

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

6th September 2010 at 10.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillors Andrew, Chambers, Clinton, Davies, Delaney, Docker, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Foster, A Hill, Hinton, Idrees, Jackson, Jones, Mulhall, O'Neill, Spence, Stevenson, Tagger, Turner and Whitehouse. Mr Ager and Mr Topliss.

Officers: **West Midlands Fire Service**

Chief Fire Officer – V Randeniya.
Deputy Chief Fire Officer - M Clark
A Brandon, J Brown, M Griffiths and D Johnson.

Clerk to the Authority

S. Phelps, N Sharma and S Hancock.

Apologies: Councillors Alden and Ryder.

18/10 **Announcements**

- The Chief Fire Officer was due to be elected to the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) leadership team at the CFOA annual meeting. He would be President from 2012/13.
- The Audit Commission had been abolished under the new government. A range of options were under consideration for an equivalent body and further updates would be provided to Members in due course.
- Discussions were currently being held with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service about their replacement Fire Control system as the Service was not content with the approach being taken by Shropshire. Further updates would be given on the outcomes of these discussions in due course.
- The Road Traffic Collision Extrication team from Northfield Blue Watch had successfully defended their trophy for the third year running in the Durham and Darlington Regional Challenge. They had completed a clean sweep in all categories available including Best Overall Team, Best Officer in Charge, Best Technical Team and Best Medic.
- Recent comments from departing employees reported in the

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- Halesowen News were currently being investigated.
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer John Brown would be retiring on 19th September 2010. John had been with West Midlands Fire Service and serving the community since he was 18 when he had begun his career with the City of Birmingham Fire and Ambulance Service. He had had a distinguished career spanning more than four decades which had culminated in his appointment as Director Technical and Operational Support. Members thanked John for his valued contribution to West Midlands Fire Service and wished him a long and happy retirement.

19/10 **Building Upon Success (BuS) Programme**

Further to Note No. 16/10 (12th July 2010) Members received an update on the BuS programme.

A number of consultation activities had taken place with employees and representative bodies and the public had also been able to contribute to the programme via public events and a website.

Employees had responded very well to the consultations and over 5,500 suggestions had been received.

A number of scrutiny panels had been set up, comprising Corporate Board members, which would receive presentations on the options available. Government announcements on the budget position were expected in November 2010. The Director Human Resources reported that the Re-organisation, Re-deployment and Redundancy Policy was currently under review to ensure that it remained fit for purpose to rise to future challenges.

Members stressed the importance of continued lobbying of the government and the building industry with regards to the installation of sprinklers in new buildings.

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20/10 Total Place and Place Based Budgets

Further to Note No. 13/10 (17th May 2010) Members' views were sought on the subject of Total Place and Place Based Budgets. Following the change of Government 'Total Place' had now become 'Place Based Budgets', however the principles remained the same and it was anticipated that some form of place based budgets would feature in the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, most likely as pilot programmes.

Members supported the principle of place based budgets but expressed concern that the Authority should maintain control over where its money was spent. It was anticipated that a locally accountable public body would be set up to oversee the funds.

Members would receive further updates in due course.

(Meeting ended at 12.30pm)

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