

Minutes of the Executive Committee

28th March 2011 at 9.30 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Hinton (Chairman);
Councillor Eustace (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Alden, Andrew (substitute member),
Chambers, Clinton, Davies, Douglas-Maul, Foster,
Idrees, Jackson, Jones (substitute member), Ryder and
Stevenson.

Observers: Councillors Docker, Jones, O'Neill, Spence and Turner.
Messrs Ager and Topliss.

9/11 **Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**
Consultation – “The Future of Fire and Rescue Control Services in
England”

The Committee received the proposed response to the DCLG's consultation on the future of fire and rescue control services in England. The Committee noted that the response was due by 8th April 2011 and could not therefore be delayed until the next meeting of the Authority.

Members commented that the failure of the project indicated that one size did not fit all and there was now an opportunity to consider various options to meet the needs of all fire and rescue services.

Resolved that the Authority's response to the DCLG Consultation “The Future of Fire and Rescue Control Services in England”, as now submitted, be approved.

10/11 **Lead Member Reports**

The Committee received verbal reports from lead members on the work they had been involved in since the last meeting:-

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Human Resources

Regular meetings were taking place between the Lead Member, the Director Human Resources and union representatives.

The Joint Consultative Panel was due to receive a report on the number, type and outcomes of discipline and grievance hearings which had occurred during the period of 1st July 2010 to 31st December 2010. The information would be used to identify lessons learned and training needs on an ongoing basis.

Councillors Chambers and Eustace would soon be attending a training course on grievance and disciplinary processes.

A report would be coming to the Executive Committee in the near future on sickness absence monitoring in relation to all employees.

Asset Management

The refurbishment of Solihull Fire Station was underway and expected to be complete by April. The refurbishment of Walsall Fire Station had been delayed due to asbestos being found, however it was expected to be completed by June.

Performance Management

Performance against The Plan indicated that the service was meeting targets across a range of indicators. However, performance was below target in the following areas:-

- accidental dwelling fires
- false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms in dwellings
- dwelling fires where a working smoke alarm was fitted

The Lead Member was satisfied that progress was being made to meet these targets. Regular performance management meetings were also taking place.

The Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed and two risks had been removed – these were the Regional Control Centre and Firelink projects.

Member Development

Work on the Member Development Charter had now ended following the Authority's decision not to pursue the Charter. Members were reminded to utilise the Member Development Strategy to support their own learning and development.

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Work was currently focussing on ensuring that a satisfactory induction programme was in place for new members, which included a member handbook which would provide signposts to key documents.

Equality and Diversity

90 women from the emergency services had attended the Fire Service Academy on 8th March 2011 to celebrate International Women's Day.

The Authority's Dignity at Work Policy was currently under review and due for implementation during April.

The Lead Member had attended the Local Government Association Equality and Diversity Forum, which she had found to be a valuable experience in terms of networking with diversity leads from other authorities and hearing about the work taking place on equality and diversity issues.

She had also attended a meeting at Avon Fire and Rescue Service and had been inspired to see all political parties' commitment to diversity issues and well-intended plans to move forward.

11/11 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting. This is to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 relating to :-

any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority; and

the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

12/11 Proposals for the Future of Catering Provision

Members noted a proposal to review the provision of catering at fire stations and the intention to enter into formal negotiations with the representative bodies on the matter. The proposal for the review was a

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product of the Building Upon Success Programme. As part of the review the service would consider the approach taken by comparator organisations. It was proposed that any revisions to the provision of catering would be implemented with effect from 1st April 2012.

A further outcome of the Building Upon Success Programme was a commitment to reduce the costs of externally produced catering and Headquarters. Members were informed that agreement had been reached with the current caterers that the contract fee would be reduced by 50% by 1st August 2011 and to zero by 1st August 2012, saving the Authority £108,000 per year. This would be achieved by increasing prices, amending opening hours and modifying the service at the Transport Engineering Workshops.

Members also noted that, in relation to the above work packages, a review was being undertaken of the posts that provided the link between frontline staff receiving goods, works and services from external providers, which included the Client Catering Manager post.

The Committee would receive a further report on the outcome of the consultations and any resultant proposals.

13/11 Update on 2009 Service Plan Proposals

Approval was sought to modify one of the proposals set out within the Authority's Annual Service Plan 2009/2010, and suspend progression of the remaining proposals.

The proposals had been based upon incident data available in 2008 and the Authority's projected budget at that time. In light of the Authority's budget position for 2011-2015 it was felt that the proposals should be put on hold.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to modify the 2009/2010 Annual Service Plan and the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to commence a period of consultation on the proposed modification;

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- (2) that approval be given to suspend the remaining proposals set out within the Authority's 2009/2010 Annual Service Plan in light of the budget position for 2011-2015.

(Meeting ended at 10.09 am)

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