

Minutes of the Executive Committee

**23rd March, 2015 at 10.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham**

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Idrees (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Aston, Atwal Singh, Davis, Douglas-Maul,
Finnegan, Quinnen and Shackleton.

Apology: Councillor Sealey.

Observers: Councillors Clinton, Collingswood, Hogarth,
Mottram JP, Singh, Skinner, Spence and Tranter;
Mr Ager.

6/15

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Melanie Dudley, Monitoring Officer, Satinder Sahota, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Karen Gowreesunker, Clerk to the Authority, to their first Executive Committee in their new roles.

7/15

Minutes

Resolved that, the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2015, be approved as a correct record.

8/15

Corporate Performance Indicators 2015/16

Further to Fire Authority Minute No. 6/15 (16th February, 2015) (The Plan 2015-18), the Committee received a report on the corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) and targets for 2015-16 and on the new tolerance based approach to performance measurements and reporting.

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The Service had reviewed its rolling three year corporate strategy - The Plan 2015-18 and as part of the planning process had re-aligned the corporate PIs. The rationale for this was to enable corporate PIs to be better aligned and more appropriately balanced and meaningful to reporting performance against the priorities, objectives and outcomes set out in The Plan. It was proposed that the Service measured its performance against 25 corporate PI's in 2015-16 as opposed to the 31 currently in place.

PI1 Risk based attendance standard had been moved to the head of the list as the five minute time response to Category 1 incidents underpinned the Service Delivery Model and was scrutinised the most. As part of the Service's commitment to continuous improvement, senior officers had rationalised PIs 2-6 Prevention, PI14 Protection and People PIs.

In terms of PI measurement a red, amber green rating system would no longer be utilised as the PIs would now be measured using a tolerance based methodology. A tolerance based methodology and approach would enable transparent, focused and quality performance discussions around perceived areas of exceptional or under performance. Generally, but not exclusively, this would allow for a + or -5% in forecast performance as it was normal for performance to vary slightly at any given time rather than be on target. A graphical example was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It showed that performance within the green band would be on target and within tolerance levels. Performance in the upper red quartile would be off target or under performance and any performance in the lower blue quarter would be off target but over performing.

Councillor Tranter had met with officers on 24 February and confirmed his satisfaction with the tolerance based approach to PI measurement and reporting.

The Chief Fire Officer thanked the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Tranter, for his involvement and support with the tolerance based approach to PIs and through his involvement in the Quarterly Performance Review meetings.

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Members welcomed the proposed changes but asked that the columns in Appendix 2 to the report should either be shown as percentages or numbers as it would be difficult to compare like with like. Positive feedback regarding the display of information through Infographic (picture) means had been received from the members of the Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the new tolerance based methodology to interpreting, measuring and reporting performance against the corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) be endorsed;
- (2) that the rationalisation and re-numbering of corporate PIs 2015-16 be approved;
- (3) that the corporate PIs and targets for 2015-16 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved;
- (4) that the ongoing work to synchronise the corporate performance reporting frameworks to enable more effective and influential performance management and reporting be endorsed.

9/15

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 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

10/15

Purchase of Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Further to Authority Minute No. 60/14 (22 September, 2014) (Revision to Procedural Standing Orders), the Committee received a report on a tender exercise and award of a contract for the supply of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms for all English Fire and Rescue Authorities.

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New regulations which required private sector landlords to install smoke alarms on each storey of their property and carbon monoxide alarms (CO) in high risk rooms were to come into force in October 2015. To help private landlords with the transition to compliance, the Government was providing funding to Fire and Rescue Services for the procurement of smoke and CO alarms to be issued to private landlords seeking to comply with the new regulations.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had provided funding to West Midlands Fire Service for the purchase of up to 400,000 smoke alarms and 40,000 CO alarms to be distributed to all English Fire and Rescue Authorities. The proposed purchase was carried out through a mini-competition under the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation Framework Agreement.

Grant funding of £2.9m was being provided to assist with the purchase. A mini tendering competition had taken place and the Committee was therefore requested to endorse the tender exercise and award of a contract although no order had yet been placed.

Because the proposed procurement was outside normal circumstances, liaison had taken place with the External Auditors to ensure the proposed arrangements could proceed. It was noted that the goods would not be physically received prior to payment and members' attention was drawn to the Authority's Financial Regulations, in particular Section 4 (ordering and paying for work, goods and services) and Section 5 (external funding).

The Fire Minister had announced the new regulations for private landlords at the Local Government Association Fire Conference on 10th March 2015. A lot of work had been undertaken to ensure 400,000 smoke alarms could be procured by 31st March 2015. It was noted that some of the alarms were already in transit to the Service and that Devon and Somerset Fire Service were acquiring smoke alarms for four Brigades.

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The Chief Fire Officer wished to thank the Procurement Team, in particular Amanda Beesley and Jacky Perkins, for their speed of action and intense work in respect of the procurement.

In response to their enquiries members were advised that:-

- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service was preparing a national press release on the initiative and the Chief Fire Officer agreed to provide members with a form of words to be used in social media later that day. The Press Release would also be circulated to members.
- the Brigade would continue to carry out Home Fire Safety Checks focussing on vulnerable people and would be commissioned to fit smoke detectors and to spread the fire safety message.
- Housing Associations were precluded and the regulation applied to private landlords. The Chair confirmed that the form of words being provided to members would make this clear. The Chief Fire Officer reaffirmed that alarms were fitted free of charge for vulnerable people.
- the specification for the smoke alarms included a battery with a ten year life as a minimum requirement.

The Strategic Enabler, Finance and Resources stated that following the mini-competition, more CO alarms would be purchased than originally estimated due to the competitive prices being achieved.

Resolved that the tender exercise for the supply of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms be endorsed and the award of a contract approved.

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(The meeting ended at 10.35 am)

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