

COMMERCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

3 April 2013

Present:-

Councillors Dyke (Vice-Chairman)(in the Chair), Gribble, Randall Johnson, D Smith and Woodman.

Apologies:-

Councillor Healey.

***CSC/31. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2013 be signed as a correct record.

***CSC/32. Business Case - Sub-Contracting of Fire Risk Assessors**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (CSC/13/3) setting out a business case, as required by the relevant legislation, for commercial trading by the Authority in the area of sub-contracting fire risk assessors. The business case addressed, amongst other things:

- the scope and objective of the business stream;
- investment and resources required;
- the potential risks, significance of the risks and mitigations associated with the venture; and
- expected financial results and relevant outcomes.

In debating the report, Members raised the issue of ensuring appropriate cover was in place for professional indemnity insurance.

RESOLVED that, subject to satisfactory clarification that professional indemnity cover was in place, the business case for the sub-contracting of fire risk assessors, as set out in report CSC/13/3, be approved.

***CSC/33. Competition Law Compliance**

The Committee received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (CSC/13/4) on what was meant by anti-competitive behaviour, the implications of being complicit in such behaviour at both a company and individual level and a four-step, risk-based approach to ensure an embedded, compliance-based culture for Red One Ltd., the Authority and the Service.

***CSC/34. Reform of Competition Law - Right to bring Private Action**

The Committee received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (CSC/13/5) on proposals by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) to amend current competition law to facilitate easier access to and facilitate a more streamlined process for challenging anti-competitive behaviour. The report referred to concerns raised by the Confederation for British Industry that the proposals could fuel a "litigation culture", concerns which BIS had sought to off-set by indicating that the proposals would have "strong safeguards" to prevent "frivolous or unmeritorious" claims being brought against businesses.

***CSC/35.**

State Aid

The Committee received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (CSC/13/6) defining what constituted “state aid” and the principles behind this which would be applicable to the Red One and the Authority in commercial trading ventures.

***CSC/36.**

Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Authority and other companies.

***CSC/37.**

Update on Commercial Matters (including current Commercial Leads and Opportunities)

(An item considered in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded from the meeting).

The Committee received, for information, a presentation by the Commercial Business Development Manager on the “Quickbooks” software package to be used for commercial activities. The presentation featured, amongst other things, the functionality of the package in recording and tracking the status of commercial leads, issue of quotations and invoices etc. and also indicated actual initiatives currently being progressed on a commercial basis.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.17hours.