

Minutes of the Executive Committee

26th January 2009, at 12.00 noon
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Howard (Chairman);
Councillors S Davis, Eustace, Hinton, Idrees, Ryder,
Stevenson and Turner (Substitute Member).

Apology: Councillor Ward (Vice-Chairman).

Observers: Councillors Clinton, Douglas-Maul, Gazey, Jones,
Mulhall, Robinson, Skinner, Spence and Tagger;
Mr Topliss.

1/09 Urgent Item

The Chairman was of the opinion that the item referred to in Minute No. 5/09 below should be considered as an urgent item of business under Section 100B of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Minute No. 5/09 (Termination of Lease at 1 Auckland Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham) – This item was urgent as the property was acquired in 2006 for operational purposes in connection with the relocation of the Fire Service Headquarters and was no longer required for operational purposes by the Authority.

2/09 Non – Domestic Rate Payers Consultation

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Committee met to consult with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the setting of the Authority's budget and precept for 2009/2010.

No representatives of non-domestic ratepayers attended the meeting.

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3/09 **Approved Duty – Are You Ready for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Workshop – Session for Members**

The Committee noted that a workshop had been arranged for the introduction of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which was replacing Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

CAA would look at how well local services were working together to improve the quality of life for local people. It would also enhance the accountability of those services to local people by providing clear and impartial information on how well they were being served and how that compared with elsewhere.

The workshop was targeted at chief executives, senior managers and Members with a lead on performance so that they were fully conversant with the legislation and aware of all the implications it would have on the local service they provided.

Resolved that approval be given for Members to attend the 'Are You Ready for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Workshop' and that attendance be regarded as an approved duty for the purpose of claiming travel and subsistence allowances.

4/09 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 for the following reasons:-

- (a) Minute Nos. 5/09 and 7/09 – exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);
- (b) Minute No. 6/09 – exempt information 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.

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5/09 **Urgent Item – Termination of Lease at 1 Auckland Road,
Sparkbrook, Birmingham**

It was reported that on 27th November, 2006, the Executive Committee gave approval for the Authority to enter into a lease with John Alexander Mitchell in regard to 1 Auckland Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham (Minute No. 80/06).

The property was required for operational purposes in connection with the relocation of the Fire Service Headquarters.

The lease was for a term of three years from 1st May, 2007, at a rent of £33,000.00 per annum plus all outgoings and was terminable by the Authority at any time after giving not less than six months previous written notice to the landlord.

The property was no longer required for operational purposes by the Authority and approval was sought for termination of the lease.

Resolved that the Clerk to the Authority be authorised to terminate a lease made on 11th May, 2007, between the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and John Alexander Mitchell in regard to 1 Auckland Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

6/09 **National Firecontrol Project: Regional Control Centre Draft
Performance Standards Review**

The Committee was informed that a set of performance standards needed to be defined as part of the development of the Regional Control Centre (RCC). The performance standards vision was to create a consistent performance standard approach that ensured the national RCC network operated effectively, whilst also allowing appropriate flexibility at local level.

Performance standards which needed to be consistently applied across the RCC network had been defined as national-network performance standards and were the only standards that were the subject of the current review, as all other local standards would be able to be amended independently at each RCC. The national performance standards would be incorporated into a Service Level Agreement with the Local Authority Controlled Company running each RCC.

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It was reported that during August 2008, a working group was established which had developed the standards into Service Level Agreement terminology.

Suggestions and comments on the proposed re-drafted performance standards were submitted for the Committee's consideration.

Resolved that the suggestions and comments on the proposed re-drafted performance standards (for the Regional Control Centre to the Department for Communities and Local Government,) be endorsed for submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

7/09 **Procurement of a Replacement Passenger Coach**

The Committee was informed that as part of the Vehicle Replacement Programme (VRP), there was a requirement to review the plan to ensure that it met the business needs of the service. Officers had reviewed the plan and identified the need to replace one passenger coach within the current financial year.

The purchase of a passenger coach had previously been deferred from both the 2006/07 and 2007/08 VRP and the original replacement period for the coach was projected as a ten year period. As the coach was registered on 1st September, 1995, it was now thirteen years old and in need of replacement.

The Coach had provided the Brigade with reliable service and had been used to support many functions such as conveying Members on official visits, providing personnel transport for service funerals, brigade band performances across the United Kingdom and Europe as well as a number of other brigade events. It had also provided the ability to transport large groups of personnel in a single mode of transport avoiding the use of multiple vehicles and drivers.

To ensure that the proposed replacement vehicle met the requirements of the Authority's Environmental Policy, the vehicle would be specified to meet the current Euro Five exhaust emission standards. In addition, the coach would also embrace equality and diversity requirements and take account of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); being fitted with a side lift along with the capability of conveying up to two wheelchair occupants.

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The coach would be white in colour, which would enable the Authority to shrink wrap the vehicle with appropriate fire and community safety messages when it was out and about on the highway; publicising and reinforcing the community safety agenda of the Authority.

Four suppliers were selected from the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation for the tendering process, of which only two returned completed tenders. The lowest tender from Plaxton Ltd also scored highest in the evaluation process.

Resolved that Plaxton Limited be awarded the contract for the procurement of one passenger coach for the sum of £203,842.

(Councillor Mrs Stevenson requested that her name be recorded as having voted against the resolution.)

(Meeting ended at 12.37 pm)

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