

<p>Notes of the Policy Planning Forum</p>
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23rd July, 2007 at 9.55 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillors Alden, Ali Khan, Birbeck, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Foster, Hinton, Howard, Hussain, Idrees, Jackson, Singh, Spence, Stevenson, Tagger, Turner, Ward, Wild and Wilkes;
Messrs Bagley and Topliss.

Officers: **West Midlands Fire Service**

Chief Fire Officer – F Sheehan;
Assistant Chief Officers – John Brown and Martin Clark;
Ann Davies, Bob Deeks and Allan Parsonage.

Clerk to the Authority

D Haywood, S Hancock and G Wythes.

Treasurer to the Authority

L Bateman.

Apologies: Councillors G Davies, S Davis, Gazey, Mulhall and Ryder; Mr Denny.

13/07 **Update on Operational Activity**

The Director [Operations] reported that the Brigade had recently taken part in Exercise Shoeshine, a multi-agency operation that dealt with a simulated incident around the release of a dangerous chemical.

The Brigade had also dealt with incidents of flooding around the River Tame, as well as providing assistance to brigades outside the West Midlands in connection with flooding in Yorkshire and Gloucestershire.

The Brigade had organised the annual Schools Quiz that involved over 1,000 pupils from 160 schools. The Quiz made a strong contribution to raising awareness among school pupils of the importance of fire prevention and fire safety measures.

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Members expressed concern about the removal of the water support unit from Willenhall Fire Station, and were reminded that this was part of a wider rationalisation of technical rescue equipment that had recently been approved by the Executive Committee. There would be benefits to the Brigade in terms of training, the level of specialism and ease of deployment.

Members asked for information about the current situation with regard to the provision of assistance to other brigades in dealing with the severe flooding affecting various parts of the country, and the effects for this Fire Authority. It was agreed to report back to a future Policy Planning Forum on this matter.

14/07 Headquarters Relocation Update

The Director [Operational Support] reported on the bids received for the sale of the existing Headquarters building, which would be considered by the Executive Committee following this meeting. Planning had also commenced for the sale of the existing stores building, which would be replaced at the new Headquarters.

With regard to the new Headquarters, a tender had been accepted for the construction of the car park. The project was running on time and within cost projections. Artists' impressions of the design of the finished headquarters and the Safeside building were shown.

15/07 Regional Control Centre Local Authority Controlled Company

The Director [Operational Support] reported on the governance arrangements for the local authority controlled company [LACC] that had been established to run the West Midlands Regional Control Centre. The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority was a member of the Company, and the Chairman of the Authority was a Director.

The LACC would be responsible for recruiting and employing staff and the control centre building; delivering the control service; paying for use of the FireControl infrastructure and Firelink radio system; and recharging its services to constituent Fire Authorities in accordance with a service level agreement.

The Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association had been completed in respect of the LACC, and work was in hand to finalise the Members' Agreement and the financial agreement. An outline of the terms of the Members' Agreement was given.

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An initial meeting of the LACC Directors was planned for 26th July, 2007.

An Executive Director for the Regional Control Centre had yet to be appointed.

Work was also in hand on the human resources implications of the move to the Regional Control Centre for the Authority.

(Meeting ended at 12.05 pm)

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