

Minutes of the Executive Committee

5 September 2011 at 10.00am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Eustace (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Alden, Chambers, Clinton, Davis, Douglas-
Maul, Foster, Idrees, O'Neill, Ryder and Singh.

Observers: Councillors Docker, Delaney, Finnegan, Griffiths,
Sandy, Spence and Turner.
Mr Ager.

14/11 Lead Member Reports

The Committee received verbal reports from Lead Members on the work they had been involved in since the last meeting:-

Members noted that Councillor Davies, Lead Member Asset Management, had submitted an apology for the meeting and therefore the Director Finance and Procurement reported to the Committee on his behalf.

Asset Management

Work was being undertaken to identify up to 12 sites at which to install photovoltaic cells. The installation of a photovoltaic cells at Handsworth Community Fire Station was expected to start by late September 2011.

Three new Training at Height facilities were now in operation at Solihull, Fallings Park and West Bromwich fire stations. Work was on hold with regards to the facilities at Sutton Coldfield and Walsall fire stations in order to review need and therefore would not be completed within the current financial year.

Sealed bids had been received with regards to the disposal of Sedgley Fire Station and officers were currently liaising with Sandwell Legal Services to clarify details on the highest bid.

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Refurbishments at Solihull and Walsall fire stations were now effectively complete.

Equality and Diversity

Councillor Spence reported that the Authority had received national acknowledgement for its human resources in that it had been ranked as a finalist for a Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) Award.

Human Resources

Councillor Chambers reported that he had recently undertaken a visit to the Fire Service College and was pleased to note that West Midlands' own Training Academy offered a comparable level of service. A visit was being arranged for staff from the College to see the services that the Academy offered.

The revised Employee Relations Framework was being considered by the Joint Consultative Panel on 5 September, 2011 prior to submission to the Authority for approval.

A review of pay and grading structures for support staff was currently underway.

Training for Members on fair hearings in the progress of being arranged.

The Employee Opinion Survey would be circulated in late September 2011 and the results would be submitted to Members in due course.

The Next Step Programme, which supported staff at risk of redundancy in raising skills in CV writing and interview techniques, was very successful and was continuing to help staff in seeking alternative employment.

The final of the Schools' Quiz had been an excellent event and the enthusiasm of all involved had been noted.

Councillor Chambers had attended the opening of the newly refurbished Walsall fire station and had been pleased to note that the event was attended by a number of other stakeholders.

The Chief Fire Officer added that on 16 and 17 September, 2011 a 36-hour pump exercise was taking place at the Fire Service College to test resilience capabilities. It was noted that West Midlands was one of only two brigades in the UK to take part in weekend training activities. Members and the Chief Fire Officer discussed how the College could be supported whilst maintaining the training facilities at West Midlands' own

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Training Academy.

Member Development

Councillor Foster encouraged Members to undertake visits to fire stations as part of their learning and development. In particular, he felt that meetings with Operations Commanders were valuable in terms of demonstrating the implementation of policies and procedures on the ground.

Visits to the Training Academy and Safeside were currently being arranged for members.

Members were reminded that, under the Member Development Strategy, they had an opportunity to meet with their group leader to discuss their training and development needs. The Member Development Working Group would be developing a schedule of development activities for members and any suggestions from Members themselves would be welcomed.

Performance Management

Councillor Douglas-Maul reported that the Fire Service's service to the community of West Midlands continued to be excellent. Of the 13 performance indicators set out within The Plan, nine were on target, two were improving and two were falling below target.

Of the 13 strategic objectives set out in The Plan 12 were on target.

In terms of the corporate risk register, two of the risks had been re-rated from medium to high due to the current climate of industrial action in the public sector.

Progress on the Building Upon Success programme continued to be satisfactory.

The Audit and Performance Management Committee was due to receive a detailed report on performance against The Plan for quarter one on 5 September.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that a group of Chief Fire Officers from Sweden were currently on a three-day exchange visit to West Midlands to seek out good practice and inspiration. It was noted that West Midlands Fire Service was regarded as one of the best fire and rescue services in the world.

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(Meeting ended at 10.28 am)

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