

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

28 January 2009

Present

Councillors B. Hughes (Chairman)(Devon & Somerset), Gordon and Healey (Devon & Somerset) Roberts and Walker (Avon), Yeo (Cornwall), Fox OBE DL (Dorset) and Wren (vice Willmott)(Wiltshire).

Attending in accordance with Standing Order 3:

Councillors Fry and Mrs. Parsons (Devon & Somerset).

Apologies:

Councillors Windsor-Clive (Gloucestershire) and Willmott (Wiltshire).

***RMB/28. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7 November 2008 be signed as a correct record.

***RMB/29. Declarations of Interest**

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

Councillors Fox OBE DL and Yeo declared personal BUT NOT prejudicial interests in those items relating to the FiReControl Project (see Minutes RMB/ to RMB/ below) by virtue of their being directors appointed by their constituent authorities to serve on South West Fire Control Limited (the Local Authority Controlled Company – LACC – established with overall governance responsibility for the Regional Control Centre).

***RMB/30. Highlight Report**

The Board considered a report of the Chair, South West Chief Fire Officers' Association (SWCFOA) (Terry Standing – Interim Chief Fire Officer, Cornwall) (RMB/09/01) covering:

- progress since the last meeting of the Board on those projects being supported by the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP), specifically:
 - an extension of the regional benchmarking/equality and diversity project;
 - the conducting of a survey to determine lessons learned from the 2008 Local Area Agreement round;
 - development of a regional website;
 - production of a Strategic Outline Case and Outline Business Case for a regional fleet options review;
 - a regional Operational Policies review;

- a summary, with contributions from those Workstream Member Champions present at the meeting, of progress made since the last meeting of the Board by those workstreams addressing the following issues on a regional basis:
 - Community Safety;
 - Equality and Diversity;
 - Finance and Procurement;
 - Human Resources Management and Development;
 - Regional Control Centre;
 - Strategic Planning (Performance Management); and
 - Service Operations and Resilience.

The report summarised milestones for each of the workstreams showing “red” status and indicated action initiated by the South West Chief Fire Officers’ Association (SW CFOA) Executive Management Group (EMBG) to resolve those issues.

The Regional Programme Manager had reviewed the progress of each workstream in realising the benefits of the regional programme of collaboration and the region was on track to realise savings of £4.9m in 2008/09 and £4.4m in 2009/10. It was intended to submit a further report on benefits realised during 2008/09 to the June meeting of the Board.

The report indicated that the Regional Business Plan would be updated to take into account the Board’s budget for 2009/10, the intention being to submit the updated plan for approval at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the progress made by workstreams and in relation to those projects supported by the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, as indicated in report RMB/09/1, be noted;
- (b) that the intention to submit, for approval at the next meeting of the Board, a revised Regional Business Plan amended to reflect the Board’s approved budget for 2009/10 be noted;
- (c) that the Chairman be authorised to convey on behalf of the Board its thanks to Deputy Chief Fire Officers Ted Simpson and Jerry O’Brien and to Assistant Chief Fire Officer Peter Baxter, who were stepping down as, respectively, the Equality and Diversity, Strategic Planning (Performance Management) and Community Safety workstream leaders, for their work during their term of office.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/ BELOW).

***RMB/31. Regional Newsletter**

The Board considered a report of the Regional Programme Manager (Graham Saunders) (RMB/09/02) to which was appended the second edition of the regional newsletter. This was a quarterly publication aimed at increasing amongst the south west fire and rescue services the awareness and take up of products of the regional programme of collaboration. A copy of the newsletter was also sent to key stakeholders such as the Government Office South West (GOSW), the South West Regional Efficiency Improvement Programme (SW REIP), IDeA and the Audit Commission.

RESOLVED

- (a) that publication of the second edition of the newsletter (as appended to report RMB/09/2) be noted;
- (b) that Board Members notify the Regional Programme Manager as appropriate of any items they would wish to see include in future editions of the newsletter.

***RMB/32. Regional Climate Change Strategy - The Way Forward**

The Board considered a report of the Secretary, South West Chief Fire Officers Association (SWCFOA) (RMB/09/3) on proposals to develop a regional climate change strategy in co-operation with the Carbon Trust. A climate change programme would be likely to impact on all workstreams and, from 2009, all authorities including combined fire and rescue authorities would be required to report on their performance on NI 188 (adapting to climate change) as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

RESOLVED that the proposals to develop a regional Climate Change Strategy, as indicated in report RMB/09/3, be approved.

***RMB/33. Board Budget 2008/09 and 2009/10**

The Board considered a report of the Treasurer on the proposed budget, including contributions from constituent authorities, for 2009/10 and on a revised budget provision in relation to the current financial year.

In relation to 2008/09, the report detailed variations against the initial budget projection which, when added to the surplus of £38,000 already planned, gave a total of £178,400 available to carry forward to off-set the proposed gross budget of £374,100 for 2009/10.

In addition, it was also estimated that some £30,000 income would be secured in 2009/10 from New Burdens funding pooled centrally and invested in the interim pending expenditure requirements. The addition of this income to the £178,400 underspend reduced the overall budget requirement for the Board to a net £165,700. This in turn would enable contributions payable by individual constituent authorities to again be frozen (for the third year in succession) at the 2007/08 level of £171,200 in total. This would deliver the proposed gross budget of £374,100 together with a small surplus (£5,500) available to carry forward to 2010/11.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the carry forward of £178,400 currently estimated as surplus against the current year's budget, to off-set the 2009/10 budget, be approved;
- (b) that, for 2009/10, a gross budget of £374,100 be approved funded as shown overleaf:

	£
2009/10 Gross Budget Requirement	374,100
Funded by	
• Underspend from 2008/09 carried forward	(178,400)
• Investment income 2009/10	(30,000)
• Individual fire and rescue authority contributions (total)	(171,200)
SUB-TOTAL	(379,600)
Surplus available to carry forward to 2010/11	5,500
TOTAL	(374,100)

- (c) that, consequent to (b) above, the Treasurer be authorised in accordance with the Board's constitutional agreement to notify individual constituent fire and rescue authorities of their contribution to the funding requirement totalling £171,200 as follows:-

Authority	2009/10 Contribution £
Avon	30,171
Cornwall	20,172
Devon & Somerset	50,342
Dorset	25,172
Gloucestershire	20,172
Wiltshire	25,171
TOTAL	171,200

- (d) That the current basis for apportioning Board costs amongst individual constituent fire and rescue authorities be continued for 2009-10.

***RMB/34. FiReControl Project - The Implications Of The Delay To The FiReControl Project**

The Board considered a report of the South West Regional Project Director (RMB/09/5) on the implications of the delay to the FiReControl Project announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The overall delay was nine months with a four month compression for the last fire and rescue services to cut-over to the Regional Control Centre (RCC). The individual delay for South West fire and rescue services varied.

The report examined the implications of the delay from the financial, personnel, technological and transition perspectives and indicated an overall conclusion that, while the delay was to be welcomed in extending the overall timescale, there were still significant challenges to be faced particularly for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, which should be the first South West fire and rescue service to cut over its controls. Additionally, there were still some significant technological challenges to be overcome for some South West fire and rescue services to maintain business continuity that could involve additional expenditure, particularly should further delays to be the project materialise.

In debating the paper, the Board sought information as to the commissioning process for cut over to the new Regional Control Centre, including indicative timescales. The Regional Project Director indicated that there were two critical decision points:-

- some three weeks prior to actual cut-over it would be necessary for each fire and rescue service to agree with the Chief Executive of the company and other key stakeholders (e.g. a representative of EADS) that all the necessary components (legal and financial agreements; technical issues; staffing issues etc) were in place to enable cut-over to proceed;
- prior to this, in October 2009 or thereabouts it would be necessary for each individual fire and rescue authority to commit in principle to closing their own legacy control rooms and moving over to the Regional Control Centre.

The Board expressed a number of concerns over this including:

- the impact of elections on continuity of fire and rescue authority Members and ensuring that any new Members were sufficiently briefed to enable an informed decision to be taken on moving over to the Regional Control Centre;
- that, despite previous representations, there still appeared to be a lack of recognition by the Department for Communities and Local Government as to the risk of one or more South West fire and rescue services refusing to participate.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Executive Management Group be asked to give urgent consideration to identifying precisely the stages and timings involved for the FiReControl commissioning process, including the risks associated with these, with a view to submitting an appropriate report to the next meeting of the Board;
- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

***RMB/35. FiReControl Project - Proposed Response to the Department for Communities and Local Government's (CLGs) Consultation on Part 2 of the FiReControl Business Case**

The Board considered a report of the South West Regional Project Director (RMB/09/6) on the publication by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), in November 2008, of the draft Part 2 Business Case for the FiReControl Project. Interested stakeholders had been invited to submit comments on this by 27 February 2009. CLG had indicated that, following this, it would issue a composite reply (addressing those points raised by individual fire and rescue services in responding to Parts 1 and 2 of the Business Case) prior to issuing a further version of the Business Case in Spring 2009.

Appended to the report was a proposed draft response from the Board to the consultation and the Board's attention was drawn to two proposed minor amendments to this draft response:-

- That the initial response to the Part 1 Business Case should accompany the response to Part 2, as an attachment to be read in conjunction with the latter response; and
- That the third sentence to the proposed answer to question (b) on page 13 of the draft Business Case be amended to read (replaced/additional words indicated by underlining) "We are surprised to see that there is continued absence of a risk regarding the appetite of Fire Authorities to willingly transfer their operations into the Regional Control.

It was also proposed that the response be copied to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and her Shadow counterparts for information.

RESOLVED that, subject to incorporation of those amendments indicated at the meeting and as annotated above, the Chairman be authorised to submit on behalf of the Board the response as appended to report RMB/096 to the FiReControl Project Director before the deadline of the 27 February 2009.

***RMB/36. FiReControl Project - Proposed Response To Consultation On Performance Standards**

Report of the South West Regional Project Director (Clive Kemp) (RMB/09/7) attached (page 52)

***RMB/37. FiReControl Project - Incident Recording System - Response from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)**

At its last meeting the Board considered a report of the South West Regional Project Director on the potential adverse financial implications for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in the South West arising from the requirement by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) for the introduction of a new Incident Recording System (IRS) as a pre-requisite to the cut-over to the new Regional Control Centre (RCC). In light of these concerns the Board resolved to make representations to CLG highlighting the concerns and seeking a solution from CLG (Minute RMB/26 refers).

The representations were duly made and a copy of the response received from CLG is now attached (Page 70) **FOR INFORMATION.**

(a) that the Board consider the proposed response to the consultation on Performance Standards, as attached at Appendix to this report; and

(b) that, subject to incorporation of any amendments as agreed at the meeting, the Chairman be authorised to submit the response by the deadline of 2 February 2009.