

Minutes of the Executive Committee

12th November 2007, at 9.30am
at Fire Service Headquarters,
Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Howard (Chairman);
Councillor Ward (Vice-Chairman);
Councillors S Davis, Foster, Hinton, Idrees and Jackson.

Observers: Councillor Mulhall and Mr Topliss.

59/07 Warehouse Fire in Atherstone-on-Stour, Warwickshire

The Committee stood in silent tribute in memory of the four fire fighters who had tragically lost their lives in the recent warehouse fire in Atherstone-on-Stour in Warwickshire.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFRS) had assisted in the early stages of the incident and its Urban Search and Rescue Team had discovered the bodies of the missing fire fighters. The Service would be providing support on the civic and ceremonial aspects of the four funerals.

A number of fundraising events were taking place across the Authority to support the families of the fire fighters who had lost their lives.

WMFRS was also providing the lead on the fire investigation, supported by Hereford and Worcester FRS, and continued to work closely with Warwickshire FRS and Police on the criminal investigation. Support was also being provided in terms of fire control, standby cover and Chief Fire Officer cover.

Resolved that the Chief Fire Officer write to Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRA) to express the Authority's sincere condolences.

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60/07 **Best Value Performance Indicators – Data for 2007/2008 to 30th September 2007**

The Committee noted the data against Best Value Performance Indicators, set out in the Authority's Operational Annual Report up to and including 30th September 2007.

61/07 **Analysis of Progress Towards Key Objectives – Second Quarterly Report 2007/2008**

The Committee noted the progress made towards achieving key objectives from Departmental Action Plans from July to September 2007.

62/07 **Commercial and Industrial Training Unit (CITU) Staffing**

Approval was sought to vary the establishment of the CITU. The Committee was informed that a number of key personnel would be retiring during 2007/2008 and so the staffing of the unit had been reviewed.

An assessment of the posts of the retiring personnel had concluded that the posts did not require previous fire service operational and command experience.

The overall costs of the proposed changes would require an income increase of approximately £26,000 per annum, which could be generated by the increasing demand for training.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to disestablish two Watch Manager A posts;
- (2) that approval be given to establish two non-uniformed trainer posts as replacements for the disestablished Watch Manager A posts referred to in (1) above;
- (3) that approval be given to the establishment of a non-uniformed section head for the Commercial and Industrial Training Unit to be funded by a combination of salary savings arising out of (1) and (2) above, together with an

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increase in CITU income, allowing the existing uniformed section head post to be moved to support the increased requirements for Command Training.

63/07 **Establishment of Independent Remuneration Panel to Conduct a Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme**

The Clerk reported that the current Members' Allowances Scheme was due for review and requested approval to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to conduct the review.

A new scheme would be implemented on 1st April 2008.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Clerk establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to conduct a review of the current Members' Allowances Scheme;
- (2) that the Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to submit a report on its findings to the Policy Planning Forum on 3rd March 2008.

64/07 **Request by Victim Support West Midlands for Lease of Additional Flat at Erdington Fire Station**

Approval was sought to lease flat No. 8 at Erdington Fire Station to Victim Support West Midlands (VSWM) for a period of 13 months. VSWM was a charitable organisation providing support to victims of crime on a referral basis from the Police. The Authority's 'After the Fire' service was based upon the same concept and had been set up with their assistance.

The Authority already had an arrangement with VSWM for the lease of flat No. 9 at Erdington Fire Station and arrangements had been working well for both parties for a number of years. It was therefore proposed that an additional lease be entered into with VSWM to enable them to rent flat 8 for a period for 13 months, at a cost of £2,000 per annum. The lease on both flats would be due to end on 13th January 2009.

It was proposed that the new lease would be excluded from Sections 24 to 28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act, 1954 to enable the Authority to obtain vacant possession upon the expiry of the lease.

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Members noted that there were no other plans for the use of the flat and granting the additional lease would enable the Brigade improved access to vulnerable members of the community and enable fire safety campaigns to be focussed at those more at risk of fire.

Members also noted that neither flat had sufficient disabled access and a reasonableness assessment had been undertaken in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 in consultation with the Access Advisor for Birmingham Disability Resource Centre. The assessment had concluded that VSWM had made reasonable adjustments to enable disabled access. Advice from Sandwell Council's Disability Access Officer concurred with this.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to enter into an agreement with Victim Support West Midlands for the lease of flat No. 8 at Erdington Fire Station for a period of 13 months (until 13th January 2009) at a cost of £2,000 per annum;
- (2) that the lease be excluded from the provisions of Section 24 to 28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act, 1954 to enable the Authority to obtain vacant possession at the expiry of the lease.

65/07 Road Casualty Reduction External Funding

Approval was sought to accept external funding from the West Midlands Road Safety Group to support the development of a Road Casualty Reduction Roadshow.

Initial funding of £35,000 would support the purchase of a vehicle and equipment for the roadshow. A further three years annual funding of £15,000 would cover the cost of a driver. The Authority would then contribute to the maintenance and servicing of the vehicle and the storage costs, which would be met from existing budgets.

Resolved that approval be given to accept external funding of £35,000, plus a further three years annual funding of £15,000 from the West Midlands Road Safety Group to support the development of a Road Casualty Reduction Roadshow.

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66/07 **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 for the following reasons:

Minutes No 67/07, 68/07 and 69/07 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person [including the authority holding that information].

67/07 **Command and Control System and Integrated Risk Management Plan Delivery**

With reference to Minutes Nos. 33/07 (9th July, 2007) and 49/07 (10th September, 2007) the Committee received a further report setting out the business case for the purchase of a replacement command and control system and seeking to proceed with the purchase.

The tenders opened on 10th September, 2007 had been evaluated and it was recommended that the contract for the purchase of the new system be awarded to Fortek at a cost of £427,000. The annual cost of service support was £41,000. The cost of the replacement system would be accommodated within existing budgets.

Resolved that approval be given for the purchase of a replacement command and control system from Fortek at cost of £427,000 plus annual support service charges of £41,000.

68/07 **Tender Returns for Construction of a Technical Rescue Station**

Further to Minute No. 26/07 (11th June 2007) the Committee noted that, following evaluation, the prices of the two lowest tenders had been amended due to arithmetical errors. Approval was sought to re-affirm the Committee's decision to award the contract to Chase Norton Construction Ltd at a revised cost of £802,262.

The estimated cost of the works was £900,000.

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Resolved that the Committee's decision of 11th June 2007 (Minute No. 26/07 refers) be re-affirmed and the contract for the construction of a technical rescue station be awarded to Chase Norton Construction Ltd at a cost of £802,262.

69/07 **Tenders for Structured Wiring for New Fire Service Headquarters**

The Committee opened six tenders received for the above works in the undermentioned amounts:-

£155,249.20
£160,857.17
£204,810.90
£219,646.26
£230,369.00
£276,784.76

The estimated cost of the works was £170,000.

Resolved that subject to:-

- (a) the checking of the tender;
- (b) the preparation of a formal contract by the Clerk;
- (c) any necessary comments from the Government Departments concerned;

the tender submitted by Workspace Technology in the sum of £155,249.20, being the lowest received, be accepted.

(Meeting ended at 10.45am)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Contact Officer: Stephnie Hancock Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121-569-3189</i></p>
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