

Minutes of the Executive Committee

10th January, 2011, at 12.30 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Hinton (Chairman);
Councillor Eustace (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Alden, Chambers, Douglas-Maul, Foster,
Idrees, Jackson, Ryder and Stevenson.

Apology: Councillors Clinton and Davies.

Observers: Councillors Docker, Jones, Mulhall, Spence, Turner and
Walsh;
Mr Ager and Mr Topliss.

25/10 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th
October, 2010, be approved as a correct record.

26/10 **Contracts Awards Summary 1st July to 31st December 2010**

The Committee received, in accordance with procurement procedures,
a retrospective quarterly summary of contracts awarded in excess of
£100,000.

27/10 **Clerk to the Authority/President of the Chief Fire Officers'
Association**

The Committee was informed that the Clerk to the Authority had taken
early retirement from Sandwell MBC on 31st December 2010.

It was therefore proposed that the Monitoring Officer, currently the
Director of Legal and Governance Services at Sandwell MBC, take on
the responsibilities of the Clerk to the Authority. Members requested a
report back on the basis of the charge to the Authority for these
services.

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In order to maintain the level of service to the Authority, it was proposed that the retiring Clerk be retained on a self-employed basis to assist the Clerk/Monitoring Officer in undertaking specific pieces of work at the direction of the Clerk and Chief Fire Officer.

The Committee congratulated the Chief Fire Officer on his appointment as Vice-President Elect of the Chief Fire Officers' Association in September 2010. This would lead to a mandatory appointment as Vice-President in September 2011 and subsequently appointment as President in September 2012.

These roles would facilitate closer involvement with national and international fire service relations and work with groups directly associated with the sector, including the Fire Protection Association, the Building Research Establishment, the construction industry, other emergency services and public services. There would also be many opportunities to present the West Midlands Fire Service in a wider context at conferences and events.

Resolved to recommend to the Authority:-

- (1) that approval be given for the Monitoring Officer, currently Director of Legal and Governance Services at Sandwell MBC, to take on the role of Clerk/Monitoring Officer;
- (2) that approval be given for additional support to be provided to the Authority by Mrs Susan Phelps, and that this arrangement be reviewed after 12 months.

28/10 **Lead Member Reports**

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

Equality and Diversity

Councillor Spence reported that she was holding regular meetings with the Director Human Resources to look at the impact of the Single Equality Act and its implications upon members and service delivery.

Consultation was currently taking place on a Dignity at Work policy, with a view to implementation by the end of February 2011.

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The Building upon Success programme continued and equality impact assessments would be completed on all proposals coming out of the programme.

The Fire Service was working with the police and ambulance services on arrangements to celebrate the forthcoming International Women's Day.

Human Resources

Councillor Chambers reported that he had recently visited the Fire Service Training Academy and had been impressed by the innovative work being undertaken there.

A meeting had taken place with the equality and diversity manager to discuss the implications of the Single Equality Act.

Trends and issues on disciplinary cases were being monitored through regular meetings with the Director Human Resources and bi-annual reports to the Joint Consultative Panel.

Improvements had been made on the recording of sickness absence and key performance indicators were being met, with sickness absence numbers for station based employees at an average of 5.5 days per year, which was significantly lower than other local authorities. Members noted that this figure included long-term sickness absence. The Chair requested that a detailed report be submitted on overall sickness comparisons be submitted to a future meeting.

Member Development

Councillor Foster reported that the Member Development Working Group had approved a draft member role description, which, it was proposed, would be circulated to the district councils prior to their annual meetings to assist them in making their appointments to the Authority.

A template had been produced to assist members in getting the most from visits to fire stations, which would also be used as a management tool to address any issues highlighted.

Work on developing a handbook for members continued.

The Member Development Working Group would be making a recommendation to the Authority that the Member Development Charter

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no longer be pursued due to the anticipated costs, which would now have to be met by individual authorities since the dissolution of the West Midlands Leaders Board. Work on member development continued however, and members were encouraged to refer any issues they had to the Working Group.

Performance Management

Councillor Douglas-Maul reported that progress was being maintained on performance against the objectives set out in The Plan.

(Meeting ended at 12.44 pm)

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