

Minutes of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

30th November 2009 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, Idrees, Jones, Mulhall, O'Neill,
F Robinson, M Robinson, Ryder, Singh, Skinner,
Spence, Stevenson, Sutton Tagger and Turner;
Mr Ager and Mr Topliss.

Apologies: Councillor Hinton and Mr Denny.

91/09 **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor O'Neill declared a personal interest in the item referred to in Minute No 102/09 below (Monitoring of Finances) in that he was a member of the Firefighters Pension Scheme. He also declared a general personal interest in that he was an out of trade member of the Fire Brigades' Union.

92/09 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and made reference to the following:-

- The funeral of Firefighter Paul Gibbons of Canley Red Watch, who had been tragically killed earlier in the month. Over 1200 mourners had attended the funeral including Councillor Skinner.
- Members of a team from Northfield Station, who came third in the National Breathing Apparatus Championships, were present. Members congratulated the team.

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- Two members from the Northfield Blue Watch team who had achieved fourth place in their first attempt at the World Trauma Challenge were present. Members congratulated the team.
- A team from the Technical Rescue Unit who had achieved first place in a technical rope rescue contest were present. Members congratulated the team.
- A team of officers were runner up in the finals of the recent Birmingham Road Safety Partnership Team competition. A member of the team was present and Members congratulated the team.
- Liz Richards from the University of Manchester would be undertaking some research with Members, following this meeting, on how they coped with their workload.
- An event to celebrate cultural diversity was being held on 2nd December, 2009, at 7pm at the Second City Suite, Sherlock Street, Birmingham.
- The Brigade's annual Christmas Carol Service was taking place on 6th December, 2009, at 4pm at St Martin's Church, Birmingham.

93/09 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September, 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

94/09 **Members' Allowances – Consideration of Annual Increase 2009/2010**

The Authority considered whether it wished to implement the annual uplift in allowances for 2009/2010 which was provided for in Section 10 of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

The Scheme stated that Members' allowances would be increased annually in line with the agreed national pay awards for Local Government Services. The rates of increase agreed for 2009/2010 were 1.25% for employees on salary spinal column points 4-10 inclusive and 1% for employees on salary spinal column point 11 and above. The Authority noted that Chief Officers had not been awarded a pay increase in

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2009/2010.

The Authority also noted that officers from the West Midlands Pension Fund had advised that Members were not eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme in their capacity as Fire Authority Members and were only eligible to join the scheme within their home authorities.

Resolved:-

- (1) that, given the current financial climate, no increase be applied to Members' allowances in 2009/2010;
- (2) that the Clerk seek further advice and clarification on the eligibility of Fire Authority Members to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

95/09 **Approved Duty – Preparation Meetings for 2012 Olympics**

Approval was sought for the attendance of the Chairman or his nominee at meetings associated with preparations for the 2012 Olympics to be regarded as an approved duty for the purpose of claiming travel and subsistence allowance. It was anticipated that the frequency of these meetings would increase as the event approached.

Attendance at these meetings would be incorporated into the report on representation to outside bodies which would be presented to the annual meeting of the Authority in 2010.

Resolved that attendance of the Chairman or his nominee at meetings associated with preparations for the 2012 Olympics be regarded as an approved duty for the purpose of claiming travel and subsistence allowance.

96/09 **Revision to Procurement Standing Order**

Approval was sought to amend Standing Order 1/8 on Procurement Procedures. In particular, changes were proposed in relation to the procedures for the submission, opening and registration and acceptance of formal tenders, and changes to the financial thresholds for quotations and tenders

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in order to streamline the process.

It would be necessary to amend the Executive Committee's terms of reference to reflect any revisions to the Standing Order.

It was proposed that the new arrangements would be reviewed after six months of operation and a report would be submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to the revised Procurement Procedure Standing Order attached as Appendix 1;
- (2) that approval be given to the revised terms of reference for the Executive Committee attached as Appendix 2; and
- (3) that the new arrangements be reviewed after a six month operation period and a report be submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration.

97/09 Response to Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Consultation Document

Members considered the Authority's draft response to the proposals set out in Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services' (WFRS) Improvement Plan Consultation Document.

WFRS had initiated a formal public consultation process about their proposals, due to end on 8th December 2009, the outcome of which would inform the development of their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2010-2013. The proposals included significant changes to the number of fire stations within the County, including the closure of seven stations within proximity of the West Midlands Fire Authority's boundary area.

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Resolved:-

- (1) that the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to finalise and submit the Authority's formal response to the proposals set out in Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Services' (WFRS) Improvement Plan Consultation Document;
- (2) that the Chief Fire Officer submit a report to the Authority in due course outlining the number of cross border calls attended by West Midlands Fire Service and the associated costs.

98/09 **Transfer of Ownership of New Dimension Assets**

This item was withdrawn from the meeting. The matter would be referred to the Executive Committee on 14th December, 2009, for consideration and approval.

Resolved that the Executive Committee be authorised to make a decision on the Authority's position regarding the transfer of New Dimension Assets at its meeting on 14th December, 2009.

99/09 **Consultation Response – Audit Commission's Proposed Work Programme and Scale of fees for 2010 and Indicative Fee Proposals for 2011/12 and 2012/13**

The Authority noted the outcome of the Audit Commission's recent consultation on its proposed work programme and scale of fees for 2010/2011 and indicative fee proposals for 2012/12 and 2012/13.

100/09 **Sedgley Fire Station Site Options**

Resolved that consideration of this item be deferred for more information on the options available for the Sedgley Fire Station site.

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101/09 Prosecutions for Arson 2002-2008

The Authority noted the number of prosecutions for arson that had been brought before the courts from 2002 to 2008 in which the Brigade's Fire Research and Investigation Section had been involved, and the sentences handed down by the courts.

102/09 Monitoring of Finances

The Authority received a report on the monitoring of finances for the current financial year.

103/09 Institution of Legal Proceedings

The Authority noted that, following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, legal proceedings had been instituted against Mr Liam Anthony Ryan for failure to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974.

10409 Minutes of the Executive Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2009 were received.

105/09 Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

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

106/09 Minutes of the Audit Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2009 were received.

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107/09 **Notes of the Joint Consultative Panel**

The notes of the meeting held on 7th October 2009 were received.

(Meeting ended at 12.20 pm)

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