

<p>Notes of the Policy Planning Forum</p>
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13th November, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.
at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillors Alden, Birbeck, Bowen, S Davis,
Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Gazey, Hinton, Hogarth,
Howard, Hussain, Idrees, Jackson, Jones, Pitt,
Ross, Singh, Spence, Stevenson, Tagger and
Ward;
Mr Topliss.

Officers: **West Midlands Fire Service**

Chief Fire Officer – F Sheehan;
Deputy Chief Fire Officer – V Randeniya;
Assistant Chief Officers – A Brandon, J Brown,
R Hulland M Clark and D Twedde;
M Griffiths;
A Newis and A Rotchell.

Clerk to the Authority

N Sharma, S Phelps and G Wythes.

Treasurer to the Authority

L Bateman.

Apologies: Councillor Foster, Mulhall, Rogers and Ryder.

24/06 **Introductions and Announcements**

The Chief Fire Officer referred to press coverage relating to the public consultation currently being undertaken with regard to the Integrated Risk Management Plan Annual Service Plan 2007/08.

He reported that the service had recently attended two major fires; one in a nightclub where a large number of people had been successfully evacuated; and one in a school. Members again referred to the damage that could have been avoided if sprinkler systems had been fitted, and this issue would be raised at the Parliamentary visit to be

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held on 15th November, 2006.

The West Midlands Fire Service had also been represented at a number of Remembrance Day Parades held over the previous weekend.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that tenders for the design and build of the new Fire Service Headquarters had been received, and that the Executive Committee would be considering a report on this matter on 27th November, 2006.

He also indicated that the Leader of the Conservative Group on the London Fire Authority had visited the Authority and had been brought up to date on current initiatives and developments.

He also reported that the Fire Services Minister, Angela Smith MP, would be visiting the region on 14th November, 2006, looking at progress on the construction of the Regional Control Centre and attending a meeting of the West Midlands Regional Management Board Programme Board.

25/06 Firelink

Members received a presentation on the current position with regard to the development of the national FireLink project and the practical and financial implications for this Authority.

The project would provide new digital voice and data transmission equipment to fire and rescue authorities on a phased basis, eventually linking into the new Regional Fire Control Centres.

The resource implications for the Authority in terms of due diligence, training and convergence of systems were outlined but the financial position was still subject to clarification.

Members were concerned that as this was a national project, the Authority's costs should be kept to a minimum, and asked for assurances from the national project team with regard to the safety of the radio equipment proposed to be installed.

26/06 Headquarters Building

Members were informed that the existing Headquarters building had now been designated a Grade 2 Listed Building. In order to obtain best value from the sale of the building, some design work had been

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carried out as part of the marketing strategy for the building and negotiations were in hand with regard to planning permission for the development of the site. Discussions were taking place with potential developers with a view to concluding the disposal of the building during 2007.

(Meeting ended at 12.50 pm)

<p><i>Contact Officer: Georgina Wythes Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121 569 3791</i></p>
