

<p><b>Minutes of the Executive Committee</b></p>
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**15<sup>th</sup> November, 2004 at 12.00 noon**  
**at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham**

**Present:** Councillor Hinton (Chair);  
Councillor Hogarth (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Eustace, Howard, Kazi, Rogers (substitute for  
Councillor Lawrence) and Underhill.

**Apology:** Councillor Lawrence.

**Observers:** Councillors Birbeck, Jackson, Foster and Ward.

Visitor: Mr Colin Williams.

102/04 **Minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board**

The Committee noted the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board (RMB) held on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2004.

In noting the minutes appreciation was given to the Treasurer for her work with the RMB Treasurers' Group in drawing up the RMB Financial Regulations and Contract Standard Orders. This work was seen as fundamental to ensuring that the workings of the RMB were underpinned by robust financial arrangements.

The Chair gave a brief update on the away session held for RMB members on 26th October, 2004 which had been a very positive meeting where members had begun to address the regional agenda in terms of the best use of scarce resources.

103/04 **Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

Further to Minute No. 87/04, the Committee considered the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel following its detailed review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Clerk submitted apologies on behalf of the Revd. David Walker, Chair of the Panel, as he was not

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able to attend. The Clerk presented the report and acknowledged the hard work of the Panel in reviewing the scheme.

The Panel acknowledged the increased responsibilities placed upon Members of the Authority, and particularly the Chair and Vice-Chair and Lead Members, arising from the modernisation agenda and new political arrangements within the Authority, and from external forces such as regional initiatives.

The Panel recommended an uplift in both the basic allowance and the special responsibility allowances currently paid to Authority Members; and furthermore recommended that the Authority undertake a review of the administrative support provided to Members at the earliest opportunity.

The Panel's recommendations had been incorporated into the Members' Allowances Scheme, a revised draft of which was submitted for the Committee's consideration.

The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the Panel, and discussed an appropriate date for implementation of the revised Members Allowances Scheme. Members felt that the increase in allowances should be backdated to the date of the Annual Meeting of the Authority.

The additional cost of the proposed scheme would be taken into account during the Authority's budget setting process.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved;
- (2) that the revised Members' Allowances Scheme attached as Appendix 1 be approved and adopted, and that the Authority be recommended to backdate the payment of the revised allowances to 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2004;
- (3) that the Clerk write to the Bishop of Dudley and the other members of the Independent Remuneration Panel to express their thanks for the thorough and professional manner in which the review has been undertaken

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104/04    **Conclusion of the Airfield Support Services Project**

The Committee was informed that the Airfield Support Services Project had concluded as the Ministry of Defence had decided not to proceed with the project. The West Midlands Fire Service was therefore no longer involved with the project.

The Committee noted the conclusion of the partnering arrangement between the West Midlands Fire Service and the Airside consortium.

105/04    **Quotations Received in Excess of £50,000 – Quarterly Update**

The Committee received a report setting out details of quotations received in excess of £50,000 but less than £100,000 since the last update. Approval was sought to provide updates on a bi-annual basis instead of a quarterly basis.

Following a detailed discussion regarding the provision of update reports it was agreed that in the interest of transparent and open decision making, the reports should continue to be provided on a quarterly basis.

**Resolved:-**

- (1)        that the quarterly report be noted;
- (2)        that reports continue to be provided on a quarterly basis.

106/04    **Draft National Procurement Strategy**

The Committee received a report seeking approval to the proposed response of the Authority to the draft National Procurement Strategy (NPS). The draft NPS was circulated for consultation in September, 2004 and the deadline for comments was 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2004.

As part of the Government's White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service" published in June 2003, there was a requirement to establish regional management arrangements to achieve an increase in the efficient use of resources. In this regard a number of issues were identified for Regional Management Boards to deliver. One of these issues was to "introduce regional based procurement or procurement to national standards". An officer from the West Midlands Fire Service was the project manager for the West Midlands Regional Management

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Board (WMRMB) regional procurement project.

Members considered the proposed response to the consultation document which included reference to issues identified by the WMRMB Procurement Project Board. In doing so concern was expressed about the potential negative effects of regional procurement on competition; and that the timing of the consultation could conflict with the proposed National Integrated Clothing Project. Officers noted the comments made and assured members that these issue had been covered in the response.

**Resolved** that the consultation response in respect of the draft National Procurement Strategy be approved for submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

107/04 **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 relating to particular employees.

108/04 **Review of the Salary of the Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer Team**

Further to Minute No. 91/04, the Committee considered an independent report on the review of the salaries of the Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer Team undertaken in line with the recommendations of the National Joint Council for Principal Fire Officers of Local Authorities' Fire Brigades (NJC), following the recent pay settlement.

The review, which had been carried out by Colin Williams of the West Midlands Local Government Association, had the following terms of reference:-

- (1) To consider the additional workload and increased levels of responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer Team in West Midlands Fire Service:
- (2) To consider the comparative salaries available in other major fire authorities in the United Kingdom:

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- (3) To make recommendations for revised salary levels taking into consideration the financial implications for the Fire Authority.

The report acknowledged the changing nature of the roles and responsibilities of the Chief Fire Officer and his Principal Officer Team, and gave evidence of comparative salaries in other fire authorities. It suggested options for arriving at revised salary levels for these posts. Mr Williams was present at the meeting to present his report and recommendations.

The Committee considered the recommendations and the financial implications of the report.

Members thanked Mr Williams for his time and effort in undertaking the review.

**Resolved to recommend to the Authority:-**

- (1) that the findings and recommendations of the independent report into the salary levels of the Chief Fire Officer and the Principal Officer Team be accepted;
- (2) that the pay of the Chief Fire Officer and the Principal Officer Team be revised in line with Option A outlined in the independent report, with minor amendments, on the basis of spot salaries and retaining the current percentage remuneration arrangements for the Principal Officer Team, with effect from 1st July, 2004;
- (3) that a further report be submitted for consideration in 2005 setting out proposals for a review of the senior management structure and the introduction of the principle of performance related pay .

(All Officers affected by the review who were present declared a prejudicial interest in this matter and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.)

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(Meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.)

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