

<p>Notes of the Policy Planning Forum</p>
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**10th November, 2014 at 10.30 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Members of the Authority
Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Idrees (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Aston, Atwal Singh, Barlow, Clinton,
Collingswood, Davis, Delaney, Douglas-Maul,
Hogarth, Mottram JP, Phillips JP, Quinnen,
Shackleton, Singh, Skinner, Spence, Tranter and
Yardley;
Mr Ager.

Officers: West Midlands Fire Service
Chief Fire Officer (P Loach);
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (G Taylor);
A Asfar, A Bhogal, J Connor, D Duff, M Griffiths,
N Spencer, A Tite and P Wilson.

Clerk and Monitoring Officer
N Sharma
R Jones.

Treasurer
Stuart Kellas.

Apologies: Councillors Eustace, Finnegan, Lines, O'Boyle, Sealey
and Young.

18/14 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed the Chief Fire Officer to the first meeting of the Forum since he had been appointed to his substantive post.

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He advised members of the current position of the fire fighters' dispute and that it now appeared to be heading toward climax. The 2015 Pension Regulations had reached the Parliamentary Stage and 23rd October, 2014 was the end of the consultation stage. The Regulations had to be laid before Parliament for 40 Parliamentary working days and if they were not opposed they would be carried. Scotland and Ireland had already agreed their Regulations and Wales had a settlement tabled. If a motion of opposition to the 2015 Regulations was received there would be a debate and vote in Parliament. The Chief Fire Officer would write to local Members of Parliament to inform them of the situation and the issues of the dispute and would update members at the Authority meeting on 24th November, 2014.

The Chief Fire Officer thanked members for their confidence in appointing him to the post and advised that he would continue to engage with members and partners to provide the best fire service for the West Midlands.

He informed members that the latest industrial action had commenced at 6.00 pm on 31st October, 2014 and ended at 6.00 pm on 4th November, 2014.

He advised that despite the appointment of a new Fire Minister there seemed to have been no progress on the proposals for the Pension Regulations since June 2013 to the current motion before Parliament. As indicated by the Chair above, he would send a risk/evidence based letter to Members of Parliament on the potential and likely impact of continued industrial action.

In response to a member's enquiry he reported that there had been two fatalities during the most recent industrial action but that in his opinion, due to the nature of the two incidents, the outcomes would not have been different had industrial action not been taken. The Service had dealt with several hundreds of incidents within the timescale. He had not been notified of any further industrial action.

He further advised that legally the Fire Service had to provide a fire and rescue service and that any fatalities would be reported to the Coroner for investigation and any appropriate action.

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19/14 Marmot

Members received a presentation from Peter Wilson on an overview of the Marmot Communications Strategy.

The Service's service delivery model, as reported to the last Policy Planning Forum, underpinned how it made resources available for its prevention and protection priorities.

The Service's communication "Improving Lives to Save Lives" explained how this was achieved and provided evidence of its support to the Marmot principles. It was important that staff understood how their everyday activities contributed to this end.

Members also viewed a video of the Service's work with children from the community.

The Service would host a health sector event on 18 November, 2014 which was targeting health professionals across the country and at least 80 people had indicated that they would attend. The event would hear of what the Service was doing with regard to assisting health inequalities (#improve&save) and attendees would receive a brochure and a video card to remind them of what they had heard at the event.

It was important to the Service that West Midlands' communities changed their perceptions of the breadth of services that it actually performed. Details of the advertising that would be undertaken to promote this message during November and December on buses, Adshel sites, local radio, other local and national media, social media and web banner adverts on local news sites were reported. All of these would try to direct people toward the Service's website. The website had a new look and its communication objectives had three defined target audiences. This would be important should a referendum have to be held.

The following responses were made to members' questions and enquiries:-

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- The pay back for the resources that the Service invested in its prevention and protection activities and the measure of its success was not short term. The work undertaken in partnership with others helped people to aspire to different and higher things would be a long term commitment which would benefit the whole community. The Service was currently trying to capture this information.
- The Authority had seats on some of the West Midlands local authority Health and Wellbeing Boards. It was engaging with health services on the shared prevention agenda to improve lives in the community.
- By developing partnerships the Service was able to receive referrals from them, e.g. of children not attending school. The Service's Aurora programme, which received some funding, assisted in trying to challenge some young people's behaviours.
- It was often worth the investment of time in trying to contact certain groups of people which other partners had little contact with; the Service's "brand" and competency helped to achieve this.
- All members of the Authority were invited to the event on 18 November, 2014
- Members would receive a briefing note, other bespoke information or the assistance of officers should they wish to promote the wider operation of the Service at any event they were part of.
- All schools in the area were contacted at least annually by the Service, particularly through KS2 and early years support.

It was felt that all Authority members should do their utmost to endorse the issues raised today and to promote and advocate all of the extended services that were provided.

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Referendum

The Chief Fire Officer informed members of how and under what circumstances the operation of a referendum would be undertaken should such a decision be made.

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The trigger and conduct of a referendum would be advised under a set of principles from the Secretary of State and a date would likely be the first Thursday in any May, in line with the date of local council elections.

The budgetary shortfalls for the Authority, particularly in 2017/18 were being monitored and further information would be made available at the Policy Planning Forum in February, 2015 which would explore the costs, the chances of success and the alternatives to a referendum.

21/14

**Resuscitation Training - Automated External Defibrillation (ARD)
Provider Course**

As requested at a previous Forum, members received a presentation from Andrew Tite and Dave Duff on the First Aid and refresher courses which fire personnel undertook particularly with regard to how AED equipment was employed. Members received a demonstration in the use of this equipment and were advised of the deployment of such units within the community and the instructions which accompanied them.

(Meeting ended at 12.23 pm)

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