
Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

18th February, 2009

Report of
Cllr Kevin Foster

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 At their meeting on 10th May, 2005, the Cabinet approved a process of reporting back to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the work of those outside bodies appointed to by the City Council. This reports sets out details of the work of West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Co-Ordination Committee note the vital role of the Fire Service in providing both responsive Emergency Services and preventative Fire Safety advice to the Citizens of Coventry.
- 2.2 Note that the three representatives of the city on the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority must be elected members and therefore recommend that members should continue to be appointed.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 The key duty of the Fire Service is to provide emergency cover and to ensure that the level of deaths and injury from fire across the West Midlands are reduced with an ultimate target of zero accidental deaths.
- 3.2 The City of Coventry has four Fire Stations (Binley, Canley, Coventry & Foleshill) that house 7 fire appliances and 1 aerial ladder. Fire Control is located at the new HQ in Birmingham and has at its disposal a fleet of Fire Appliances available to the Brigade. In the event of a major incident within the city fire control can call on these resources, as well as specialist units to assist. There are reciprocal arrangements for cover with neighbouring authorities and a strong link with Warwickshire Fire Service has been formed. In total the Brigade employs 1,886 full-time uniformed staff, 68 control room staff and 564 non-uniformed staff.

- 3.3 The West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority is a joint board set up by the 7 industrial authorities including Coventry in the West Midlands. Coventry City Council has three representatives on the Board, Councillor Gazey, lead member, and Councillors Skinner and Mulhall.
- 3.4 The Fire Authority is a major arm of Local Government as required by law. It is well organised and praised by the Government, its two previous Chief Fire Officers being appointed as Chief Fire Officers to the Government.
- 3.5 The Fire Authority works directly with DCLG and the Home Office as necessary. Currently a programme of modernisation of local fire stations is underway.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 The Fire Authority is one of the Councils key partners in a range of services and a key part of the response to any civil emergency within the city. As members of the Authority the city's three representatives play a key role in shaping policy and are able to influence the services that are provided to our citizens.
- 4.2 The Fire Authority is funded by Local Authority precept and government grant.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 5.1 Coventry City Council's representatives on the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority are Councillors Gazey, Skinner and Mulhall. Since May 2008 until the present time two meetings of the Authority were held and Councillors Gazey and Mulhall attended both with Councillor Skinner attending one. Also within this time seven meetings of the Policy Planning Forum were held with Councillor Gazey attending all seven, Councillor Mulhall four and Councillor Skinner six.
- 5.2 Members of the Authority receive a £3,500 basic allowance per annum.

List of background papers

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 Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies