

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

28 January 2010

Present:-

Councillors Walker (Avon)(Vice-Chairman)(in the Chair), Curran (vice Roberts)(Avon), Kennedy (Cornwall), Gribble (vice Hughes OBE) and Healey (Devon & Somerset), Bulteel (Dorset), Windsor-Clive (Gloucestershire) and Brig. Hall (Wiltshire).

Apologies:-

Councillors Hughes (OBE) and Gordon (Devon & Somerset) and Roberts (Avon)

Substitute Members Councillors Barrett (Avon), Boyd and Fry (Devon & Somerset) and Wren (Wiltshire).

RMB/24. Councillor Roberts

RESOLVED that the Vice-Chairman write to Councillor Roberts on behalf of the Board to wish him a speedy recovery following his recent illness.

RMB/25. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 November 2009 be signed as a correct record.

RMB/26. Declarations of Interest

Board Members were invited to consider items to be discussed at 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.

At this stage Councillors Healey and Brig. Hall declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in those items relating to the FiReControl/Regional Control Centre project by virtue of their being an Authority-appointed Director and an alternate Director (respectively) on the board of South West Fire Control Ltd., the local authority controlled company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre.

(SEE ALSO MINUTES RMB/27 TO RMB/31 INCLUSIVE BELOW)

RMB/27. FiReControl Consultation: Agreement between Local Authority Controlled Companies (LACCS)/London Fire And Emergency Planning Authority (LFEP) and Communities and Local Government

(Councillors Healey and Brig. Hall declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in this item by virtue of their being an Authority-appointed Director and an alternate Director (respectively) on the board of South West Fire Control Ltd., the local authority controlled company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre).

The Board considered a report of the South West FiReControl Project Director and the South West FiReControl Legal Advisor (RMB/10/1) on the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) consultative Circular 73/2009 - "FiReControl: Agreement Between LACCs/LFEPA and Communities and Local Government".

Responses were requested by 5 March and, although the Board was not being directly consulted, it was nonetheless proposed that it might wish to respond as it had been involved in the project since its inception. To this end, a draft response was appended to the report for consideration.

The report set out the background to the FiReControl project and described the contents of the circular in terms of the principles to underpin the strategic outcomes for the Agreement together with the indicative content guide for the agreement, as set out in the Circular, in areas such as:

- "home" regional control centre performance standard;
- direct access to national service contracts;
- limits on liability;
- network-wide performance standard; and
- financial framework

The report also addressed issues such as change control and cross-referencing of other documents.

In debating the proposed response to the Circular, the Board commented that it might be clarified and enhanced by:

- the inclusion of the words "throughout the lifetime of this system" at the end of the first bullet point of comment 2 in the section "Other comments we would wish to make in response to this consultation..."; and
- specific reference to the earlier response of the Board to the previous consultation on in-service management arrangements.

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to inclusion of the amendments as suggested above, the draft response to the CLG consultation "FiReControl: Agreement Between LACCs/LFEPA and Communities and Local Government", as appended to report RMB/10/1, be approved and the Chairman authorised to submit it on behalf of the Board;
- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/26 ABOVE)

RMB/28. Workstreams Highlight Report

(Councillors Healey and Brig. Hall declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in this item, in so far as it referred to the FiReControl/Regional Control Centre project, by virtue of their being an Authority-appointed Director and an alternate Director (respectively) on the board of South West Fire Control Ltd., the local authority controlled company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre).

The Board considered a report of the Regional Programme Manager (RMB/10/2) on 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;
 - a survey to determine lessons learned from the 2008 Local Area Agreement round;
 - development of a regional website;
 - a regional fleet options review;
 - a regional operational policies review;
 - a new e-recruitment project;
 - an Early Learning Fire Safety (ELFS) project; and
 - potential future projects to be included in the SW RIEP funded programme for 2010/11 (regional benchmarking; social marketing; and business transformation);
- progress in relation to the Regional Climate Change Strategy; and
- a summary 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.

Appended to the report was a summary of “red” milestones against the projects together with an indication of the action to be taken to resolve this. The regional programme of collaboration risk register had been reviewed and updated to reflect the current position.

RESOLVED that the progress of workstreams and the programme of work supported by the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP), as indicated in report RMB/10/2, be noted.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/26 ABOVE).

RMB/29. Governance Options for Regional Collaboration - Report of Task and Finish Group

(Councillors Healey and Brig. Hall declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in this item, in so far as it referred to the FiReControl/Regional Control Centre project, by virtue of their being an Authority-appointed Director and an alternate Director (respectively) on the board of South West Fire Control Ltd., the local authority controlled company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre).

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Secretary, Chief Fire Officers Association [South West], on behalf of the Task and Finish Group (RMB/10/3), on the considerations and conclusions of the Task and Finish Group established at the last meeting to consider future governance arrangements for regional collaboration with the aim of realising efficiencies (Minute RMB/23(c) refers).

The Group had met on 18 January 2010 to consider a report of the Regional Programme Manager as appended to report RMB/10/3. That report had:

- outlined the background of successful regional collaboration prior to the establishment of the formal Regional Management Board;
- set out the legal requirements to set out the Board, together with its current constitutional, governance and budgetary arrangements;
- outlined the current requirements of regional management boards as contained in the current Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11, together with the requirement in the Framework for fire and rescue authorities to “have regard to” the contents of the Framework in discharging their functions;
- detailed relevant extracts from the Audit Commission report “Rising to the Challenge” which recommended that both the government and fire and rescue authorities should assess the relative worth of regional management boards in delivering regional collaboration;
- four potential options for the governance of regional collaboration in the future.

The Group, having considered the report, had concluded, unanimously, that the options for dissolution of the Board should be recommended. The Group was also mindful, however, of the contents of the current National Framework and consequently felt that, prior to progressing any dissolution, the views of the Department for Communities and Local Government should be obtained as to this proposed course of action.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the view of the Task and Finish Group as set out in paragraph 2.5 of report RMB/10/3 and outlined above, be endorsed;

- (b) That, accordingly, the Secretary, Chief Fire Officers Association [South West] with the Regional Programme Manager be requested to draft and, following consultation with the Chairman, submit a letter to the Department for Communities and Local Government seeking a view on the proposal to disband the South West Regional Management Board, the letter to set out the business case for the proposal (by reference, amongst other things, to the track record of successful regional collaborative working prior to establishment of the RMB; retention of the processes established for programme management; and cost savings associated with the proposal);
- (c) that a report on the outcome of (b) above be submitted to the next meeting of the Board together with, if required, a report detailing options for establishment of a revised South West Forum and addressing other budgetary and accounts issues associated with the dissolution of the Board.
- (d) that the Task and Finish Group be disbanded.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/26 ABOVE AND RMB/31 BELOW).

RMB/30. Future Workstream Structure

(Councillors Healey and Brig. Hall declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in this item, in so far as it referred to the FiReControl/Regional Control Centre project, by virtue of their being an Authority-appointed Director and an alternate Director (respectively) on the board of South West Fire Control Ltd., the local authority controlled company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre).

The Board considered a report of the Regional Programme Manager (RMB/10/4) on progress to date with a review, initiated by the Chair of the Chief Fire Officers Association South West (CFOA SW), of the pace, direction and leadership of the programme of workstreams established, amongst other things, to capture the work of the Association and to complement the work of the Regional Management Board.

The report set out the background to the current workstream structure, outlined an assessment of whether it was still fit for purpose and set out a number of recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the programme of regional collaboration. The recommendations, which at this stage were for the Board to note, would be used by the Executive Management Group (EMG) as the basis for further consultation with workstream leaders within the context of drafting a regional business plan for 2010/11.

RESOLVED that the review being undertaken by the Chief Fire Officers Association [South West] of the structure and focus of the regional workstreams, with the aim of improving effectiveness, be noted.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE RMB/26 ABOVE).

RMB/31. Regional Management Board Budget 2010/11

(Councillors Healey and Brig. Hall declared personal but non-prejudicial interests in this item, in so far as it referred to the FiReControl/Regional Control Centre project, by virtue of their being an Authority-appointed Director and an alternate Director (respectively) on the board of South West Fire Control Ltd., the local authority controlled company (LACC) with overall governance responsibility for the South West Regional Control Centre).

The Board considered a report of the Treasurer to the Board and the Secretary, Chief Fire Officers Association [South West] (RMB/10/5) on:

- the budget requirement for the Board, and associated contributions from individual fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), for the 2010/11 financial year; and
- a revised budget requirement for the current (2009/10) financial year.

The report detailed variations to the approved 2009/10 budget which amounted to a net underspend of £17,900. This, together with a budget surplus of £5,500 (allowed for when setting the level of individual FRA contributions towards the 2009/10 budget), provided a total of £23,400 available to be carried forward to support the 2010/11 budget.

The Chief Fire Officers Association South West (CFOA SW) Executive Management Group (EMG) had, following a meeting on 7 January 2010, agreed that the Board's 2010/11 budget should be determined on the basis of a standstill in individual FRA contributions. This could be secured by a 44% (£149,500) reduction in the gross budget for 2009/10 (£344,100) together with utilisation of the indicative carry forward. The report detailed proposals to secure the reduction in gross budget (provided for largely by reductions in staffing costs associated with regional projects) and indicated that further savings might be possible pending the outcome of the review of governance arrangements for future regional collaborative working.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the carry forward to 2010/11 of the underspend against the current year's budget, currently estimated to be £23,400, be approved;
- (b) that the proposed budget for 2010-11 as set out in Appendix A to report RMB/10/5 be approved;
- (c) That the required contributions from each fire and rescue authority to fund the 2010-11 budget be fixed at the same levels as the current year, as indicated in table 5, paragraph 5.10 of the report, and the Treasurer authorised, in accordance with the Board Agreement, to notify each individual fire and rescue authority of their respective contribution;
- (d) That the current basis of cost share of RMB costs be continued for 2010 -11.

(SEE ALSO MINUTES RMB/26 AND RMB/29 ABOVE)

The meeting started at 11.00hours and finished at 12.52hours.