

Minutes of the Executive Committee

5th October 2007, at 11.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters,
Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Howard (Chairman);
Councillor Ward (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors Foster, Gazey (substitute member), Idrees
and Jackson.

Observers: Councillor Turner and Mr Topliss.

Apologies: Councillors S Davis and Hinton.

50/07 Local Government Formula Grant Distribution 2008/09 to 2010/11

The Committee was informed that Communities and Local Government (CLG) had issued a consultation document outlining various options for review of the Local Government Formula Grant Distribution for the three year settlement period 2008/09 to 2010/11. Responses were invited by 10th October, 2007.

The consultation paper contained two main options which could significantly reduce the level of grant received by the Authority. The first was a change to the expenditure base of the Fire and Rescue Relative Need Formula which would move significant resources away from deprived inner city areas to more rural fire authorities. The second was a phasing out of the guaranteed minimum increase in funding per authority, which again could result in a significant reduction in funding for the Authority.

A draft response opposing the proposed changes in funding arrangements was submitted for consideration.

The Committee was informed that the Metropolitan Fire Brigades through their Chief Fire Officers had employed a lobbying organisation to press their case for more generous grant settlements for areas of large population and deprivation.

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Members expressed concern about the effects a reduction in grant would have on the precept and front line services. It was suggested that Authority Members should approach their Members of Parliament on this issue.

Resolved that the proposed response to CLG be approved.

51/07 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 No 52/07 and 54/07 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the authority holding that information].

Minute No 53/07 – information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

52/07 New Fire Service Headquarters – Update Report

The Committee was informed that a contract had now been signed with Watkins Jones Group for the sale of the existing Fire Service Headquarters. The Authority would now lease the premises at a peppercorn rent until December 2008. It was hoped that the new Headquarters would be ready for occupation by August 2008.

It was also proposed to enter into a 15-year lease with Network Rail for the use of four railway arches at the site of the new Headquarters, which would be used for vehicle storage and waste management. Building work was necessary to prepare the arches for use, which would cost in the region of £193,000.

Detailed discussions had taken place with the Authority's Employers Agent and the fit-out consultants, and it was recommended that to improve reliability, overall project quality and reduce time and cost, a

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large part of the mechanical and electrical fit out work be transferred to the main contractor, Ashford Construction plc, for completion. No additional costs would be incurred as a result of this transfer.

The latest financial forecast for the new Headquarters project was submitted.

Resolved:

- (1) that the Clerk be authorised to enter into a 15-year lease with Network Rail in respect of four railway arches at the rear of the new Headquarters site at Vauxhall Road, Nechells, on the terms and conditions now reported;
- (2) that the proposed building work to prepare the railway arches for use, at an estimated cost of £193,000, be approved;
- (3) that the transfer of mechanical and electrical fit out work in the sum of £641,000 to Ashford Construction plc be approved.

53/07 Draft Annual Service Plan 2008/09

The Committee considered the draft Annual Service Plan 2008/09. The Plan set out how the Authority would provide prevention, protection and response services to the community it served and would be subject to a 12-week period of consultation with the public and employees.

Resolved that the draft Annual Service Plan 2008/09 be approved for public consultation.

54/07 Supply, Fitment and Maintenance Services for Tyres 2007/09

Further to Minute No 40/07, the Committee received a report on the analysis of two tenders received for supply, fitment and maintenance services for tyres for the period 2007/09.

The tender submitted by TruckForce fully met the tender specification and was recommended for acceptance, being the lowest tender on four out of six elements, and a competitive price on the remaining two elements.

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Resolved that, subject to:

- (a) the preparation of a formal contract by the Clerk;
- (b) any necessary comments from the Government Departments concerned;

the tender submitted by TruckForce (Goodyear Dunlop) for supply, fitment and maintenance services for tyres for the period 1st December, 2007 to 30th November, 2009, with an option to extend the contract for a further 12 months, be accepted.

(Meeting ended at 11.28 am)

<p style="text-align:center"><i>Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121-569-3791</i></p>
