

## **Minutes of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**

**3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2007, at 11.00 am**  
**at the Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham**

**Present:** Councillor Howard (Chairman);  
Councillor Ward (Vice-Chairman);  
Councillors Alden, Ali Khan, Birbeck, Bowen,  
G Davies, S Davis, Delaney, Douglas-Maul,  
Eustace, Foster, Gazey, Hussain, Idrees,  
Jackson, Mulhall, Ryder, Singh, Spence,  
Stevenson, Tagger, Turner, Wild and Wilkes;  
Messrs Bagley and Topliss.

**Apology:** Councillor Hinton.

### **60/07 Chair's Announcements**

The Chairman referred to the tragic deaths of four firefighters in a warehouse fire at Atherstone-on-Stour. Members stood in silent tribute in their memory.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that he had sent letters of condolence on behalf of the Authority and the Fire Service to the Chair and Chief Fire Officer of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). He also outlined the assistance and support that had been given by the West Midlands Fire Service: by Urban Search and Rescue in the retrieval of the bodies of the firefighters; fire investigation resources; advice and resources in respect of the funerals; officer and appliance cover during the fire and the funerals; and media and web site support. This support had been much appreciated by the Warwickshire FRS.

The Chief Fire Officer would also be looking at the lessons to be learned from the incident. Firefighter training and guidance had already been reviewed and affirmed and staff informed through routine notices and via the internet.

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A remembrance service for the four firefighters was to be organised in February, 2008.

The Chairman reported that he had attended a concert given by the West Midlands Fire Service Concert Band at the Sutton Coldfield Town Hall on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2007. He thanked those Members who had also attended.

He reminded Members that the annual visit to Westminster to meet West Midlands Members of Parliament was to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2007.

### 61/07 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 62/07 **Crown Premises Inspection – Fire Safety**

The Authority was informed that Article 28 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 allowed Crown Inspectors to utilise the services of fire officers in undertaking inspection of Crown premises.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the Chief Fire Officers' Association had been approached by the Crown Premises Inspection Group (CPIG) regarding the feasibility of transferring the fire safety data and inspection responsibility for lower risk category premises to local fire and rescue services. It had been agreed that this arrangement should be trialled by the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service (WMFS).

Written authorisation had been received from the CPIG giving WMFS fire safety inspectors powers of inspection in Crown property. Before inspection could take place, consent to accept this authorisation had to be given by the Authority in accordance with Article 28 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2005.

Members asked for clarification of the statement in the report

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that there were no direct financial implications arising from the proposals. The Chief Fire Officer indicated that this work was not anticipated to be resource-intensive and confirmed that the costs could be met within the existing budget. He undertook to report back on the outcome of the trial.

**Resolved** that the Authority consents to its fire safety inspectors undertaking fire safety inspections under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 on behalf of the Crown Property Inspection Group.

63/07 **Monitoring of Finances**

The Authority received a report on the monitoring of finances for the current financial year to October 2007.

64/07 **Revision to Procurement Procedure Standing Order**

The Authority considered a revised Procurement Procedure Standing Order which included a streamlined process for the opening of tenders. It was proposed that in future, tenders be opened by the Clerk, or an officer designated by her, in the presence of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Authority, and the Head of Finance and Procurement and the Chief Fire Officer, or officers designated by them. Following the tender opening, the completed tender schedule would be submitted to the next available meeting of the Executive Committee for a decision to be made on the tenders received.

It was also proposed to dispense with the requirement for the Executive Committee to be present at the opening of electronic tenders.

The opportunity had also been taken to introduce a statement on strategy.

**Resolved** that the revised Procurement Procedure Standing Order 1/8 set out as Appendix 1 hereto be approved.

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**65/07     Institution of Legal Proceedings**

The Authority was informed that, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, legal proceedings had been instituted in respect of 289 Icknield Port Road, Ladywood, Birmingham, for failure to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2007.

It was noted that this was a house in multiple occupation where the failure to comply had been detected through a home fire safety check. The Fire Service worked closely with housing authorities with a view to identifying houses in multiple occupation, but not all such premises were appropriately registered, although they were a high risk in terms of fire safety. The Borough Commander for Coventry was shortly to give a presentation to City councillors on fire safety and the control of arson, and it was suggested that this could be offered to other constituent Councils with a view to promoting a fire safety message to all residents.

**66/07     West Midlands Regional Management Board – Annual Report 2006/07**

The Authority noted the Annual Report of the West Midlands Regional Management Board for 2006/07,

**67/07     Minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2007 were submitted.

**Resolved** that the acts, proceedings and recommendations of the West Midlands Regional Management Board, as set out in the minutes, be approved and adopted.

**68/07     Minutes of the Executive Committee**

The minutes of the meetings held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October, and 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 were received.

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69/07    **Notes of the Policy Planning Forum**

The notes of the meetings held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2007, were received.

An enquiry was made about when it was proposed to deliver training for Members on equality and diversity. The Lead Member for Equality and Diversity indicated that considerable progress had been made in this area, and that the Equality and Diversity Team had been nominated for an award for their work. Confirmation was given that equality impact assessments were carried out where necessary and that any training would cover this aspect.

A training session would be organised for Members in the near future.

(Meeting ended at 11.44 am)

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