Minutes of the 28th Business and Community Safety Forum Meeting:

Thursday 6th November 2008

Rooms G/J & G/K Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU

Present:

Les Byrom (Chair); David Smith (ABE); Ian Evans (CAPT); Lynsey Groom (FSB); Graham Ellicott (FIC); Jonathan O'Neill (FPA); Andrew Furness (IOSH); David Sibert (TUC); John Bonney (CFOA); Rhonda Bedford (CFOA); Lee Howell (CFOA); Gary Jeffrey (CFRA); Iain Cox (CFOA); Ian Powell (BASSAC); Neil Gibbins (CFOA).

CLG: Shona Dunn (FRD), Robert Attrill (FRD); Bess Teeger (FRD); Barbara Stewart (FRD); Louise Upton (FRD); Mike Larking (FRD).

Apologies: Tim Humphreys (ABE); Charlie Hendry (CFOA); Sarah Davies (CIH); Bruce McGlashan (EA); David Geary (FSB); Sheila Merrill (ROSPA); Clive Harris (LGA); Sir Ken Knight (CFRA).

1. Introduction

1.1 Les Byrom, the new Chair, welcomed attendees.

1.2 Les paid tribute to the work done by Pamela Castle OBE over the past four years as the BCSF Chair. He had been asked by the Fire Minister to look at how the BCSF and the Practitioners' Forum could work more closely together to advise Ministers and CLG. He had in the past few weeks contacted members of the BCSF to find out more about their individual areas and of work, and to try to identify what issues the BCSF would wish to discuss in the coming year.

1.3 Shona Dunn introduced herself as the new Director of Fire and Resilience Directorate. She thanked Les Byrom for his comments and the BCSF members for all their work over the past four years and highlighted the importance that CLG attached to the advisory role that BCSF and the Practitioners' Forum had to play.

2. Minutes and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the BCSF meeting held on 25th September 2008 were approved, with one amendment.

- **Action: Send the 'Olympic' letter to the Minister and notify members accordingly.**

2.2 John Bonney confirmed that Max Hood from LFB had replaced Mike Hagan from Merseyside FRS as Chair of the Arson Control Forum (ACF). Funding for the Forum had now been agreed for the next two years.

- **Action: To invite Max Hood as the new ACF Chair to attend all future BCSF meetings.**

3. CFOA National Prevention Committee

3.1 Lee Howell gave a presentation on the recent work of the CFOA National Prevention Committee the areas they planned to focus on in 2009. A lead officer for Older People had been appointed to develop an Older Person's strategy, and there are now a series of good practice guides for FRAs to use.

- **Action: David Smith of ABE to provide Lee with a link to recent research done by CLG on hydrogen-powered vehicles and potential risk of fire in car parks.**

- **Action: Lee Howell is willing to attend a future BCSF meeting to demonstrate the Community Safety Evaluation toolkit.**

3.2 A discussion on fire prevention followed the presentation. Jonathan O'Neill said that although the number of domestic fires is reducing, the number of commercial premises fires had increased from Q1 to Q2 this year by 25%. Possible reasons could be the increased use of 'larger compartment properties'. More statistical information on property damage was needed. Jonathan O'Neill suggested that Government should lead on this.

- **Action: Les to meet with Jonathan, Iain, Paul on an information sharing project to discuss a way forward.**

- **Action: 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).**

4. Fire Kills – Value for Money

4.1 Following questions raised at the previous meeting on 'value for money' on some of the recent Fire Kills campaigns, Mike Larking gave a wide-ranging presentation on the aims of the campaigns including the diversity of the promotional work.

4.2 This covered the National Campaigns, and those targeted at particular 'at risk' groups including single men living alone, single parent families, young people, the elderly, and ethnic groups including Somali, Pakistani, and Polish speakers. The campaigns included working in partnership with local initiatives by FRAs and CFOA.

4.3 Jonathan O'Neill raised the concern that not all smoke alarm products on the market have a British Kite Mark, and FRAs had a duty to comply with the law. It was agreed that Mike Larking and Jonathan O'Neil would discuss this issue outside the meeting.

4.4 Les thanked Mike for his presentation. It was useful to see the depth of promotional campaigns both at national and local level and the reasons for targeting campaigns at specific communities.

4.5 John Bonney commented on the level of sophistication of media engagement from CLG and FRS in the design and work of the campaign.

4.6 Andrew Furness confirmed that IOSH would like the opportunity to work with Mike/CLG in future campaigning work through the network of 33,000 safety officers within IOSH.

N.B Secretarial note: Following the meeting and discussions with Fire Angel. Please see attached letter which covers the issue of Kite Mark Standard.

5. National Enforcement Register

5.1 Iain Cox as Chair of the CFOA National Fire Safety Committee gave a presentation on the recently launched National Enforcement Register. He explained the reasons for the development of the Register, the recent pilot launch, and the need to publish as part of enforcement activities. Following the initial pilot with 10 FRAs of varying size and geographical type, the Register would be quality assured for data robustness and legal compliance and rolled out to FRAs in March 2009, and then to the public by June 2009.

5.2 The Register uses the HSE Enforcement Register as a base line model, and the HSE are providing support as long as it is used for public safety or public interest.

5.3 Iain explained how the three stands of: Enforcement, Prosecution and Appeals, would be utilised when the Register goes live on the CFOA website. Members asked various questions as to data covered and protocols in place. Currently the Register covers only England and Wales. CFOA do not own the data, it is down to individual FRAs to keep information up-to-date. It is not compulsory for FRAs to enter data but support is strong and they see it as being of benefit to them.

5.6 The numbers of enforcement notices and prosecutions have increased in recent years, as has the success rate of prosecution. The system can be searched by various criteria, including details of the article breached, level of penalty, and the number of employees but not size of building. Les suggested that the Register may be capable of being used to evaluate how deregulation affects safety in commercial premises.

- **Action: Ian Cox is willing at a future meeting to show development and a demonstration of the planned live National Enforcement Register.**

6. The Environmental Protection Manual

6.1 Gary Jeffrey of CFRA provided a brief update on the recently published Environmental Protection Manual, the first operational manual dedicated to the protection of the environment in the context of FRS daily activities.

6.2 It contains guidance for FRSs on preventing and, if necessary, dealing with incidents with the potential to pollute, advising services on how to minimise their own impact on the environment, including those caused by emission of greenhouse gases. The manual was written in partnership with environment agencies and FRSs.

6.4 Les asked how the manual would it be updated and maintained. In the short-term the current manual will be going on the CLG web-site, and in the longer term they are currently looking at building updates into future contracts with TSO (The Stationery Office). They are also looking into the possibility of a live manual via the web-site, but further investigations are necessary.

6.6 A paper is currently being prepared for discussion at a future Practitioners' Forum on the updating and revision of this important guide. An Operation Guidance Programme Manager has now been appointed, in order to oversee the future development of "Operational Guidance".

- **Action: Sean Ruth of CFRA to be invited to a future meeting, to give a presentation on revising Operational Guidance for the FRS.**

7. British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres

7.1 Ian Powell the "Head of Member Services" of the British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres (BASSAC), gave a presentation on BASSAC. Ian Evans commented that there were synergies between the role of BASSAC and community involvement with the Fire Kills campaign.

8. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Future Monitoring Arrangements

8.1 Neil Gibbins of CFOA presented the paper previously given to the Practitioners' Forum on the future monitoring arrangements of the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO).

8.2 Louise Upton explained the scope of CLG's review of the Order. Andrew Furness suggested that better guidance and a Code of Practice on the Order would be welcomed by the IOSH.

- **Action: 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.**

9. Any other business

9.1 Jonathan O'Neil commented that the "Timber Frame Construction report" by the Task and Finish Group would be available at the next meeting.

9.2 Les Byrom is currently discussing possible future dates for the BCSF with officials, aiming to match them up with next year's Practitioners' Forum dates. They will be available shortly.