

## **Minutes of the Executive Committee**

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2008, at 12.15 pm**  
**at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

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

**Apology:** Councillor Ryder.

**Observers:** Councillors Jones, Mulhall, Robinson, Singh, Skinner, Spence and Tagger.  
Mr Ager.

### **55/08 Annual Service Plan 2009/2010**

The Committee was informed that a letter had been received from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council requesting the immediate suspension of the consultation process for the Annual Service Plan 2009/10, following a motion which was passed at its Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008.

Members discussed the request. Having considered the letter, the Committee was minded to take no action in regard to the request received from Sandwell MBC, as the consultation period was close to conclusion; and as any decisions made on the Service Plan were not likely to be implemented in the near future, and the new Chief Fire Officer would have ample opportunity to be involved in the development of any proposals.

#### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that Sandwell MBC be thanked for its contribution to the consultation and informed that the Committee understood its views as set out in the letter, which would be taken on board in consideration of the consultation responses;

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- (2) that no action be taken to suspend the consultation process for the proposed Annual Service Plan 2009/10.

56/08 **Performance Against Operational Indicators – Data for 2008/2009 up to 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2008**

The Committee noted the data against the performance indicators, set out in the Authority's Annual Service Plan up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2008. Members were asked to note a requirement arising from the Use of Resources audit, asking that performance be more closely linked with financial issues.

57/08 **Finance Update – Audit of Accounts 2007/2008 and Monitoring of Finances 2008/2009**

The Committee noted that the audit of the Authority's accounts for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008 had now been implemented and that the accounts had been amended for one material error with regard to the treatment of sale proceeds.

The initial accounts showed a gain on disposal which was incorrect as the assets should have been re-valued prior to disposal. As a result, the gain was removed from the income and expenditure account and amendments were made to the fixed asset figures and reserves to show the revaluation and then the removal of the revised amount on disposal of these assets.

The Committee also noted the monitoring of finances for the Authority in the current financial year.

58/08 **Analysis of Progress Towards Key Objectives – Second Quarterly Report for 2008/2009**

The Committee noted the progress made towards achieving key objectives from Departmental Action Plans from July to September 2008.

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59/08     **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 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including any individual and the authority holding that information).

60/08     **Provision of Communications Equipment: Replacement Respiratory Protective Equipment**

Approval was sought to the awarding of contracts for the provision of radio communications and interface equipment required to facilitate the replacement of the Service's existing Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) as identified in the Annual Service Plan for 2008/09.

The current breathing apparatus radios used within the Brigade were purchased in 1998 with a five year life expectancy. Through carefully planned maintenance programmes, the Brigade had extended the life of this equipment and had been able to achieve serviceable radio equipment five years beyond this expectancy.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2008, the Authority approved Draeger Safety UK as the preferred supplier for the replacement of RPE, subject to a further report to the Executive Committee on related expenditure for radio and communications equipment (see Minute No. 57/08). Two suppliers of compatible communications equipment had been identified through the national FiReBuy consortium arrangement and their products evaluated for suitability, price and maintenance. The radio equipment supplied by Radiocoms was the cheapest and most suitable. The remaining interface equipment was only available from Draeger Safety UK.

The proposed expenditure would be met from the existing budget associated with the replacement of RPE.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that Radiocoms be awarded the contract for replacement radio equipment for the sum of £118,000;

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- (2) that radio interface and associated equipment be purchased from Draeger Safety UK for the sum of £233,000.

**61/08 Integrated Back Office Computer System**

The Committee was informed that the E-Business Project was established to deliver an Integrated Back Office (IBO) for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS).

The principal driver for adopting an IBO was to provide integrated services to ensure a single version of information was available to the organisation so that robust corporate reporting could be established and a flexible approach made possible in relation to changing requirements.

Following an extensive facilitated review across the back office business areas, clarity had been reached with reference to WMFS' current business requirements and there had been an evaluation of a number of different options for delivering these requirements whilst being mindful of the need to deliver value for money.

The options considered were as follows:-

Option 1 – do nothing;

Option 2 – host a full solution at WMFS (potentially with or without finance);

Option 3 – host a full solution at Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council;

Option 4 – enhance existing systems.

Option 4 was the recommended course of action as it focused on maximising the investments made by the service in existing systems.

It was noted that within Option 4, both the Finance and Payroll systems would continue to be provided by Sandwell MBC and consequently all existing arrangements would remain in place.

The estimated cost for the proposal would be met from existing funding approved to undertake the project within the Authority's Capital Programme.

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The Committee noted that whilst Option 4 did not address the original requirements of the project to provide a fully integrated back-office, it provided system enhancements, ensuring appropriate flexibility for future development of the back-office if and when required.

**Resolved** that the enhancement of the existing West Midlands Fire Service back-office systems at a total estimated implementation cost of £612,000 (Option4), be approved;

(Meeting ended at 12.53 pm)

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