, and dispelling the myths about their disadvantages. Lobbying at a national and local level was still necessary to encourage the growth of the use of sprinkler systems and for the amendment of planning and building regulation legislation.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that five local education authorities within the West Midlands were now committed to provide sprinkler systems in their new build schools. It was national policy to encourage the installation of sprinklers in schools but it was not compulsory. It was understood that the Building Schools for the Future programme encouraged the installation of sprinklers if a business case could be made.

Members indicated that they were continuing to lobby their own authorities on this issue. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer undertook to circulate a briefing note to assist Members in this task.

### 11/07 Demountable Special Equipment Review and Technical Rescue Station

The Director [Operational Support] gave a presentation on proposals to relocate specialised fire rescue equipment, and updated Members on the Technical Rescue Station.

The Executive Committee was to consider a report on this matter at its meeting immediately following the Forum.

(Meeting ended at 12.05 pm)

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