Minutes of Business and Community Safety Forum (BCSF) Meeting:

Thursday 19th February 2009

Rooms G/L & G/M Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU

Present:

Les Byrom (Chair); Tim Humphries (ABI); Adair Lewis (FPA); David Sibert (TUC); Alistair Donohew (Entec Consulting); Charlie Hendry (CFOA); Clive Harris (LGA); Max Hood (ACF).

CLG: Robert Attrill (FRD); Jon Woolfson (FRD); Barbara Stewart (FRD); Toby Robinson (FRD); Mark Dunn (FRD; Beverley Fountain (FRD); Catherine Levin (FRD); Toma Efejuku (CFRA); Anna Wadsworth (FRD).

Apologies: Sarah Davies (CIH); Bruce McGlashan (EA); David Smith (ABE); Ian Evans (CAPT); Rhonda Bedford (CFOA); Graham Ellicott (FIC); Jonathan O'Neil (FPA); David Geary (FSB); Andrew Furness (IOSH); Sheila Merrill (ROSPA); Sir Ken Knight (CFRA); Gavin Crowden (FRD); Sean Ruth (CFRA).

1. Introduction

1.1 Les Byrom, the Chair, welcomed attendees.

1.2 Les welcomed CFO Max Hood as the Chair of the Arson Control Forum and congratulated him on his appointment as CFO of West Sussex. FRA.

1.3 Les congratulated CFO Charlie Hendry on his recent award of the CBE in the New Year Honours List.

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the BCSF meeting held on 6th November 2008 were approved, and the letter from Fire Angel in regard to the Kite Mark Standard of their products was noted.

2.2 Matters Arising:

A) Send the Olympic Letter to the Minister and notify members.

Max Hood and Jonathan O'Neil have resolved the issues and the draft letter was sent to members with the agenda. Following confirmation the letter will be sent to the Minister and members will be notified accordingly. Members to note that due to the passage of time it has been agreed that Les Byrom should sign the letter as the new Chair of the BCSF.

B) To invite Max Hood as the new Arson Control Forum Chair to attend all future BCSF meetings.

Max Hood joined the BCSF as Chair of the Arson Control Forum for the first time today.

C) David Smith of AEB to provide Lee Howell with a link to the recent research done by CLG on hydrogen-powered vehicles and potential risk of fire in car parks.

To check and confirm, outside of the meeting.

D) Lee Howell is willing to attend a future BCSF meeting to demonstrate the Community Safety Evaluation toolkit.

Plans in place for him to be invited to a meeting later in 2009.

E) Les to meet with Jonathan, Iain, Paul on an information sharing project to discuss a way forward.

Les, Iain and Paul to discuss outside of the formal BCSF.

F) As the process of data collection on all fires will change in 2009, it would be useful for the BCSF to see the new Incident Recording System (IRS).

Lee Howell to be invited to a meeting later in 2009. May also consider inviting a member of the Research and Statistics Division of FRD to provide perspective from Data analysis.

G) Ian Cox is willing at a future meeting to show development and a demonstration of the planned live National Enforcement Register.

Plans in place for him to be invited to a meeting later in 2009.

H) Sean Ruth of CFRA to be invited to a future meeting, to give a presentation on revising Operational Guidance for the FRS.

Plans in place for him to be invited to a meeting later in 2009.

I) Louise would be invited to give a presentation to the BCSF after the Review of the Order had been published and would share the review specification with BCSF members.

Plans in place for her to be invited to a meeting later in 2009.

3. Operational Guidance

3.1 Toma Efejuku presented an oral update on Operational Guidance; a paper had previously been presented to the Practitioners' Forum on the 13th February.

3.2 Following the questions at the Practitioners' Forum, Toma re-confirmed that final liability rests with CLG. The creation of the Operational Guidance Group had been made to provide scoping and clarity, and the interim programme was to deliver a focussed risk plan and mitigation. Charlie Hendry also responded to the Practitioners' Forums question on outstanding details of hierarchy of guidance which would hopefully be worked through at the first Project Board meeting on the 5th March 2009.

3.3 CFO Max Hood commented that in the South East Region they have already stated looking at the harmonisation of PDA and tactics and common standards for the Region. What opportunity to replicate this else were, Toma said the Group were more than happy to look at and take on good practice for other Regions.

3.4 Sir Ken Knight is due to be liaising with Devolved Administration at the Project Board. Les Byrom confirmed that CFO John Bonney was considering using part of the brainstorming session at the meeting to try and mesh together the issues of ownership and pay.

3.5 David Sibert ask how they planned to get existing projects to slip into the new Operation Guidance, and Toma explained that through the recent Health check these should be pick up.

3.6 Les Byrom confirmed he had raised at the Practitioners' Forum the issue following the Manchester Fire prosecutions and the resulting protocols being set up, that the Project Board must also produce specific roles and responsibilities for CLG and how other Agencies and organisation e.g. environmental fit together.

- **Action: Les Byrom confirmed that he had been asked to sit on the Operation Guidance Project Board which is due to meet on 5th March and he will feed back to members via e-mail following the meeting.**

4. Research for Joint Task & Finish Group

4.1 Mark Dunn provided a brief oral update on the "Research Joint Task and Finish Group". A paper and presentation had previously been made to the Practitioners' Forum on the 13th February.

- **Action: It was agreed in conjunction with the Practitioners' Forum that the Terms of Reference of the Research Task & Finish Group are to updated and the work of the Group is extended for a further 2 years.**

5. FiReContol

5.1 Due to the meeting being ahead of expected timings, Toby Robinson offered to give his presentation ahead of schedule. Toby was standing in for Gavin Crowden who was unable to attend, and gave any update of the

FiReControl project. A paper and presentation had previously been made to the Practitioners' Forum on the 13th February.

5.2 Toby covered the issue of the recent rescheduling of the timescale and the 9 month delay in going live, but the project had been condensed by 4 months as the end of the project has been reduced by 5 months. The timescale is now June 2010 to February 2012.

5.3 Les Byrom commented that any further delay to the 9 month could prove fatal to the confidence in the project given the scepticism that is still around. In regard to the major change that the FiReControl Project would bring there is a serious need for more planning for living in the "World of Regional Control Centres". Although he did confirm that both Sadiq Khan and Peter Housden have re-affirmed their level of commitment to FiReControl and RCCs and the commitment to deliver a better service.

5.6 Charlie Hendry confirmed the issue of the timing and the 2012 Olympics had been discussed at the Practitioners' Forum, along with the need for improved engagement with staff. It was felt that Roger Hargreaves had responded well to the concerns.

5.7 Max Hood confirmed that there had also been a discussion on the need for the harmonisation of pre-determined attendances (PDAs) and this would be looked into.

5.8 David Sibert asked whether there should be consultation within each Region to any changes to PDAs and whether the effect of IRMPs been taken into account?

5.9 Les Byrom queried what each region was doing, some would go to public consultation before the opening of their RCC and some after.

- **Action: Timing and method of Public Consultation concerning any changes to PDAs to be looked at by the BCSF at a future meeting, nearer to the time of their launch, in order to ensure that appropriate consultation happens.**

6. Sprinklers

6.1 Catherine Levin and Alistair Donohew of Entec Consulting made a presentation to the BCSF membership about research to develop an evidence base to assess the cost-benefit of introducing sprinklers in high risk buildings. CLG sought members' views on how to engage business in discussions about fire safety management issues. CLG will be setting up workshops in three regions to gather evidence on perceptions and solicited members' views on how best to locate attendees who would not have considered fire safety matters previously.

6.2 David Sibert asked what is "high risk"? High life risk, high economic risk or high heritage risk, or a mixture of all three?

6.3 Charlie Hendry asked them to consider contacting the FPA in relation to large financial loss fires research and to take into account the issue of business continuity.

6.4 Adair Lewis of FPA also suggested that the research should focus on the business continuity aspects of this work as it was a major issue for businesses. He also noted that in houses in multiple occupation, fitting sprinklers to only part of a building would not be sufficient.

6.5 Clive Harris suggested approaching him at the LGA to provide contacts for enquiries about schools and educational establishments, as they had been working with them through the Safer Communities Board.

6.6 Les Byrom suggested Catherine and Alistair should let the secretariat know dates and locations of the planned workshops so that member organisations can be informed in due course.

6.7 Beverley Fountain suggested they might consider contacting the Recovery Team in CLG who may be able to provide possible organisations who could be responders – through their work they completed with the RDAs during the summer floods.

- **Action: To send an electronic copy of the power-point presentation to the BCSF membership, particularly those who were unable to attend the meeting.**

- **Action: Provide Catherine Levin with contact for all BCSF members so CLG/Entec Consulting could approach BCSF members to gain any further contacts.**

7. Flooding

7.1 Beverley Fountain gave an oral update on flooding and the progress since the Pitt Report.

7.2 The Pitt Report was commissioned by SoS of the Environment following the widespread floods of summer 2007. The Government response to the report was published in December 2008 and the Government has since supported all 92 recommendations for Government, Local Authorities, and the Environment Agency, providers of essential services, the insurance industry and others.

7.3 The recommendations covered six main themes: Knowing when and where it will flood; Improved planning and reducing the risk of flooding and its impact; Being rescued and cared for in an emergency; Maintaining power and water supplies and protecting essential services; Better advice and helping people to protect their families and Managing the Recovery process.

7.4 Beverley then provided a brief overview of progress within each for these areas; including: the development and piloting of Extreme Rainfall Alerts by the Met Office used in the recent severe in the South West; work on the development of legislation which would give Local Authorities the lead on the management of local flood risk; the enhancement of the national capacity for flood rescue, with the FRS playing a leading role; developing a framework allowing the Government, economic regulators and asset owners to work together to support building resilience in critical sites for power, water and essential services; Improve the ability of the Environment Agency to contact people automatically by telephone about early flooding warnings (making it an opt out service rather than opt in) and improve the way in which information on flooding is shared with local communities and Local Resilience Forums; Government plan to provide more certainty to Local Authorities about what financial assistance they can expect to receive from Government to help meet the cost of long term community recovery and to publish revised guidance on the recovery process in 2009.

7.5 FRD have specific interest in recommendation 39 of the Pitt Report which looks at enhancing the national flood rescue capacity, and although it is CLG's view that it is not desirable for there to be a statutory duty for flood rescue placed on any one single emergency responder or agency it does support the view that the national flood rescue capacity should be enhanced.

7.6 A miscellaneous Cabinet Committee has been established to oversee the implementation of the Pitt Report recommendations, chaired by Rt. Hon Hilary Benn MP and Sir Michael Pitt will sit on the Committee in a scrutiny role. The Cabinet Committee will also review the progress and approve the final Flood Emergency framework, currently out for consultation until 27th March 2009, for more details see www.defra.gov.uk/corporate /consult/naturalenvirnment.htm

7.7 The draft Flood and Water Bill which is due to be published in the spring as part of the pre-legislative scrutiny process will outline the new responsibilities for the Environment Agency and Local Authorities.

7.8 Les Byrom thanked Beverley for her presentation and commented that Local Government will need to spend time looking at if it wants or requires more duties, but the progress and response to the Pitt Report should help with any future event and overall business continuity.

7.9 David Sibert commented that recommendations and response are heavily intertwined with Operational Doctrine as raised in the earlier item.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 The Minster has now given approval to consult on extending the FRA trading powers through the Freedom & Flexibilities consultation which was due to go out in March 2009 though is now scheduled to be published in April. **Anna Wadsworth** provided an update to BCSF members (a paper has been sent to Practitioners' Forum members). This was an update to BCSF on

current situation regarding the FRA Trading Order and options that are being consulted on through the 12 week consultation on Freedoms & Flexibilities planned for mid April 2009. A paper was be distributed at the meeting, and sent to members who were unable to attend.

- **Action: A link to the consultation will be sent to members once it starts, to give member organisations an opportunity to respond and members are encouraged to send onto interested parties.**

- **Action: Anna is willing to provide an update after the close of the consultation at a future meeting of the BCSF.**

8.2 Les Byrom provided an update of the "Fire involving Timber framed Buildings Task and Finish Group paper, delivered at the recent Practitioners' Forum. The paper presented was given to members at the meeting.

8.3 In regard to the updates from the Devolved Administrations' Scotland had sent an apology for not being able to return information in time for the meeting. Wales confirmed that the inaugural meeting of the Fire and rescue Consultative Forum would take place on Monday 23rd February when the Terms of Reference and forward plan would be discussed and hopefully agreed. Northern Ireland did not reply.

8.4 The next meeting date was due to be 14th May 2009 but given that this clashes with the last day of the International Fire Exhibition and Conference in Birmingham that it should be moved/delayed and the secretariat would be looking as new dates in the following week.

N.B. It has subsequently been suggested that the May meeting be cancelled due to the clash with the FRS Conference and that the next meeting should be on 2nd July 2009 as planned. This meeting is booked at Eland House and due to start at 09:30.