

<p>Minutes of the Executive Committee</p>
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25th July, 2005 at 12 noon
at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Hinton (Chair);
Councillor Hogarth (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Bowen, Eustace, Howard, Idrees and Rogers
(substitute member).

Observers: Councillors Davis, Douglas-Maul, Jackson, Jones, Mulhall,
Ryder, Singh, Tagger and Ward.
Mr Topliss.

Apology: Councillor Lawrence.

50/05 **Supply Chain Modernisation - Progress**

Further to Minute No. 69/04 of the Authority, the Committee was informed of the progress against indicative timescales in relation to the supply chain modernisation process up to the end of March 2005.

Overall the plan was being completed to target. However, because of the staged manner in which the revised supply chain structure was being undertaken, ongoing salary savings were not anticipated to be achieved until 2006/2007.

The restructure of the approved supply chain fully supported the implementation of the Draft National Strategy for Procurement in the Fire and Rescue Service and the West Midlands Regional Procurement Strategy.

51/05 **General Income Write Offs**

Further to Minute No. 42/04 of the Authority, the Committee was informed of general income write offs up to and including £1,000, for the financial quarter ending 30th June, 2005.

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Approval was sought to write off as irrecoverable income of £1,500 arising from the liquidation of a company and award the Treasurer with delegated powers to write off any similar future instances.

Provision had been made in the Authority's accounting arrangements to write off the debts, which totalled £1886.01.

Resolved:-

- (1) that general income items written off as irrecoverable for the financial quarter ending 30th June, 2005 be noted;
- (2) that approval be given to the write off of £1,500 arising from the liquidation of B.I.P.;
- (3) that the Treasurer be given delegated authority to write off as irrecoverable, any future debts relating to bankruptcies and liquidations.

52/05 Statement of Accounts 2004/2005

Members received the Authority's Statements of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 2005.

The Accounts showed net revenue expenditure in 2004/2005 of £108.096 million, including a contribution to earmarked reserves of £2.428 million. General balances had decreased by £0.911million to £3.514 million, which was as anticipated.

Net operating expenditure was £143.5 million and included the Fire Service Pensions deficit which was at £39.2 million. Capital expenditure totalled £4.366 million, of which £3.658 million was financed from borrowing.

The Treasurer also reported that, as a result of underspends in 2004/2005, provision had been made in 2005/2006 for the repayment of transitional funding.

Members questioned the value for money that the Authority received as a result of its membership of the Local Government Association and requested a report on the matter.

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Resolved:-

- (1) that the Authority's Statement of Accounts 2004/2005 be approved;
- (2) that a report be submitted to the a future meeting detailing the benefits received to the Authority as a result of its membership of the Local Government Association.

53/05 **Outcomes Against Action Plan Objectives to 31st March, 2005**

The Committee noted the progress made against the following Action Plan objectives up to the financial year ended 31st March, 2005:-

- Ten year scan and departmental objectives for 2004/2005.
- Directed Action Planning.
- KPMG Annual Audit recommendations.
- KPMG Review of Performance Management at devolved Fire Stations.
- Audit Commission: Verification Study.
- Best Value Reviews of Employment Services and Litigation, ICT, Procurement, Principal Management, Property Management and Financial and Legal Services.

54/05 **Executive Committee Member Visits to Fire Stations**

Members were asked to give consideration to establishing a programme of visits by Executive Committee members to fire stations. The purposed of the visits would be to enhance existing communication processes and strengthen governance practices by ensuring openness and transparency and providing a 'face' of the Authority. It would also contribute to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) targets in terms of leadership.

Members discussed the merits of holding formal meetings on fire stations. It was agreed that a review would be undertaken after the initial visits to look at the feasibility and practicalities of holding meetings on fire stations.

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Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given, in principle, to establishing a programme of visits by Executive Committee members to fire stations;
- (2) that the Chief Fire Officer determine a programme of visits, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority;
- (3) that an evaluation of the effectiveness of the visits, including the feasibility of holding formal meetings on stations, be undertaken in January 2006 and reported to the Executive.

55/05 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 relating to terms proposed for the disposal/acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services and disclosure would be likely to prejudice the Authority.

56/05 Proposed Sale of Land attached to Walsall Fire Station to Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council for Road Widening

Approval was sought to the sale of land to Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) for the purpose of road widening.

As part of a highways improvement scheme, Walsall MBC had included a strip of land fronting Walsall Community Fire Station in the Walsall MBC Brineton Street to Broadway North Highway Compulsory Purchase Order 2003.

A provisional sum had been agreed for compensation. In addition, Walsall MBC had agreed to meet the legal and surveyor's costs incurred by the Authority.

It was noted that the progression of the land purchase was dependent upon Walsall MBC receiving funding from central Government to proceed with the scheme.

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Resolved that approval be given to the sale of land fronting Walsall Community Fire Station to Walsall MBC, for the purpose of road widening.

(Meeting ended at 12.32 pm)

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