



# Minutes

## Executive Committee

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Date: 02 September 2013

Time: 9.45 am

Venue: Fire Service Headquarters, Birkenshaw

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Present: Councillor M Khan (Chair), T Austin, P Harrand, J Hughes and C Townsley

In Attendance: None

Apologies: None

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### **8 Minutes**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of a meeting held on 31 July 2013 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **9 Urgent Items**

None.

### **10 Admission of the public**

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press. The press and public were excluded, however, during a legal issues briefing by the Director of Corporate Resources immediately following the resolution at agenda item E5.

### **11 Declarations of interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

## **12 Industrial action – contingency planning arrangements**

Consideration was given to a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive and the Director of Strategic Development which sought endorsement of the contingency planning arrangements and related proposals in the event of strike action undertaken by members of the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU).

Members were advised that the outcome of the strike ballot had been announced on 29 August 2013 with 78% of voting FBU members in favour of taking industrial action in respect of matters relating to pension reforms. No decision had yet been communicated by the FBU about the type and extent of action to be taken. Any action, however, had to be commenced within 28 days of the ballot result.

Initial steps had been taken to train Community Response Operatives (CRO's) as reported to the 31 July 2013 meeting of the Executive Committee. Further planning and review had been undertaken to enable the Fire Authority to fulfil its statutory duties in respect of fire-fighting and Industrial action business continuity plans had been developed for staff shortages and other significant events which would have the potential to impact on service delivery.

It was reported that the anticipation was that the receipt of emergency calls and despatch of resources would remain largely unaffected and a wide range of community safety activities would continue to be delivered by non-operational staff. It was, however, acknowledged that the service to be provided under the contingency arrangements would not be as effective as the normal service and industrial action on a major scale would inevitably have an impact on public safety.

Members were advised that, in addition to the contingency planning that had been undertaken it was recognised that, in the event of the Authority being unable to implement a plan which delivered the lowest level of appropriate service in extreme and unavoidable circumstances, it may be necessary to seek additional assistance in the form of military support provided by Government. A copy of the relevant impact analysis had been attached to the report now submitted.

In addition to the service delivery aspects of the business continuity planning, a comprehensive Communications Strategy had been developed for internal and external communications which included open dialogue facilities for all Watches and the inclusion of a range of initiatives to deliver fire safety messages and raise awareness during the dispute.

The cost of equipping and training the CRO's and drivers was estimated to be in the region of £60,000 which would be met from within contingencies and any additional costs in terms of turnout fees during any action would be met from the resulting savings in salary costs. It was further reported that in the event of use being made of military support, the Authority would be liable for the full costs which may be in excess of any salary cost savings.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That endorsement be given to the planning arrangements developed in respect of industrial action undertaken by members of the FBU; and
- (ii) That approval be given for the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to submit a request to the Secretary of State requesting military support should he deem this necessary.

[The Committee went into confidential session in accordance with Paragraph 5 (Legal privilege) of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972 to receive a briefing from the Director of Corporate Resources.]

Chair