

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

19 September 2008

Present:-

Councillors B. Hughes (Chair), Healey and Mrs. Nicholson (vice Gordon)(Devon & Somerset), Roberts and Walker (Avon), Fox OBE DL (Dorset), Windsor-Clive (Gloucestershire) and Wren (vice Willmott)(Wiltshire & Swindon).

Apologies:-

Councillors Gordon (Devon & Somerset), Willmott (Wiltshire & Swindon) and Yeo (Cornwall).

RMB/15. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2008 be signed as a correct record.

RMB/16. Date of Next Board Meeting

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972).

The Chairman determined that this should be considered as a matter of urgency to enable an issue that had arisen post-despatch of the agenda for this meeting, but which directly affected the date of the next meeting, to be determined at the earliest possible juncture.

The Clerk reported on receipt of a request from the Chief Executive of South West Fire Control Ltd. (the Local Authority Controlled Company [LACC] with governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre [RCC] that the Board consider changing the date of its next scheduled meeting from 10 to 7 November 2008 to align this with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company. Both meetings could then be held at Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters thereby maximising the opportunity of non-Director Board Members to attend the AGM.

RESOLVED that the next scheduled meeting of the Board be changed from Monday 10 to Friday 7 November 2008, to commence at 10.00hours in Somerset House, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters.

RMB/17. Declarations of Interest

Board Members were invited to consider items to be discussed as part of this meeting and declare any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** they might have in any item(s) in accordance with their respective appointing Authority's approved Code of Conduct.

At this stage Cllr. Windsor-Clive declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in relation to the items on the FiReControl Project, and in relation to the workstreams highlight report and proposed revisions to the regional Business Plan – in so far as these related to the FiReControl project - by virtue of his being a local-authority appointed Director on South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) established to exercise governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC).

Although not declared at this Stage, Councillor Fox OBE DL subsequently declared (at the commencement of debate on the first item discussed) a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in relation to workstreams highlight report and the revisions to the regional Business Plan by virtue of his being a local authority appointed Member on the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP).

(SEE ALSO MINUTES RMB/18 TO 22 BELOW).

RMB/18. The FiReControl Business Case Part 1 – Response to the Department for Communities and Local Government

(NOTE:- Cllr. Windsor-Clive declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item by virtue of his being a local-authority appointed Director on South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) established to exercise governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC).)

The Chair reported receipt of a request from Mr. John Drake (Regional Fire Brigades Union [FBU]) to address the Board on the issue of the FiReControl Project. The Chair invited Mr. Drake to so address the Board in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 17.1.

The Regional FBU Representative emphasised to the Board the nature and significance of this project. The FBU had grave concerns over the project and had commissioned from the IPF – the commercial arm of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - an independent assessment of Part 1 of the FiReControl Business Case, copies of which were circulated to Board Members of this meeting.

The Board thanked the FBU for its presentation.

The Board went on to consider a report of the Regional Director (Clive Kemp)(RMB/08/18) on publication by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) of the Part 1 Business Case for the FiReControl project. Although not a formal consultation as such, CLG had nonetheless invited interested parties to comment on the Business Case by 30 September 2008 and appended to the report was a proposed draft response on behalf of the Board.

The report identified, amongst other things:-

- the legal and financial implications of the project;
- indicative additional costs for the region, based upon regional data and assumptions, when compared to figures contained in the Business Case;
- concerns over the financial implications for individual fire and rescue authorities of maintaining, both at local service level and at Regional Control level, up-to-date data sets necessary to enable effective and efficient running of the new system.

The draft response highlighted the latter two bullet points; proposed solutions for consideration by CLG and aimed at securing the previously predicted savings both regionally and for individual fire and rescue services in the move to and operation of the new system; and also highlighted the governance structure in the South West vis-à-vis the responsibilities of both the Board and its individual fire and rescue authorities.

The Chair then invited, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 17.1, Cllr. Jim Mochnacz (Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority appointed Director on the LACC) to address the Board on the regional briefing on the Business Case held at the Regional Control Centre on Monday 15 September 2008.

Cllr. Mochnacz expressed disappointment at the poor attendance at the briefing and stressed the importance of the project for individual fire and rescue services and of the need for all Members to ensure that they were appropriately briefed. Cllr. Mochnacz referred to his experience with the police Airwave project and commented that, amongst other things, it was important for the fire and rescue service to seek to ensure at the outset that there would be no electromagnetic compatibility issues between the new system and existing equipment (an issue the police had subsequently had to face and which had resulted in additional expenditure). Cllr. Mochnacz also cautioned of the effect on retention of skilled staff of delays in the project and of the need for individual authorities to carefully assess the potential budgetary impact of migrating to the new system.

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to the amendment as indicated at the meeting (rewording of the second sentence of section (c) [resilience payment] (i)), the draft response to the FiReControl Part 1 Business Case as appended to report RMB/08/18 be approved;
- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

(SEE ALSO MINUTES RMB/17 ABOVE AND 19 BELOW).

RMB/19. Cost Apportionment – CLG Consultation

(NOTE:- Cllr. Windsor-Clive declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item by virtue of his being a local-authority appointed Director on South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) established to exercise governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC).)

The Treasurer to the Board reported on Circular 41/2008, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in August and setting out CLG's preferred option (by Council Tax base) for apportioning FiReControl shared costs amongst the regions of England. CLG was seeking the views of all regions, via Regional Management Boards, to this by 31 October 2008. A copy of the Circular, together with a draft response, had been circulated to the Board with the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED that, subject to amendment of the final two paragraphs to ensure consistency with the approved response to the FiReControl Part 1 Business Case, the draft response to the CLG consultation on cost apportionment as included with the agenda for the meeting be approved and the Treasurer authorised to respond accordingly.

(SEE ALSO MINUTES RMB/17 AND 18 ABOVE).

RMB/20.

South West Fire Control Ltd. - Performance Standards for the South West Regional Control Centre

(**NOTE:-** Cllr. Windsor-Clive declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item by virtue of his being a local-authority appointed Director on South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) established to exercise governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC).)

The Board considered a reference from the Board of Directors of South West Fire Control Ltd. which, at its meeting on 4 July 2008, had considered a report of the Regional Project Director on setting performance standards for the Regional Control Centre and had resolved to invited the Regional Management Board to support the creation of, and nominate two RMB Members (who were NOT LACC Directors), to a Performance Standards Working Group.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to respond to the Board of Directors of South West Fire Control Ltd. (SWFCL) stipulating that, in the first instance, the Regional Management Board would wish the Executive Management Group (comprising the South West Chief Fire Officers) to liaise with the Regional Project Director and SWFCL to explore the scope for the setting of third-tier performance indicators, and the most appropriate mechanism for doing so, and to report back to a future meeting as appropriate.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/17 ABOVE).

RMB/21.

Workstreams Highlight Report

(**NOTE:-** Cllr. Windsor-Clive declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item - in so far as it related to the FiReControl Project - by virtue of his being a local-authority appointed Director on South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) established to exercise governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC). Cllr. Fox OBE DL declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item – in so far as it related to the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership [SW RIEP] by virtue of his being a local authority appointed Member on the Partnership)

The Board considered a report of the Chair of the South West Chief Fire Officers Association (CFO Standing – Gloucestershire) (RMB/08/16) summarising progress to dates by the various workstreams against their work programmes, each of which had been reviewed as part of the process of updating the regional Business Plan. Appended to the report was a summary of those milestones showing red status together with a description of action being taken to resolve these issues.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the following Member Champions be appointed to fill existing workstream vacancies:-

Cllr. Fox OBE DL (Finance and Procurement);

Cllr. B. Hughes (Service Operations and Resilience);

Cllr. Roberts (Community Safety);

- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/17 ABOVE).

RMB/22.

Revisions to the Regional Business Plan

(**NOTE:-** Cllr. Windsor-Clive declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item - in so far as it related to the FiReControl Project - by virtue of his being a local-authority appointed Director on South West Fire Control Ltd., the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) established to exercise governance arrangements for the South West Regional Control Centre (RCC). Cllr. Fox OBE DL declared a **personal** but non-prejudicial interest in this item – in so far as it related to the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership [SW RIEP] by virtue of his being a local authority appointed Member on the Partnership)

The Board considered a report of the Secretary of the South West Chief Fire Officers Association (CFO Gunter - Dorset) (RMB/08/17) on proposed changes to the Business Plan originally approved by the Board in September 2007. The Plan had been updated to ensure, amongst other things, consistency with:-

- the latest National Fire and Rescue Service Framework;
- the National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-18;
- the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007;
- details of the Board's budget 2008/09 and other sources of funding; and
- the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SWRIEP) fire and rescue service programme Delivery Plan.

The report also proposed the creation of a new workstream to co-ordinate cross-cutting work on climate change.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed changes to the Business Plan as indicated in report RMB/08/22 be endorsed;
- (b) that, subject to the changes indicated in this document being endorsed (and incorporation of any additional amendments required by the Board) the updated Business Plan be circulated to workstreams as a working document;
- (c) that the Plan be subject to an annual review in March of each year after the RMB sets its budget for the following year;
- (d) that a Task and Finish Group under the chairmanship of CFO Terry Standing should be established to draft a regional South West Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) Climate Change Strategy;
- (e) that the Regional Communications Strategy be amended to take into account the revised aims and objectives of the regional Business Plan.
- (f) that all workstreams should undertake a high level equality impact assessment of their work programme

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/17 ABOVE).