

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

12th July 2010 at 10.00 am
At Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**
Councillors Alden, Bennett, Chambers, Clinton,
Davies, Docker, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, A Hill, M Hill,
Hinton, Idrees, Jackson, Mulhall, O'Neill, Ryder,
Spence, Tagger, Turner, Walsh and Whitehouse.
Mr Topliss.

Officers: **West Midlands Fire Service**
Chief Fire Officer – V Randeniya.
Deputy Chief Fire Officer - M Clark
A Brandon, M Griffiths and D Johnson.

Clerk to the Authority
S. Phelps and S Hancock.

Apologies: Councillors Foster, Jones and Stevenson.

15/10 **Overview of the Fire Service**

The Chief Fire Officer gave an overview of the Fire Service, for the benefit of new Members.

Members also received a presentation from Faith Education Officer, Adam Harper, on the work being undertaken to target hard to influence communities. Examples included:-

- Engaging with local businesses to place fire safety messages on the packaging of foods regularly purchased by the African-Caribbean and the Asian communities within which certain age groups had been identified as being at a higher risk of domestic fires.
- Placing fire safety messages on small cards with a picture of a Saint worshipped by the travelling community on, which they were unable to dispose of for faith and cultural reasons.

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The Brigade was also in negotiations with a MOBO (Music of Black Origin) award winning record company to produce a record with a fire safety message.

16/10 **Building Upon Success Program (BuS)**

Members received a presentation on the Authority's Building Upon Success (BuS) programme. The programme had been set up to manage the challenges faced by the Authority as a consequence of the national budget deficit and resultant grant reductions from 2011 onwards. It was anticipated that this authority would be hardest hit because a larger proportion of its budget was made up of grant money compared to other authorities.

The BuS programme aimed to maximise efficiency by challenging current practices and looking at new ways of working to achieve maximum value for money.

Trades unions and staff were currently being consulted and the views of the community would also be sought via an online survey. A review of back office processes was already underway and a report on the outcome of the review was anticipated in the Autumn. Other measures which had already been taken included a freeze on recruitment and a review of the Workshops section. New technology was also being explored to support new ways of working, along with opportunities to expand by offering services to other authorities.

It was anticipated that the full implications of the grant reductions for 2011/2012 would be known by December 2010.

Members' views were welcomed to feed into the programme.

17/10 **Announcements**

The Chairman acknowledged the challenges the Authority currently faced and emphasised the importance of engaging staff and unions.

The following announcements were made:-

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- The Schools' Quiz was taking place on 13th July 2010 at Headquarters and all Members were encouraged to attend.
- Congratulations were extended to Stuart Fisher, who had been awarded an MBE in the Birthday Honours for his voluntary work on the Brigade's Road Safety programme.

(Meeting ended at 12.30pm)

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