

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

18th May, 2009, at 10.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillors Alden, Chambers, Douglas-Maul, S Davis, Gazey, Hinton, Howard, Idrees, Jones, Mulhall, O'Neill, Robinson, Ryder, Singh, Skinner, Spence, Stevenson, Tagger, Turner, and Ward;
Mr Ager and Mr Topliss.

Officers: **West Midlands Fire Service**

Chief Fire Officer – V Randeniya;
Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer – M Clark;
Assistant Chief Officers – A Brandon, J Brown, M McGregor and T Prosser (Acting);
M Griffiths and B Deeks.

Clerk to the Authority

N Sharma, S Phelps and G Wythes.

Treasurer to the Authority

L Bateman.

Apologies: Councillors Clinton, G Davies and Eustace;
Mr Bagley.

15/09 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made a number of announcements as follows:

- He congratulated officers on the arrangements for the recent official opening of the Headquarters building and Safeside. A letter had been received from HRH Duke of Kent's Equerry congratulating the Authority on the success of the day.
- Bob Deeks, the Chief Fire Officer's Communications and Policy Advisor, would now be retiring at the end of June 2009 following over 30 years' service. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Mr Deeks for his support and his best wishes for his retirement.

Policy Planning Forum – 18th May, 2009

- The Headquarters and Safeside Buildings had been shortlisted in a number of categories in the West Midlands Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Awards 2009, and had won the award for sustainability, which had been presented at a ceremony held at the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham on 14th May, 2009.
- The Chairman of the Buckingham Fire Authority had visited the Authority as part of the recent peer assessment process and had been impressed with the wide range of services provided by the West Midlands Fire Service.
- The Authority had won a Gold Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in the occupational health and safety management category.
- The Chief Fire Officer and other colleagues had given presentations at the recent national Fire Conference held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. The Brigade had also had a large stand at the Conference.
- The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer had attended the official launch of the National Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- Negotiations were continuing between the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) and the Department of Communities and Local Government with regard to the transfer to the LACC of the lease of the Regional Fire Control premises in Wolverhampton.

16/09 Chief Fire Officer's Announcements

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that there had been a serious fire at the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-the-Marsh which had resulted in the destruction of 11 fire engines. It had been possible to release two West Midlands fire engines for temporary use at the College.

He also reported that a team of officers from the West Midlands Fire Service had recently taken part in the Executive Stretch training exercise and had won in each of ten scenarios.

The Road Traffic Collision and Extrication Team from Northfield Fire Station had also successfully defended their title in a recent national competition, winning awards for the best overall team, best officer-in-charge, best medic and best technical team.

Policy Planning Forum – 18th May, 2009

17/09 Interim Structure Changes

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of interim changes to the command structure of the Brigade. A further report would be submitted in due course.

18/09 Treasurer

The Chairman noted that this would be the last Policy Planning Forum for the Treasurer, Lynda Bateman, as she would be retiring at the end of August from her post of Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services at Sandwell Council, and would retire as Treasurer of the Authority at the same time. Sandwell Council had indicated to him that it would be possible for Stuart Kellas, Mrs Bateman's successor, to take on the Treasurer's role.

Members and officers paid tribute to the Treasurer for her excellent service to the Authority.

19/09 Value for Money

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation on value for money as the basis for a workshop discussion for Members and officers from which a draft Value for Money Strategy document would be drawn up for submission to the Authority in due course.

(Meeting ended at 12 noon)

Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121 569 3791
--