

Minutes of the Executive Committee

6th July, 2009, at 12.00 noon
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Ward (Chairman);
Councillor S Davis (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Alden, Clinton, Douglas-Maul, Eustace,
Gazey, Hinton, Idrees, O'Neil and Ryder.

Observers: Councillors Mulhall, Skinner, Spence and Turner;
Mr Ager.

24/09 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May, 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

25/09 **West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority's Draft Annual Report 2008/09**

The Committee considered a draft version of the Annual Report for the 2008/2009 financial year, which set out the Authority's progress and achievements for 2008/2009 in the areas of prevention, protection, emergency response, organisation and working with partners. It also reported the outcomes against the Local Indicators, previously agreed with the Lead Member for Performance Management.

The Committee congratulated officers on their hard work in achieving the targets.

Resolved that the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Report for 2008/2009 be approved.

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26/09 **Value for Money Strategy**

It was reported that the concept of Value for Money (VFM) had been part of the Authority's approach to service provision for several years. This had included:-

- the duty of Best Value;
- the ambitious approach that had been taken to the freedom and flexibility created by the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Planning;
- the generation of cashable savings as part of the National Fire and Rescue Service's 2007/08 and 2010/11 efficiency targets.

The improvements which had been created through this approach had been reported in the annual efficiency statements. The Audit Commission report 'Rising to the Challenge' identified successes for the National Fire Services, however, it was suggested that this must not become a barrier to further progression. The report identified a number of initiatives and approaches that had not yet been adopted or evaluated by the West Midlands Fire Service. The recent Annual Audit and Inspection Letter identified further scope for improving the processes to manage VFM and the integration of financial and performance management information.

The Committee gave consideration to a draft VFM strategy which had been created to provide the foundation upon which the Authority could further develop its approach to VFM.

As a transparent and open organisation, both Members and officers at all levels of the organisation were consulted in the development of the draft strategy.

Resolved that the Value for Money Strategy be approved.

27/09 **Consultation on Formula Grant Review**

The Committee was informed that the Fire and Rescue Service Circular 34/2009 had recently been issued. The circular requested views from Fire and Rescue Authorities on what factors should be considered in the Fire and Rescue relative needs formula used in the formula grant distribution system.

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It was likely that in addition to a specific Authority response, a Metropolitan Fire Authorities response would also be provided given that there were a number of key themes that applied to all of the Fire Authorities in that 'Family Group'.

The deadline date for the consultation responses was 20th July, 2009. Some initial key issues had been identified and were presented to Members for consideration.

Resolved that the issues identified by officers be approved for inclusion in the consultation response and that reference also be made to the following:-

- emphasising the importance of training in the support services function;
- expressing Members' concerns about the accuracy of census population data and the deleterious effect this could have on the calculation of grant;
- including reference to concerns about the lack of progress on the regional fire control.

28/09 **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 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including any individual and the authority holding that information).

29/09 **Office Furniture Contract**

The Committee was informed that tenders were opened on 18th May, 2009 in respect for the supply, delivery and installation of office furniture, for a period of four years. The results of the tender evaluation exercise were reported.

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The proposed contract would result in savings of approximately 25% compared to the current contract prices. The cost of the proposed contract would be met from within existing budgets.

Resolved that Eurotek Office Furniture Ltd be awarded the contract for the supply, delivery and installation of furniture and storage.

(Meeting ended at 12.51 pm)

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