

Minutes of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

15th February 2010 at 11.00 am
at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Ward (Chairman);
Councillor S Davis (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Alden, Ali Khan, Andrew, Chambers,
Clinton, G Davies, Delaney, Douglas-Maul,
Eustace, Gazey, Hinton, Idrees, Jones, Mulhall,
O'Neill, F Robinson, , Ryder, Singh, Skinner,
Spence, Stevenson, Sutton Tagger and Turner;
Mr Ager and Mr Topliss.

Apologies: Councillor M Robinson and Mr Denny.

1/10 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- Personnel from the Urban Search and Rescue Team, who had provided humanitarian assistance following the earthquake in Haiti, had attended a reception at Downing Street on 5th February 2010 where they had met the Prime Minister's wife, Sarah Brown. Mrs Brown had acknowledged their support and considerable achievements in helping the people of Haiti.
- The Aspire Awards evening had taken place on 10th February 2010. The event was attended by 500 guests, including business leaders, civic dignitaries and Fire Service staff, who had enjoyed a night of celebration in recognition of the Brigade's achievements and the hard work and dedication of its employees. The crowd was entertained by Julian Smith, a saxophonist who had achieved runner up in Britain's Got Talent, and comedian Tim Clark, who was Master of Ceremonies. The Authority paid tribute to those who had organised the event and the sponsors who had funded it.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th February 2010

2/10 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

3/10 Corporate Strategy

Members noted the progress made in preparing the 2010-2013 Corporate Strategy and the proposed changes to the document.

The Strategy would detail the direction in which the organisation wished to progress and outline the strategic priorities, the high level objectives and broad areas of activity for the forthcoming three year period. It would be underpinned by a number of action plans outlining how it was to be delivered which would be monitored, reviewed and reported upon on a quarterly basis.

As part of the review it was proposed to develop an electronic Strategy with hyperlinks to the various supporting documents, plans and other strategies. This approach would enable the Service to demonstrate more visibly that effective links were in place joining the strategy, delivery plans, corporate risk and performance and would also remove the need to produce a separate Annual Service Plan document. A reduction in the number of paper copies produced would cut costs in line with the Value for Money Strategy and would also meet the aims of the Environmental Strategy.

A public consultation process on the Service's priorities had been undertaken and Members were informed of the priorities and strategy statements that had now been developed as part of the review and the consultation process.

Resolved that the corporate priorities and strategy statements now submitted be approved and used to formulate the Service's Corporate Strategy for the period 2010-2013.

4/10 **Budget and Precept 2010/2011**

The Authority considered a report on the Capital Programme for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13, the prudential indicators relating to the Authority's capital financing requirements, the Treasury Management Strategy, the revenue budget and forward looking efficiency statement for 2010/11, and the consequent precept level and resultant amount payable by each constituent District Council.

The 2010/2013 budget plan would need to be reviewed throughout 2010/2011, not only to ensure that the priorities and objectives for that year were achieved but also to consider which service areas would need to be reduced or stopped from 2011/2012 onwards, given the anticipated funding reductions in that financial year.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Authority's Revenue Budget for 2010/2011 of £119.080m, as now submitted, be approved;
- (2) that the Authority's capital programme for 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, as now submitted, be approved;
- (3) that the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators, as now submitted, be approved;
- (4) that the Authority's Forward Looking 2010/2011 Efficiency Statement, as now submitted, be approved;
- (5) that it be noted that the constituent District Councils have formally set their Council Tax bases for the year 2010/2011 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as follows:-

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th February 2010

	Tax Base
Birmingham	298,709.00
Coventry	88,578.00
Dudley	97,631.53
Sandwell	85,255.70
Solihull	79,518.00
Walsall	78,143.38
Wolverhampton	<u>70,973.60</u>
	<u>798,809.21</u>

- (6) that the following amounts be now calculated by the Authority for the year 2010/2011, in accordance with Sections 43 to 48 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
- (i) £121,863,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 43(2)(a) to (d) of the Act;
 - (ii) £2,783,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 43(3)(a) to (b) of the Act;
 - (iii) £119,080,000 being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 43(4) of the Act as its budget requirement for the year;
 - (iv) £80,813,000 being the aggregate of the sums which the Authority estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of formula grant by the aggregate of the sums which the Authority estimates will be received in the year from the constituent District Councils in respect of amounts they have estimated as the surplus on their collection funds for 2009/2010;

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th February 2010

- (v) £47.83 being the amount at (iii) above less the amount at (iv) above all divided by the total amount at (5) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 44(1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;

(vi)	<u>Valuation Bands</u>	£ (to 6 decimals)	£ (rounded to 2 decimals)
	A	31.887464	31.89
	B	37.202041	37.20
	C	42.516619	42.52
	D	47.831196	47.83
	E	58.460351	58.46
	F	69.089505	69.09
	G	79.718660	79.72
	H	95.662392	95.66

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (v) above by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 47(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (vii) that the following precepts be issued to the seven charging authorities in the West Midlands:-

	£
Birmingham City Council	14,287,609
Coventry City Council	4,236,792
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	4,669,833
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	4,077,882

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th February 2010

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	3,803,441
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	3,737,691
Wolverhampton City Council	<u>3,394,752</u>
Total	<u>38,208,000</u>

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (v) above by the appropriate tax base at (5) above in accordance with section 48(2) of the Act, as the amount of precept payable by each constituent District Council;

- (7) that the precept for each District Council as calculated at (vii) above be issued in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

5/10 **Monitoring of Finances**

The Authority noted a report on the monitoring of finances for the current financial year to December 2009.

6/10 **Annual Audit Letter**

The Authority noted the Audit Commission's findings from the audit of the Authority's financial statements and the results of work undertaken to assess arrangements in place to secure value for money in the use of resources.

The Authority had been given a "Performs Well" rating for its organisational performance in 2008/2009. It was noted that the Authority had performed credibly against a new and more demanding assessment. Members noted a number of key successes. Areas identified for improvement had been included in Departmental and Command Area action plans where appropriate.

7/10 **Property Asset Management Plan**

The Authority received the Property Asset Management Plan. The plan was essential to ensure the efficient and effective use of land and buildings. The plan had been developed with input from all key stakeholders and reflected property related priorities over the next three to five year period.

Resolved that the Property Asset Management Plan, as now submitted, be approved.

8/10 **Proposed Vehicle Replacement Programme 2012/13**

Approval was sought to proceed with the proposed Brigade Vehicle Replacement Programme (VRP) for 2012/2013. Officers from Transport and Engineering Workshops had carried out an annual review of the ongoing Vehicle Replacement Procurement Plan and developed a programme based upon the age profile, use, agreed replacement timeframe and review periods.

It was the intention to procure a range of vehicles identified in the VRP using FiReBuy, Office of Government Commerce (OGC), Fire Service Appliance Consortium (FSAC) and other approved Consortia routes that represented value for money to the Authority.

The Authority noted the projected capital costs and the year in which vehicles were estimated to be delivered. It was also noted that the procurement process for Pump Rescue Ladders was based upon a two year contract with the chosen supplier to provide the benefit of economy of scale. If approved, this would commit a further £1.85m for the following financial year 2013/14.

Members noted that Dennis no longer manufactured emergency response vehicles, however, they would continue to supply spares for a further 10 year period. The chosen new supplier had been based upon cost and firefighter trials and had a number of contracts with other Fire Brigades, providing a solid base for repairs and spares.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th February 2010

Resolved that the proposed Brigade Vehicle Replacement Programme (VRP) for the financial year 2012/13, as now submitted, be approved.

9/10 **Institution of Legal Proceedings**

The Authority noted that, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, legal proceedings had been instituted against Mr Harjinder Aujla, Mr Pal Mann, Mr Chandra Mohan, Mr John Lancaster and the Connaught Hotel (West Midlands) Ltd.

10/10 **Minutes of the Executive Committee**

The minutes of the meetings held on 14th December 2009 and 25th January 2010 were received.

11/10 **Notes of the Policy Planning Forum**

The notes of the meetings held on 27th November and 14th December 2009, 11th January and 25th January 2010 were received.

12/10 **Minutes of the Audit Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2010 were received.

13/10 **Minutes of the Standards Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 14th December 2009 were received.

14/10 **Notes of the Member Development Working Group**

The notes of the meeting held on 9th November 2009 were received.

15/10 **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 the authority holding that information).

16/10 **Planned Procurement Exercises for 2010/2011**

The Authority received details of a number of planned procurement exercises for 2010/2011, including the proposed route to market and funding provisions in accordance with Section 2.11 of Standing Order 1/8.

It was noted that some of the tender exercises had already commenced due to an overlap with the approval of the revised Standing Order 1/8.

Further reports would be submitted to the Executive Committee as and when required or when requested by Members. The Director of Finance and Procurement would be responsible for awarding the contracts, subject to the contract being awarded to the lowest or most economically advantageous tenderer.

Resolved that approval be given to proceed with the following tender exercises for the provision of various works, goods and services to West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority during 2010/2011:-

- (1) Catering Services.
- (2) Gas and Electricity.
- (3) Preventative maintenance and reactive repairs of Heating, Ventilation and Hot Water Systems.
- (4) Stationery, Computer Consumables and Paper.
- (5) Security Guarding.

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority – 15th February 2010

- (6) Printing – stock and non stock.
- (7) Cleaning Consumables and Paper Products.
- (8) Deep Cleaning of Kitchens.
- (9) Refurbishment of Walsall and Solihull Fire Stations.
- (10) End of Life Vehicles.
- (11) Lifting Equipment/Airbags and Controllers.
- (12) Diesel Fuel.
- (13) Heating Oil.
- (14) Thermal Image Cameras.
- (15) Supply and fitting of Tyres.
- (16) Vehicles.
- (17) Smoke Alarms.
- (18) Uniform.
- (19) Personal Protective Equipment (Structural Firefighting Kit).

(Meeting ended at 11.40 am)

*Contact Officer: Stephnie Hancock
Democratic Services Unit
Sandwell MBC
0121-569-3261*