

Notes of the Policy Planning Forum

15th December, 2008, at 10.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: **Members of the Authority**

Councillors Alden, Douglas-Maul, Eustace, Gazey, Hinton, Howard, Idrees, Jones, Mulhall, Robinson, S Davis, Singh, Skinner, Spence, Stevenson, Tagger and Ward.
Mr Ager, Mr Bagley, Mr Denny and Mr Topliss.

Officers: **West Midlands Fire Service**

Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer – M Clark;
Assistant Chief Officers – A Brandon, J Brown and D Tweddle;
Head of Finance and Procurement – M Griffiths;
Head of Human Resources – D Johnson;
B Deeks.

Clerk to the Authority

N Sharma, S Phelps, G Wythes and A Sahota.

Treasurer to the Authority

L Bateman.

Apologies: Councillors Chambers, Clinton, G Davies, O'Neil, Ryder, Turner and Tweddle.

28/08 **Acting Chief Fire Officer's Announcements**

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer welcomed Members to the meeting.

He referred with sadness to the recent death of firefighter Brian Dean, who had died on 3rd December, 2008.

Members and officers stood in silent tribute.

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He also reported on the success of the Fire Service Band performance in Sutton Coldfield on 6th December, 2008 and how well the band had developed over the years. The band had had 37 engagements over the year.

He referred to the assistance given by the Technical Rescue Unit in the recent serious road traffic incident on the M6 and during the recent floods in the region.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer also made reference to the recent Parliamentary visit on 10th December, 2008 and the interest shown by Members of Parliament in inspecting the Brigades technical rescue equipment.

29/08 Budget and Precept 2009 – 2010

Members received a presentation from the Treasurer with regard to the likely precept for 2009/2010 and the following two financial years, based on a forecast of the next three years' revenue and capital budgets and the likely three year financial settlement from the Government.

A number of national issues might also impact on budget setting over the next three years but the funding implications were not clear at this point: New Dimension funding; Regional Fire Control; Fire Link; firefighter and command training; and Community Safety initiatives.

Budget preparation work was continuing and further reports would be made to the Policy Planning Forum on 26th January, 2009 and the Authority on 9th February, 2009.

Members endorsed the proposed precept increase of 2.5% for the purpose of further development of the budget proposals.

30/08 Fire Safety in the Home

Members received a presentation from the Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer on the progress made with Home Fire Safety Checks within the communities of the West Midlands.

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Members were informed that since the Homes Fire Safety Checks were introduced in 2006, the process had become a lot more effective and less time consuming due to electronic data entry and the introduction of a Contact Centre in Headquarters to manage appointments.

The Mosaic System was being used to identify high risk localities and communities which were given priority for Home Fire Safety Checks.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Brigade had Community Advocates whose role was to engage with the community in an attempt to reach targeted groups.

Members were also informed that there had been a 20% reduction in accidental dwelling fires and a 30% reduction in accidental dwelling injuries from 2004/05 to 2007/08.

(Meeting ended at 11.49 am)

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