

Minutes of the Executive Committee

28th July 2008, at 12 noon
at Fire Service Headquarters,
Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Howard (Chairman);
Councillor Ward (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors S Davis, Eustace, Gazey, Hinton, Idrees, and
Stevenson.

Also Present: Councillors Clinton, Douglas-Maul, Jones, O'Neill,
Robinson, Skinner and Tagger.
Messrs Ager and Topliss.

Apology: Councillor Ryder

34/08 **Members' Allowances Scheme**

Further to Minute No. 31/08 of the Authority, the Committee considered an amended Members' Allowances Scheme following the recent review undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Members' Allowances Scheme, as set out in the Appendix, be approved with effect from 23rd June, 2008;
- (2) that the Clerk make the necessary arrangements for the publication of the amended Members' Allowances Scheme in accordance with the Local Government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

35/08 **Consultation on the Distribution of the Fire Capital Grant**

The Committee noted the Authority's response to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) on options for the distribution of capital grants in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

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As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) CLG had secured new capital grant funding of £78 million for 2009/10 and 2010/11 for Fire and Rescue Services in England. The consultation paper proposed three options for the distribution of the £78 million.

The Authority's preferred option was Option A, which was based upon the existing formula for Supported Capital Expenditure.

Based on the three options proposed within the consultation, the Authority would receive between £2.685 and £5.034million.

36/08 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:-

Minute Nos. 37/08 and 38/08 relate to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

Minute No. 39/08 relates to 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.

37/08 Development of Training Facilities

Approval was sought for the redevelopment of the main Brigade Training Centre in Smethwick and the retention and development of the ICT and training facility at Potterton Way, opposite the main Training Centre building in Smethwick.

The Brigade Training Centre had ceased to operate residential training courses in March 2007. The areas of the Centre previously used for accommodation, which comprised over 700 square metres, had consequently become vacant. In addition, as a consequence to non-residential based training, there had been an increase in demand for

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parking at the centre.

The Potterton Way site had previously been earmarked for disposal as part of the new Fire Service Headquarters Relocation Project. However there had been a number of developments since this decision and it was now proposed that the site be retained and re-developed to house a bespoke self contained Command Training Facility and a Driver Training Section. This would free additional space up at the main Brigade Training Centre to allow for a dedicated First Aid Trauma Training Section to be set up there.

The Chief Fire Officer highlighted the importance of strategic investment in training in order to meet the growth in demand for operational skills training, command skills training and management development training.

Members noted that the funding for the new Headquarters Project was now fully provided for within the capital programme and was no longer reliant upon the sale of the premises at Potterton Way due mainly to the higher than anticipated capital receipt from the sale of the existing Headquarters.

Total funding of £1.048 million had been set aside during the Authority's 2006/07 and 2008/09 closedown of accounts processes to meet the estimated capital costs of the proposals.

The Committee was informed that tenders had been received for the proposed works in the undermentioned amounts and had been opened by the Vice-Chairman and relevant officers prior to this meeting:-

£713,790.00;

£774,706.00;

£795,120.55;

£799,078.00.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to the redevelopment of the space previously used for residential accommodation at the Brigade Training Centre, Smethwick, to provide accommodation to meet the growth in demand for training;
- (2) that approval be given to the retention and redevelopment of the ICT and training facility at Potterton Way, Smethwick

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as a centre for incident command and driver training;

(3) that, subject to:-

- (a) the checking of the tender;
- (b) the preparation of a formal contract by the Clerk;
- (c) any necessary consents from the Government Departments concerned;

the tender submitted by Mansell Construction Services in the sum of £713,790.00, being the lowest received, be accepted.

38/08 Auction of Strip of Land at New Fire Service Headquarters

The Committee considered a proposal for the Authority to take part in an auction for the 0.31 acres of land fronting the Vauxhall Road elevation of the new Fire Service Headquarters site.

The Authority currently held a lease for the land.

Resolved that, subject to the 0.31 acres of land fronting the Vauxhall Road elevation of the new Fire Service Headquarters being declared surplus to requirements by Birmingham City Council, authority be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to agree a maximum amount to be offered at auction for the purchase of the land.

39/08 Sedgley Fire Station

Approval was sought for the Authority to undertake a consultation exercise regarding proposals to change the way fire cover was provided in the Sedgley area of Dudley.

Sedgley was currently the only fire station in West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) that was staffed by part-time operational staff. The station was situated less than 2 miles from Dudley Fire Station and the attendance time for Pump Rescue Ladders (PRLs) from Dudley into Sedgley's station area was potentially better than could be achieved by Sedgley's PRL.

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The removal of Sedgley's PRL would satisfy the requirements of the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan and would not compromise the level of operational cover provided.

The potential future uses for Sedgley Fire Station would be considered and a business case would be made for the options to be considered.

A further report would be submitted following the outcome of the consultation exercise.

Resolved that approval be given for the Authority to undertake a 12 week consultation exercise regarding proposals to change the way fire cover is provided in the Sedgley area of Dudley.

(Meeting ended at 12.38pm)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Contact Officer: Stephnie Hancock Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121-569-3189</i></p>
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