

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
date	25 February 2005	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Members with an update of the work of the East Midlands Regional Management Board (EMRMB).

2. BACKGROUND

The Regional Management Board was created as a consequence of the publication of the White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service". Its purpose, aims and objectives are clearly laid out in the National Framework Document. Two elected Members from each of the five constituent fire and rescue authorities make up the Board.

3. REPORT

The last meeting of the EMRMB was held on 16 December 2004. EMRMB meetings are open to the public. The minutes of that meeting are attached as Appendix A to this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report. Members are already aware that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has set clear expectations against which success or failure of RMBs will be assessed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report. Members will be aware that there are financial implications arising from the levels of financial support required to underwrite regional projects. This is currently contained within existing budgets, however there is potential for further funding support being required for regional work. The extent of this funding is being assessed and will be presented to the Authority.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD**

Held: Thursday 16 December 2004 at 2.00 pm

P R E S E N T :

**Derbyshire Fire Authority
Councillor Richard Gerrard**

**Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority
Councillor Roffey**

**Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor James Ashton (Chairman)**

**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority
Councillor Brent Charlesworth
Councillor Graham Jackson**

Officers in Attendance

**Mr David Archer, CFO, Northamptonshire Fire Authority
Mr Bernie Cahill, CFO, Derbyshire Fire Authority
Mr John Oliver, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service
Mr Paul Woods, CFO, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire
Authority
Mrs Marie Ensor, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority
Mr Trevor Peel, Regional Treasurer, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue
Service**

**Mrs Jo Beresford, Regional Programme Manager
Mrs Helen Cooper, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Mr Guy Goodman, Clerk to the Board, Leicester City Council
Mr Dan Jewson, Committee Administrator, Leicester City Council**

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**Apologies were received from Councillor Dunn, Councillor
Helstrip, Councillor Johnson, Councillor Patterson and Councillor
Perkins.**

71. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

73. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE BOARD

There were no items of correspondence to report.

74. QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.1

There were no questions received under Standing Order 8.1

75. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 28 OCTOBER 2004

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of 28 October 2004, be approved as a correct record.

76. REPORTS OF THE CLERK

76.1 INCREASED DELEGATION

The Clerk to the board reported on the proposed increased delegation that had been discussed at the previous meeting of the board. In order to increase delegation agreement was required by all authorities, of which only two were now outstanding – Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

It was reported to the Board that Lincolnshire had now approved the proposals and that Derbyshire was expected to do so shortly.

76.2 BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair advised that this item would be taken during the private session.

77. REGIONAL PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Chief Fire Officer Riddet gave a verbal report updating the Board on progress on the development of a regional procurement process.

The Board noted that a project initiation document was being produced by Chief Fire Officer Riddet and would be brought to the March meeting of the Board for its approval. It was also noted that the establishment of a procurement process for acquiring new vehicles for each of the fire services had now been agreed and that this work would now move

from the regional resilience work stream to the procurement work stream.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

78. REGIONAL FINANCE PROJECT

Chief Fire Officers Paul Woods submitted a report presenting the Board with the Regional Finance Project Initiation Document for its approval.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the RMB notes the report; and
- (2) That the RMB approves the Regional Finance Project Initiation Document

79. REGIONAL CONSULTATION / NEGOTIATING PROCEDURE

CFO Woods submitted a report informing the Board of the current position relating to consultation with representative bodies. The Board were informed that a joint partnership forum was to be established, which it was proposed would be a model of consultation and negotiation between the representative bodies on matters of common interest. A draft constitution for the joint partnership forum was included in the report for the approval of the Board. It was reported that the draft constitution had omitted to include representation by the APFO and that this would be included in the final draft.

Members of the Board welcomed the principle of a joint partnership forum. However, some concerns were raised at the detail of the draft constitution. It was suggested that the proposed the forum could be too large, making it unworkable and that consideration to slimming down may be appropriate. There was also discussion as to whether the quorum requirements should be reduced and discussion over which bodies should have representation on the forum.

The Chair proposed that the forum hold an initial meeting under the guidance of the draft constitution after which consideration would be given to making amendments to the constitution. This was seconded by Councillor Jackson and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Joint Partnership Forum hold an initial meeting under the guidance of the draft

constitution after which consideration be given to amending the constitution.

80. DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Marie Ensor presented a report seeking approval for the Board's draft communications strategy. The Board's attention was drawn to the recommendations in the report and members were asked to consider the three options available for an electronic quarterly newsletter and decide on a way forward.

The Board agreed that this was an important piece of work. They felt it important to ensure that the strategy was coordinated between the constituent authorities to ensure quality and effective communication. The Board approved of the idea of a quarterly newsletter and hoped it could be used to communicate local 'good news' stories. It was suggested that the first copy of the newsletter included a glossary to explain terminology and acronyms.

The Chair proposed that option 2 in the report, the creation of an 'in house' independent stand alone EMRMB web site, be agreed by the Board and that the quarterly electronic newsletter be no longer than 8 pages long. It was also proposed that Nottinghamshire would undertake this work. Editorial responsibility for the newsletter would be delegated to CFO Woods in consultation with the Chair of the RMB. This was seconded by Councillor Jackson and agreed.

RESOLVED:

that Nottinghamshire County Council's public relations department be commissioned to undertake option 2 for the creation of an 'in house' independent stand alone website and electronic newsletter with editorial responsibility for the newsletter to be delegated to CFO Woods in consultation with the Chair of the RMB.

81 REGIONAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Board received a report from Jo Beresford which provided an update on the progress of regional projects.

In response to a request from the Board it was agreed to provide training for Members of the Board on Project Management. The training would take place at 9.30 am on 3 February 2005. The training would take place at the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Headquarters.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report and training on project management available to members of the RMB be noted.

82. PRIVATE SESSION

RESOLVED:

- (1) that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following report in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because it involves the likely disclosure of 'exempt' information, as defined in the Paragraph detailed below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 7

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

- a) BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS
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- (2) that the press and public be excluded as the East Midlands Regional Management Board is required to consider the following report in private on the grounds that it contains 'confidential' information given to the East Midlands Regional Management Board by a Government Department on Terms which forbid its public disclosure as defined by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.
 - a) REGIONAL CONTROL – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE AND NEW BURDENS SUBMISSION

83. BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS

The Clerk and Treasurer to the Board left the meeting during discussion of this item.

The Board received a report reviewing the business support arrangements for the Board.

The Chair proposed that the Treasurer to the Board be re-appointed from 1 April 2005. This was seconded by Cllr Gerrard and agreed.

The Treasurer to the Board was then invited back into the meeting.

The Board noted that the report set out the options and costs for its continuing business support arrangements, which were currently provided by Leicester City Council. It was noted that the report did not include any options or costs for the Board to outsource the business support role to another provider.

Members of the Board appreciated the benefits of continuing with Leicester City Council from the point of view of business continuity but felt that it was important to ensure that the Board was receiving value for money. Members felt unable to make a decision as to future support arrangements without comparator details of the costs that other service providers would charge. It was also suggested that the Board consider the benefits of rotating the support role around the fire authorities to ensure that they all build up the servicing expertise. In addition it was suggested that the location of the meetings could also be considered for rotation.

Cllr Jackson proposed that a decision on support arrangements be deferred and that the Treasurer produce a business support specification in order that he may approach each of the 5 fire authorities asking them to tender for providing business support arrangements to the Board. A decision on these arrangements could then be taken at a special meeting of the Board on 25 January 2005. This was seconded by the Chair and agreed.

Following discussion of the RMB's quorum arrangements it was agreed that their will be sufficient members of the Board available for the RMB to exercise its powers during the transitional period following the County Council elections in May 2005. Members agreed to inform the Clerk to the Board if they intended to stand down at the County Council elections.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the decision on support arrangements be deferred and that the Treasurer produce a support specification in order that he may approach each of the 5 fire authorities asking them to tender for providing business support**

arrangements to the Board. A decision on these arrangements could then be taken at a special meeting of the Board to take place on 25 January 2005; and

- (2) That Members of the Board inform the Clerk if they intend to stand down at the County Council Elections in May 2005; and**
- (3) That it be noted that there will be sufficient Members for the Board to exercise its powers during the transitional period.**

84 REGIONAL CONTROL – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE AND NEW BURDENS SUBMISSION

The Treasurer to the RMB presented a report which updated the Board on a briefing session regarding the Regional Control Outline Business Case which had been held by the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in November 2004. Members attention was drawn to the fact that the East Midlands region had been identified to take part in Tranche 1 of the regional roll out, with Regional Control Centres due to be introduced from November 2006.

The ODPM projected costs of running the Regional Control Centre (RCC) were detailed for the Board. These costs forecast a clear financial benefit for RCC's, however the Board were informed that the projected figures did not include all costs and omitted, for example, non core work. They also included a number of savings that were thought to be difficult to achieve (for example accommodation costs). However, despite these the proposed savings still appeared to show a business case for investment in RCC's, although any saving might only be on a national level and may not necessarily be achievable for the East Midlands Region.

Details of the bid for New Burdens funding were also reported to the board. The Board were informed of the differing estimates by the ODPM and the East Midlands Region of running RCC's, in particular their was not agreement on the staffing costs of running the RCCs.

The RMB were advised that by February they were required to decide on corporate governance arrangements for the RCC. The 2 options available, including their costs, were outlined to the Board and members were advised that a unanimous decision would be required on corporate governance arrangements.

Members of the Forum thanked the Treasurer for his report. They discussed the options available to the RMB for corporate governance in some depth but felt unable to make a decision on either of the options

as they did not have full details of all the potential risks and benefits information available to them.

The Chair proposed that the decision on corporate governance be deferred to allow for a RMB workshop to take place on 25 January 2005 to further discuss and identify the implications of the corporate governance options. Following the workshop a special meeting of the Board would be held to enable a decision to be made on the corporate governance options. This was seconded by Councillor Roffey and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the decision on corporate governance be deferred to allow for a RMB workshop to take place on 25 January 2005 to further discuss and identify the implications of the corporate governance options. Following the workshop a special meeting of the Board will be held to enable a decision to be made on corporate governance options.

85. PUBLIC SESSION

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be invited back into the meeting of the Board.

86. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS OF THE EMRMB

The Treasurer to the Board presented a report outlining the revised financial estimate for 2004/05 and the proposed budget for 2005/06. The Board were advised that some changes to the figures in the report had occurred since it had been written and these were detailed to Members. Members were asked to accept the Revised estimate for 2004/05 and agree the proposed budget for 2005/06.

Members raised concerns about the proposed budget for 2005/06 as the amount each authority was expected to contribute was likely to be significantly higher than they had expected. Members were concerned at the amount that was set aside for contingency and there was a discussion as to how much, if any, should be included for contingency. It was suggested that the six major projects should be properly budgeted and therefore would be unlikely to need additional funds part way through the year. The meeting was advised that it was sensible set aside a contingency budget and that any use of the contingency funds would have to be approved by the RMB.

Members also raised concern at the level of budget for the Regional Control Project and discussion was held as to how much money would

be required for this project. They were advised that it was hoped additional finance would be provided by the ODPM for this project so the amount required in the budget could reduce.

The Chair proposed that the revised estimate for 2004/05 be accepted and that a regional budget of £375,000 be approved for 2005/06. This was seconded by Councillor Roffey and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the revised estimate for 2004/05 be accepted and that a regional budget of £375,000 be approved for 2005/06.

87. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Special Meeting - 25 January 2005 at 12.30pm preceded by a workshop on Regional Control at 9.30am.

Ordinary Meeting – 3 March 2005 at 2pm.

88. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.10pm.