

## **Minutes of the Executive Committee**

**23rd July, 2007, at 12.30 pm**  
**at Fire Service Headquarters,**  
**Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham**

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

**Observers:** Councillors Birbeck, Eustace, Tagger and Turner;  
Messrs Bagley and Topliss.

**Apologies:** Councillors S Davis and Foster.

### **35/07 Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Howard declared a prejudicial interest in the matter referred to at Minute No. 40/07 (Tenders for the Supply, Fitment and Maintenance Services for Tyres) and withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of that item.

### **36/07 Best Value Review of Training**

The Committee was asked to approve recommendations and targets arising from the Best Value Review of training that had been carried out during 2006/07.

The recommendations and action plan arising from the review had been produced in full consultation with the Training Centre Management Team and Training Centre staff by way of Service Review Teams.

**Resolved** that the recommendations and targets arising from the Best Value Review of Training be approved.



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**37/07 Quotations Received in Excess of £50,000 – Quarterly Update**

The Committee noted a quarterly update report of quotations received in excess of £50,000.

**38/07 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 for the following reasons:-

Minutes Nos. 39/07 and 40/07 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Minute No. 41/07 relating to an individual.

**39/07 Sale of Existing Fire Service Headquarters**

Further to Minute No. 27/07, the Committee was informed that eight organisations had submitted both conditional and unconditional bids to purchase the existing Headquarters site. The Authority's advisors CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) and officers of the Authority had undertaken a full evaluation of the offers received. Members were informed of the detailed findings and recommendations of the evaluation process.

A further report would be submitted in due course with regard to the funding package for the new Headquarters project now that there was more clarity about the financial situation.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Treasurer and Clerk, be authorised to enter into the unconditional sale of the existing West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters to Watkin Jones Group, based on the outline terms and conditions set out in the documents now submitted;
- (2) that should it not be possible to agree a suitable contract with Watkin Jones Group, the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation



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with the Treasurer and Clerk, be authorised to proceed with the unconditional sale of the existing West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters to the next best remaining offer/s, based on the outline terms and conditions set out in the documents now submitted.

Councillor Ward (Vice-Chairman) in the Chair

**40/07 Tenders for the Supply, Fitment and Maintenance Services for Tyres**

The Committee opened two tenders received for the above works.

**Resolved** that officers undertake a detailed technical and financial evaluation of the tenders and report back to a future meeting.

Councillor Howard resumed the Chair

**41/07 Review of Salary of Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer Team**

The Committee was informed that the relative level of salaries paid to the Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer Team had deteriorated since the salary review undertaken in 2004, when compared to the same range of benchmark authorities. Consequently, Sandwell MBC's Head of Human Resources had undertaken an independent review and was now recommending that the salaries be increased.

The 2004 review had recognised the relative size of the West Midlands Service together with the complexities of the range of services provided and the risks associated with the population, transport networks and industrial undertakings. The 2004 review had placed the West Midlands third in the ranking of Fire Authorities in terms of salaries. However, since 2004 the West Midlands Fire Service had only applied national pay awards whilst many other fire services had regularly reviewed the salaries of their senior teams. A recent benchmark review had indicated that, whilst the level of risk remained the same, principal officers in the West Midlands Fire Service had dropped from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> in terms of pay.

The 2004 review had also recommended that consideration be given to the basis of the pay and grading structure for this group in relation to spot salaries versus salary ranges and the principle of the introduction of Performance Related Pay. It was now recommended that further work be undertaken on this and a report be submitted to the Committee in due course. Members requested that this report should incorporate the



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results of further research into the comparator data used to inform the current report and models for alternative pay structures for principal officers.

**Resolved** to recommend to the Authority:-

- (1) that the salary of the Chief Fire Officer be increased in line with the recommendation set out in the report with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2007;
- (2) that the salary of those Principal Officers in receipt of a salary based upon a percentage of the Chief Fire Officer's salary be increased by an appropriate amount in line with the increase set out in (1) above with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2007;
- (3) that in future the salary level for the Chief Fire Officer be reviewed on a biennial basis utilising data from Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Yorkshire and Strathclyde as the agreed benchmarked comparator group of Fire Authorities;
- (4) that Sandwell MBC's Head of Human Resources be commissioned to prepare a further report on the pay and grading structure for Principal Officers including a review of the comparator data used to inform the current salary increases, models for alternative pay structures and the introduction of performance related pay.

(All Officers affected by the review who were present declared a prejudicial interest in this matter and withdrew from the meeting.)

(Meeting ended at 1.15 pm)

*Contact Officer: Stephnie Hancock  
Democratic Services Unit  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
0121-569-3189*



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