

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SOUTH EAST FIRE IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 APRIL 2012 AT 11:00 HOURS
AT RUSHMOOR FIRE STATION, 8 LYNCHFORD ROAD,
FARNBOROUGH GU14 6BF**

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the South East Fire Improvement Partnership Board at its next formal meeting.

Members:

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| Cllr B Abraham | Cabinet Member for Fire & Community Safety, Isle of Wight Fire Authority |
| *Cllr B Cope | Chairman, Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority |
| *Cllr C Dudley | Chairman, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority |
| Cllr C Field | Cabinet Member Public Protection, West Sussex County Council |
| Cllr K Hammond | Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Surrey County Council |
| *Cllr Mrs J Heathcoat | Cabinet Member Safer & Stronger Communities, Oxfordshire County Council |
| *Cllr J Livings | Chairman, East Sussex Fire Authority |
| *Cllr D Rowlands | Chairman, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority |
| *Cllr R Smith | Chairman, Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority |

* = Present

In Attendance:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Acting CFO O Baars | Royal Berkshire |
| CFO J Bonney | Hampshire |
| CFO D Etheridge | Oxfordshire |
| CFO M Hood | West Sussex |
| CFO M Jones | Buckinghamshire |
| CE A Millington | Kent |
| CFO R Pearson | Surrey |
| CFO D Prichard | East Sussex |
| Charles Kerr | Kent |
| James Finch | SEFIP (Kent) |
| Richard Stanford-Beale | SEFIP (Kent) |
| Sue Klein | East Sussex |
| Neil Odin | CFOA Regional Secretary |

1/12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Item 1)

- a) Councillor Colin Dudley had replaced Councillor Bryant as Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and had subsequently taken the Chair for this meeting of the Board. As this was his first meeting, he had no outgoing address to make.
- b) Members noted that Councillor Bradbury had been replaced as Cabinet Member for Public Protection (West Sussex) by Councillor Christine Field; unfortunately, Councillor Field had been unable to attend this meeting. It was also noted that Steve Apter was the new Chief Fire Officer for the Isle of Wight but he had also been unable to attend.
- c) Councillor Dudley welcomed Owain Thompson (Community Safety Researcher) and David Wales (Investigation and Research Manager) who were giving a presentation on the research being undertaken by Kent FRS into how people behave when faced with a fire in their home. Neil Odin was also welcomed to the meeting, which he was attending as CFOA were responsible for ensuring the delivery of areas of the SEFIP Business Plan.
- d) Councillor Smith was congratulated on his award of the George Medal for tackling and subduing a gunman armed with a semi-automatic weapon on board HMS Astute, which was in Southampton for a liaison visit. Councillor Smith said that this huge honour was totally unexpected.
- e) Councillor Dudley then went on to congratulate East Sussex FRS on its award of 'Excellent' in the Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework and Councillor Livings congratulated all staff within ESFRS for their continuing work in achieving this accolade.
- f) Royal Berkshire FRS was also congratulated on winning the 'Fire Project of the Year' at the Improvement & Efficiency Awards for their mobile Incident Command Unit (ICU). Acting CFO Baars also paid tribute to Cambridgeshire & Suffolk and Hertfordshire FRSSs, the two other shortlisted FRSSs.

2/12 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN and VICE-CHAIRMAN (Item 2)

Members noted that it was normal for the SEFIP Board to elect a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman at its Annual General Meeting. As there had been less formal business undertaken by the SEFIP Board this year due to the government's move away from regional structures, the fact that improvement funding was coming to an end, and the new draft Fire & Rescue National Framework was removing the requirement for formal Regional Management Boards, the current Chairman and Vice-Chairman had offered to continue in their roles for a further period of up to one year.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Dudley was elected as Chairman and Councillor Abraham Vice-Chairman.

3/12 APPOINTMENT OF CLERK (Item 3)

Acting CFO Baars (Royal Berkshire) agreed to be the Clerk to the Board for 2012/13, with administrative support continuing to be provided by East Sussex.

4/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 4)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Abraham (Isle of Wight), Field (West Sussex) and Hammond (Surrey), and CFO Apter (Isle of Wight).

5/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 6)

There were none.

6/12 PROCEDURAL MATTERS (Item 6)

There were no procedural issues; no questions had been received.

7/12 MINUTES OF THE LAST FORMAL MEETING – 6 APRIL 2011 (Item 7)

12/11 – Arrangements for Future Meetings

CE Millington pointed out that London was the preferred location for informal meetings of the SEFIP Board. Current legislation laid down that formal meetings of the Board had to be held within the Region¹.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above, the minutes of the last formal meeting held on 6 April 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8/12 MATTERS ARISING (Item 8)

11/11 – The Future of Fire & Rescue Control Services – Consultation Response

CFO Bonney reported that the Local Authority Controlled Company had now been formally wound up, legalities completed, and the project closed.

17/11 (1) – East Sussex Annual Pride Parade

CFO Prichard reported that last year's annual Pride Brighton & Hove parade had been very successful, with a high profile of CFOs and Chairs from the Region, and he would send out an early notification for this year's event in the hope that even more could attend². Councillor Rowlands asked whether there would be a conference held the day before, which had been very successful in 2010, and CFO Prichard would take this up with the CFOA Equalities Group, although he stressed that sponsorship would be needed.

¹ This is not a formal requirement, but it was felt to be unreasonable to expect members of the public to travel outside of the Region for a public meeting

² The PRIDE event is scheduled to take place over the weekend of 1st and 2nd September 2012

17/11 (2) – LGA Fire Management Committee

Councillor Rowlands informed the meeting that he had spoken to John Raynsford, Chief Executive of the LGA, about Members' concerns regarding the Chairman to the LGA Fire Management Committee being appointed, rather than elected. Councillor Rowlands pointed out that the current Chairman was due to be replaced in May 2012, with the appointment being made by Sir Merrick Cockell, and the Fire Service Management Committee would then be appointed by the new Chairman. Although he had not achieved all he had hoped, Councillor Rowlands felt that he had got a long way forward with his endeavours. Councillor Dudley agreed that this should be taken further, with CFAs being given their due recognition.

9/12 CORRESPONDENCE (Item 9)

The only correspondence received was the consultation on the National Framework for Fire & Rescue Services (see minute no 12/12 below).

10/12 HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN FIRE (Item 10)

CE Ann Millington introduced Owain Thompson (Community Safety Researcher) and David Wales (Investigation and Research Manager) who gave a presentation on the research being undertaken by Kent FRS into how people behave when faced with a fire in their home. Owain and David had won the FIRE Magazine/Gore Research Excellence Award and were keen to roll out their findings across the Region and, eventually, nationally in order to persuade others to join in the research and thereby expand the database of findings. They are offering the survey for others to use but stressed that this should be used as offered and not tailored to local needs as they were keen to maintain the validity of the tool.

CE Ann Millington informed members that it was hoped that the research would provide valuable information which would enable fire authorities to gain a better understanding of how people behave when faced with a fire in the home, and would enable community safety initiatives to be developed to address this behaviour, change perceptions and ultimately reduce risks.

Councillor Rowlands asked whether this work could be taken to the general public and schools and CE Millington replied that this would eventually be part of the potential community safety actions but we needed to ensure the research was carried out first. They would be contacting Dave Curry, the CFOA lead on protection and prevention to ensure he is aware of the work. Mr Wales thanked East Sussex for their input from their Black Museum

CFO Jones suggested that this work be presented to the Annual Research Event at the Fire Service College in November, and asked whether the high percentage of intoxicated victims had been taken into account in the research. Mr Thompson explained that they still had a lot to learn but the high response rate showed how well-trusted FRSs are. Information on the Burns Unit database at East Grinstead would reveal mitigating circumstances and they were still working hard to be able to align with this information.

CFO Bonney was very interested in how this research challenged the long-established advice to 'Get Out, Stay Out, and Call the Fire Brigade' which appeared to be peripheral to survivability but would be difficult to change now. CFO Prichard agreed with this and hoped the research results would help tailor how human behaviour is dealt with.

Mr Wales said that decisions would be underpinned by increased knowledge and that the Fire Safety Engineering Group at Greenwich University was very keen to work with them on this research and had £400k funding available.

Councillor Heathcoat asked whether there was any evidence regarding age and whether the elderly reacted differently to younger people, but Mr Wales said that there was not yet a big enough sample to interrogate; they also avoided asking for the cause of fire.

Councillor Dudley thanked Owain Thompson and David Wales for their presentation and recommended taking the project forward as a whole. CE Millington proposed writing to each Chief Fire Officer and Chair and, if they were interested in getting involved, Messrs Thompson and Wales could visit their respective Fire Authorities to deliver their presentation. To clarify, CE Millington recommended triangulation, with the project becoming a SEFIP project before going forward to national platforms.

RESOLVED – That the research being undertaken be noted and a further report be brought to the next meeting.

11/12 SEFIP BUSINESS PLAN 2012/15 (Item 11)

Members considered a draft of the new business plan which took into account the closer alignment between SEFIP and CFOA activities in the Region, reflected the draft National Framework where appropriate and projects commissioned as part of the last plan, as well and activities being undertaken by CFOA SE.

Richard Stanford-Beale drew Members' attention to the fact that there was no mention of Regional Management Boards in the draft National Framework, so the SE RMB had become the less formal SEFIP Board. Councillor Heathcoat was pleased that the Chief Fire Officers were taking an active role on the Board, and joining up the work of SEFIP and CFOA.

CFO Prichard asked that the first bullet-point on page 9 – 'we will jointly procure fire engines using the common specification which has been agreed by all nine authorities;' – have 'wherever possible,' added at the beginning.

CFO Bonney asked whether the work of the 13/16 Group on cross border arrangements was included in the draft plan, and was reassured that this was included on page 8, under 'Our Plans for 2012/15 – Improving interoperability and operational efficiency'.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the comments above, and some final re-wording, the draft business plan 2012/15 be approved.

12/12 CONSULTATION ON THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (Item 12)

James Finch informed Members that consultation on the National Framework had closed on 19th March 2012 and it had, therefore, been necessary for the Chairman to send a response on behalf of the Board as urgent action.

CFO Bonney felt that there was a lack of clarity around national arrangements for resilience and the partnership between CFOA and the LGA and he was keen to ensure that the government meets existing and emerging threats.

Mr Finch again referred to the absence of any mention of Regional Management Boards in the draft Framework. He would bring a report to the next meeting, to include proposed Terms of Reference for this Board, and the dissolution of the Regional Management Board.

RESOLVED – That the following be noted:

- 1) the consultation response, which was agreed as urgent action with the Chairman; and
- 2) the requirement to operate a Regional Management Board has been formally removed from the National Framework.

13/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Item 13)

11 July 2012, if required – to be confirmed by James Finch
3 October 2012, at a venue to be arranged.

14/12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Item 14)

There were no items in relation to which the SEFIP Board resolved that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting.

15/12 OTHER BUSINESS FOR INFORMATION

There was none.

It was noted that two members of the public were present:

Danni Armstrong, Regional Secretary FBU South East
Ricky Matthews, Regional Secretary FBU Southern Region

The meeting closed at 12:25 hours.

.....Chairman