

<p>Minutes of the Executive Committee</p>

12 December, 2011 at 10.00am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillors Ali Khan (substitute member), Chambers,
Clinton, Docker (substitute member), Douglas-Maul,
Foster, Hogarth (substitute member), Idrees, O'Neill and
Singh.

Apologies: Councillors Alden, Davis, Eustace and Ryder.

Observers: Councillors Davies, Griffiths, Sandy, Spence, Tranter,
Turner and Walsh.
Mr Topliss.

32/11 **Declaration of Interests**

Councillors Chambers, Clinton, Edwards, Hogarth, Idrees, Douglas-Maul and Singh declared a personal interest in the matter referred to at Minute No. 36/11 (Local Government Pension Scheme) in that they were members of the scheme.

33/11 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 10 October and 7 November, 2011, be approved as a correct record.

34/11 **The Plan 2012-2015**

Approval was sought to a number of changes to The Plan following a review of the outcomes and strategic objectives for the service, which had been done as part of The Plan's annual re-fresh.

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Changes to the Key Priorities, Strategic Objectives and Outcomes contained within The Plan had been identified through feedback from the Corporate Board and the Policy Planning Forum, and a workshop held with the Strategic Advisory Group.

A review of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken against the plan had been carried out, with a focus upon embedding equality and diversity into The Plan. Further EIAs would be undertaken where appropriate as part of i) the creation of the strategic objectives that delivered The Plan, and ii) the Building upon Success (BuS) programme work.

The final draft of the plan would be submitted to the Authority on 13 February, 2012, alongside the Authority's budget.

Resolved that the Key Priorities, Strategic Objectives and Service Outcomes be approved as a basis for the refresh of The Plan for 2012-2015.

35/11 **Emergency Response Attendance Times**

The Committee noted proposals to review the Service's attendance time standards to reflect its risk-based approach to service delivery.

Following the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, all Fire Authorities had been required to deploy their resources based upon risk as set out in an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). WMFS had introduced its IRMP in 2004, which had enabled the performance of Brigade resources to be monitored. Since this time, a number of modifications had been made to reflect changes in working practices.

In line with work currently being undertaken to improve and refine service delivery through the Building upon Success (BuS) Programme, it was now necessary to revise the manner in which WMFS monitored and reported upon attendance time performance, so that a more flexible, transparent and risk appropriate approach could be adopted.

The recent BuS consultation exercise had demonstrated that there was significant support, both from staff and from the wider community, for the attendance time standards to be revised, to take account of the higher risks attached to some incident types where life and property were under threat.

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A Risk Based Attendance Matrix had been developed which ensured that the highest standard of emergency response was applied to those incidents where life and property could be in danger. Integral to the process of setting risk-based standards that reflected local geography and demographics, was the need to create a suitable mapping process which showed areas of high and low risk. To fulfil this need, an Area Risk Map had also been developed which was used to highlight areas of high, medium or low risk, so that response could be tailored accordingly.

It was noted that the performance for the year to 31 August 2011 showed a continuing improvement in WMFS attendance time performance, against the declining national trend described in the review of FRS's response times that had recently been carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

A full Equality Impact Assessment had been carried out on the proposals, which showed that the impact of introducing a risk-based framework for the planning and monitoring of emergency response attendance times did not cause disadvantage or negative impact to any particular identifiable group within the community, or to staff. The approach ensured that resources were allocated according to need in a way that was transparent and open to scrutiny to a greater extent than the current systems.

36/11 **Local Government Pension Scheme**

Following a review of public sector pension schemes the Government had announced its intention to raise employee contributions in public service schemes, with effect from 1 April 2012.

Approval was sought to the Authority's proposed response to the Department for Communities and Local Government's consultation on the draft proposals to achieve short term savings of £900m within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) by 2014-15. This would be equivalent to a 3.2 percentage point contribution increase in the unfunded public service pension schemes.

The scope of the consultation was to seek views on two proposed options to changes to the LGPS in England and Wales.

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Members remarked that the LGPS was a healthy, stand-alone, scheme and did not require any “top-up” and expressed concern that the scheme was being considered amongst proposals for other unfunded schemes.

Members also felt that the parameters in relation to the proposed increases should be increased so as to minimise the impact upon lower paid employees.

Members asked that the response be re-drafted to include these points and that the revised draft be circulated to members before submission to the DCLG.

Resolved that the Authority’s draft proposal to the Government’s consultation paper on proposals to changes to public sector pension schemes in England and Wales be approved, subject to it being amended to reflect the Committee’s views and the final draft being re-circulated to members before submission.

37/11 **Collaboration with Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority; Governance Board – Inaugural Meeting**

Further to Minute No. 19/11 (10 October, 2011) the Committee noted that the inaugural meeting of the collaborative Project Governance Board between the Authority and Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority had taken place on 3 November, 2011, and received the minutes of that meeting.

The Board had discussed and approved its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which was a clear and accountable framework under which both services were able to identify potential opportunities and deliver joint benefits and outcomes that improved the delivery of services to their respective authorities. It also set out ways that the partners would work together to deliver a shared fire control service for joint delivery; clarified and recorded the responsibilities of the partners individually and established guidelines for taking forward collaborative joint working.

The Board had also discussed the project management options for the management, delivery and implementation of the shared fire control project and had agreed to recruit an independent project manager on a full-time basis initially (on a twelve month fixed term contract), to ensure that the project was given the correct level of priority to commence..

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It was also noted that the Board had approved a joint bid for funding of £4.154m which had been submitted to the CLG on 4 November 2011. The bid contained a summary of the local plans; the expected costs and benefits; the resilience benefits; efficiency benefits; the assessment of risks and dependencies.

(Meeting ended at 10.44 am)

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