

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
date	21 October 2005	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

1. PURPOSE OF 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

3.1 The last meeting of the EMRMB was held on 8 September 2005. EMRMB meetings are open to the public. The minutes of that meeting are attached as Appendix A to this report.

3.2 As discussed at previous Fire Authority meetings, Members sought information on particular interest to this Authority arising from regional workstreams. Issues are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

3.3 Budget Monitoring

The Board will be considering its 2006/07 business plan and budget in the next few months. It is important that the EMRMB considers the direct impact on this Authority of any budget re-charge. It is also important that efficiencies, economies of scale and added-value are demonstrated as part of that process.

3.4 Regional Control Centre (RCC)

The EMRMB has agreed to combined the RCC and Firelink projects into one, given the inter-dependencies of these workstreams. In addition, the EMRMB will need to consider issues of operational convergence arising out the RCC integration, as well as potential integrated support arrangements emanating from the merger of the five individual centres.

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. The EMRMB has agreed to apportion £15K per Authority to support the appointment of a procurement project manager from 2006/07.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial impact assessment has revealed there are no specific issues of equality arising from this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Members note the report and minutes.

8.2 That Members seek a detailed report from the Chief Fire Officer ahead of EMRMB business plan/budget setting for Member consideration.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



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

**Held: Thursday 8 September 2005 at 2.00 pm at Leicestershire Fire
and Rescue Headquarters, Leicester Road, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8HD**

P R E S E N T:

Derbyshire Fire Authority
Councillor Paul Smith
Councillor Richard Gerrard

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority
Councillor Peter Roffey
Councillor Graham Perkins

Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Bill Parker

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority
Councillor Darrell Pulk
Councillor Brent Charlesworth

Lincolnshire County Council
Councillor Peter Robinson
Councillor Mrs Jean Johnson

Officers in Attendance

Mr Roger Baddley, Deputy CFO, Derbyshire Fire Authority
Mr Alan Richmond, Project Manager, Derbyshire Fire Authority
Mr Ian Cartwright, Acting CFO, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Mr Derek Smith, Project Manager, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Mr Mike Thomas, CFO, Lincolnshire Fire Authority
Mr David Archer, CFO, Northamptonshire Fire Authority
Mr Paul Woods, CFO, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority
Mr Trevor Peel, RMB Treasurer, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Mrs Jo Beresford, Regional Programme Manager
Ms Julie Cope, Press Office

Mr Peter Nicholls, Clerk to the Board, Leicester City Council
Ms Jane Doubleday, Business Support Team, Leicester City Council

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Liz Tavener (Northamptonshire), CFO
Bernie Cahill (Derbyshire), CFO Dave Webb (Leicestershire) and Ms Marie Ensor, Press
Officer.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE BOARD

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE BOARD

There was no correspondence received by the Board.

20. OTHER BUSINESS OF THE CHAIR

There was no other business of the Chair.

21. BUSINESS REMAINING FROM THE LAST MEETING

There was no business remaining from the last meeting.

22. QUESTIONS RECEIVED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8.1

There were no questions received.

23. MINUTES AND REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no minutes and reports of Sub-Committees and Panels to receive.

24. REPORTS OF THE CLERK

There were no reports of the Clerk.

25. REPORTS OF THE TREASURER

25.1 BUDGET MONITORING TO JUNE 2005

The Board received a budget monitoring report from the Treasurer. The Treasurer informed the Board that this was the first of regular monitoring reports that would be submitted. The Board was asked to note the underspend of £30,000 from the Regional Control Project which would be returned to the RMB. This in addition to the contingency fund of £25,000 would bring the total to £55,000. The Board were asked to agree that the budget for the Regional Control Project be revised to £80,000 to reflect this revised forecast.

RESOLVED:

that the underspend indicated in the report be noted and that the budget for the Regional Control Project be revised to £80,000. The remaining £30,000 to be returned to the contingency allocation.

26. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS OF CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

26.1 COMMAND & CONTROL WORKSTREAM - REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE

Derek Smith, Regional Control Project Manager outlined the report submitted by CFO Webb. Now that the ODPM had announced the location of the Regional Control Centre negotiations would begin with the three potential ICT contractors. This process was likely to take fourteen weeks with completion by early January 2006. ODPM were looking at the question of funding and would be resolving this next year.

An important issue was the request for approval to manage Firelink and FiReControl under the same project management structure. This would be the most efficient method to deliver each project and use of available resources. The Chairman suggested that additional administrative support might be necessary in the future with both projects being combined under the same Project Board.

Members of the Board requested assurances that staff at the Regional Control Centre would maintain their pay levels as these varied between authorities. The Chairman agreed that this was a major issue and that the Board shared the concern of the workforce but it was not possible for the RMB to offer any assurances.

RESOLVED:

1. that the contents of the report be noted
2. that approval be given to manage both the Firelink and FiReControl projects under the same management structure

PROCUREMENT WORKSTREAM – PROGRESS REPORT

CFO Thomas submitted a report to the Board updating the strategy as agreed at the last meeting. The Management Board has since looked at the low staffing levels available for procurement activity. It would be important to carry out the additional activities without adding further burdens to the existing staff. Rather than outsourcing it was felt that using FRS or County Councils with experience and expertise in procurement would be the best solution. Northamptonshire County Council is currently recognised as a Centre of Excellence in Procurement and they had agreed to help in meeting the activities.

The Board were asked to agree a sum of £15,000 per FRS being added to the budget for 2006/07 to support this activity. CFO Thomas was optimistic that the benefits of the strategy would be seen by the end of the two-year period with a full return of the investment.

The Board discussed the possibility of reducing the amount committed by each FRS in the light of the underspend in the Treasurer's report. It was agreed that CFO Thomas would produce a Business Plan to present to the next RMB meeting with a projected plan of more than two years. This would be necessary as the Treasurer would be preparing a budget estimate for the next meeting.

The Board discussed deferring a decision on this report but the Chairman indicated that it would be necessary to make a decision at the meeting and that this decision should be made as a point of principle.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted
2. that the sum of £15,000 per FRS be added to the RMB budget for 2006/07

26.2 HUMAN RESOURCES WORKSTREAM – JOINT PARTNERSHIP FORUM

CFO Woods submitted a progress report and confirmed that the Management and Trade Unions had now signed the Constitution. Lead Officers had met with Trade Unions and agreement had been reached on one representative from the Trade Unions being appointed to attend each Project Board meeting. The Board discussed the procedures to be put in place if the representative was required to be excluded from private sessions of the meetings. The Chairman confirmed that the representative would not be excluded from the entire meeting but in line with normal procedures they could be asked to leave during confidential discussions.

Graham Emberton, UNISON representative, agreed that exclusion from private sessions would be acceptable where necessary and agreed to the Chairman's request that a representative be arranged for each workstream.

CFO Woods requested that a standing item be included on RMB agendas for a report from the Joint Partnership Forum. CFO Woods requested that reports from the Joint Secretaries be added as a standing item on RMB agendas in future.

RESOLVED:

1. the Board noted the signing of the Constitution
2. the Board agreed the process by which Trade Union members be represented on Project Boards
3. that the Constitution and Forum minutes be posted on the RMB website

INTEGRATED COMMON SERVICES WORKSTREAM

CFO Woods submitted a report requesting that approval be given to undertake a project to integrate and develop a regional ICT strategy. The FiReControl and Firelink projects would mean that more management information systems were necessary and the development of integrated services was part of the National Framework policy document for RMBs. All FRSs in the region would benefit from enhanced co-operation and co-ordinated systems.

CFO Archer commented that this was a crucial project and the Chairman pointed out that the Regional Control Centre would not work without this regional ICT strategy.

RESOLVED:

that the project as defined in the Project Initiation Document – Regional Information & communications Technology Strategy – Version 1.3 12 July 2005 be approved

E-GOVERNMENT

CFO Woods submitted a report outlining the developments in e-government which would affect the region and drew attention to the Fire and Rescue Service Circular 26-2005 which was issued on 28 June 2005. He reported that the network is progressing well in line with the national strategy and that targets will be met in accordance with ODPM measurements.

RESOLVED:

that the information in the report be noted

26.3 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WORKSTREAM

Deputy CFO Baddley submitted a report on regional recruitment and assessment and development centres. A presentation by Alan Richmond, Project Manager, outlined to the Board the pilot of the ADC system as agreed by the Project Board and piloted in Derbyshire. Derbyshire had been chosen to pilot the scheme because the facilities were already in place there.

Board members discussed the system and commented that this was the best use of resources and was in the spirit of the RMB which was set up to save costs and provide mutual aid rather than develop regionalisation. There was some discussion about the cost per authority in the light of differing needs. The Project Manager confirmed this would need to be considered.

The Chairman confirmed that the development of a regional recruitment and ADC system was in line with the National Framework and would provide better training and evaluation of employees. It was agreed that a regional standard for firefighters needed to be obtained and there was obvious merit in pooling resources. It would reinforce the principles of the IPDS.

RESOLVED:

1. to endorse the action agreed by the Regional Programme Board in establishing a pilot programme
2. to note the progress towards a Regional ADC and Recruitment System

26.4 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WORKSTREAM

Deputy CFO Baddley submitted a report containing in Appendix 1 the suggested response to the consultation document 'National Learning and Development' strategy for England. The Board suggested that existing Quality Assurance standards were used rather than duplicating what was already in existence or the development of a bespoke system.

There was some concern that the Fire College would become purely academic in its teaching and would not provide the technical knowledge and expertise necessary and this would result in the dilution of competencies in the service.

RESOLVED:

1. that no amendments be made to the draft response
2. that the Lead Officer finalise the response in consultation with the Chairman and submit it

26.5 REGIONAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Regional Programme Manager submitted a Progress/Exception Report to the Board. The Board confirmed that the format of the report should be used in future without any changes. Although the report was written in August there had been little change since then. However there had been some slippage due to capacity issues in local brigades.

The Regional Programme Manager expressed concern that the Regional Control Centre project still did not have a Regional Programme/Project Plan. This would create problems in management of the decision making process. A plan was required to reflect outstanding decisions. The Chairman questioned whether this was a capacity problem and Deputy CFO

Baddley confirmed that it was not. The issue related to national uncertainties and the difficulty in reflecting this in a regional plan. However, an overview plan would be required from the team.

The Regional Programme Manager confirmed that a New Dimensions Project Manager had been appointed and that interviews were to be held for the Resilience Workstream Project Manager on 9 September 2005.

There was some exception by members of the Board to the wording on Page 17 of the report. Rather than refer to lack of commitment by members leading to the postponement of the Procurement Briefing it was felt that 'lack of availability' would have been more appropriate to reflect the circumstances.

Members of the Board therefore suggested that Lead Members should be able to see the reports of the CFOs before they were circulated in public. It was agreed that CFOs would ensure that Lead Members were sent reports electronically before they were publicly issued. This would be the responsibility of the author of the report.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted
2. that a Regional Programme/Project Plan for the Regional Control Centre would be prepared by the Project Team.
3. that authors of reports provide their report to Lead Members prior to agenda papers being circulated

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TABLED BY MEMBERS

There were no motions tabled by members.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 3.35 pm.