

Minutes of the Executive Committee

24th January 2011, at 12.30 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Hinton (Chairman);
Councillors Alden, Andrew (substitute member),
Chambers, Clinton, Davies, Douglas-Maul, Foster,
Idrees, Jackson, Jones (substitute member) and
Stevenson.

Apologies: Councillors Eustace (Vice-Chairman) and Ryder.

Observers: Councillors Docker, Singh, Tagger, Turner and Walsh.

5/11 **Urgent Business**

The Chairman was of the opinion that the item referred to in Minute No. 8/11 below should be considered as an urgent item of business under Section 100B of the Local Government Act, 1972 as a response to the consultation was required by 27th January 2011.

6/11 **Consultation with Non-Domestic Ratepayers**

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Committee met to consult with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the setting of the Authority's budget and precept for 2011/2012.

No representatives of non-domestic ratepayers attended the meeting.

7/11 **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 consultations or negotiations, or

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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).

8/11 **Redundancy Payments for Grey and Gold Book Employees**

The Director Human Resources advised the Committee of a consultation being carried out by the employers' side of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services in relation to enhanced redundancy terms for Grey Book and Gold Book employees.

Unlike their local authority counterparts, fire authorities did not have the flexibility to offer enhanced redundancy terms to Grey Book employees (other than Control staff), i.e. in excess of the statutory position. The same was true of employees covered by the Gold Book (Scheme of Conditions of Service for uniformed Brigade Managers). There was no national agreement on the matter.

In previous years fire authorities had largely been able to reduce the numbers of uniformed employees through natural wastage. However, the extent of the current financial position facing fire authorities meant that there was a possibility that the use of natural wastage may be insufficient.

The consultation document asked fire authorities to consider whether it would be appropriate to seek to put in place arrangements that would permit fire authorities to have the flexibility to enhance redundancy payments.

An estimate of the projected costs for individual employees based on the average age and length of service of employees within each Grey and Gold Book role was circulated.

Members noted that, if agreed, the proposal would potentially see a significant increase in the cost of redundancy payments if they chose to apply any discretion and were keen to ensure that they did not commit without seeking further clarification. The Director Human Resources advised that, if given the flexibility to vary redundancy payments, the Authority would be able to define what it thought was appropriate in individual circumstances and that clear criteria would be set.

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Members agreed in principle to the enhancement of redundancy payments for Grey Book employees, subject to no commitment at this stage pending further information and clarity on the proposals. However, the Committee was not minded to agree to the variance of redundancy payments for Gold Book employees.

Resolved:-

- (1) that support be given in principle to the enhancement of redundancy payments for Grey Book employees, subject to no commitment at this stage pending further information and clarity on the proposals;
- (2) that the Authority does not support the principle of enhanced redundancy payments for Gold Book employees.

(Meeting ended at 12.44 pm)

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