

<p>Notes of the Policy Planning Forum</p>
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3rd April, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.
at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillors Birbeck, Bowen, S Davis, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Jones, Hinton, Hogarth, Howard, Idrees, Jackson, Lawrence, Matchet, Mulhall, Rogers, Ryder, Singh, Stevenson, Tagger, Underhill 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 and A Rotchell.

Acting Clerk/ Treasurer to the Authority

L Bateman, S Hancock and G Wythes.

Apologies: Councillors Davies, Foster, Hussain, Ross and Wallace.

7/06 **Update**

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on matters of interest affecting the service as follows:

- Rumours about the closure of Tettanhall Fire Station were unfounded;
- The Fire Service was currently involved with discussions on fire prevention in Aston Hall and in a recent inter-Brigade exercise at Himley Hall as a pre-planning exercise for a heritage risk;
- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had now awarded the FireLink contract for a national communications system;
- The consultation on governance for regional FireControl had now commenced;
- An early day motion had been submitted for consideration in the House of Commons calling for the mandatory installation of

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sprinklers in all new build and major refurbishments of maintained schools. The Chief Fire Officer undertook to inform Members which West Midlands Members of Parliament had signed the motion;

- Jean Cole of Government Office West Midlands had been appointed to the post of Business Change Manager with Hereford and Worcester Fire Service. Jean had worked closely with the Authority for some years, and her valuable contribution would be missed;
- A report would be submitted to Members in due course on progress with the relocation of Fire Service Headquarters.

8/06 Joint Review of the Shift System

The Director of Human Resources reported on the outcomes of the review carried out jointly by management and representative bodies as part of the settlement of the recent industrial action. The review had examined various options for a revised shift system and had also included a staff survey, a review of the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan, and consideration of outstanding conditions of service issues. The review had been completed by 31st March, 2006 and a number of recommendations had been made, which were supported by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). A report on this matter would be considered later by the Executive Committee.

Members welcomed the positive approach from the FBU to the review process.

9/06 Audit and Assessment

The Director of Performance and Planning reported that the Authority would not be subject to a full Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2006/07, but would be subject to three separate assessments covering service delivery, use of resources and improvement planning. Each assessment would involve considerable work in preparing for self-assessment, fieldwork and formal inspection by the Audit Commission. All the assessments would be completed by March 2007.

(Meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.)

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

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