

11 April 2008

FiReControl update – CLG paper

Accommodation

Buildings

1. *Four regional control centres (RCC) have been completed – in the East Midlands, West Midlands, North East and South West. Construction at the remaining sites is progressing well. The South East is on track for completion in May and the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside and the East of England are on course for completion this year. The London RCC has achieved planning consent subject to settlement of the detailed Section 106 provisions. Construction is scheduled to start later in 2008.*

National facilities management contract

2. *A preferred facilities management supplier has been selected. Seven dates in April and May have been scheduled for FM presentations to the Local Authority Controlled Companies (or appropriate regional bodies) and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). At these, Communities and Local Government will be asking LACCs to agree to take on and manage the FM contract for their RCC. Presenters will aim to explain the detail of the FM contract to decision-makers, and to answer any questions.*

Technology

3. *CLG is working with EADS (the technology delivery partner) on various products that will enable the FiReControl solution to be implemented. One of the early products is the Data Capture and Migration Toolkit.*

Data Capture and Migration Toolkit (DCMT)

4. *The DCMT is being delivered in a number of phases to allow FRSs to start working on the preparation of their data while further DCMT functionality is developed and rolled out. The first phase of development of the toolkit is referred to as DCMT1. This deals with the capture of land and property information (also known as gazetteer information). User assurance testing (UAT) on DCMT1 took place in March, with substantive input from a range of FRSs. A number of issues were identified during the testing. It was therefore not practical to install the DCMT1 equipment for early adopters in the week commencing 17 March as planned. A remedial plan has been received and agreed and training and installation to early adopters is due to commence in May.*

People and Organisation Design (POD)

Recruitment

5. *Short listing has taken place for RCC director recruitment for Yorkshire and Humberside and the North West and 12 candidates are going forward to the assessment centre in April.*

6. *The Department has developed a staffing model based on a widely recognised and accepted, industry-standard approach for estimating the staff numbers required to meet a given service level in call handling environments – and has shared this with the regions to help them determine their own staffing numbers. All but one region has had a session on the staffing model workings and assumptions. These have been very well received and have provided reassurance about the robustness of the model.*
7. *Work continues on modelling the spate conditions experienced during the floods on 18 January, 25 June and 20 July 2007 to test the performance in the network under these conditions. The outcome of this work will be reported back to stakeholders.*
8. *The numbers issued by the Department to the regions thus far are the indicative numbers resulting from the staffing model only. The actual number of staff to be employed in each region is a decision for each LACC to make, and the indicative numbers from the staffing model are provided to aid that decision-making.*
9. *The South West announced their staffing numbers for steady state operation on 31 March. They are the first region to do this and other regions will follow later, although the numbers will vary by region. The South West has found that once the centre is operating in a steady state in 2012, handling calls across the South West, 63 control staff will be needed. During the transition from the seven control rooms to the SW RCC, the SWRCC will have a higher number of staff to ensure a smooth changeover.*

General

Business Case

10. *The Department intended to publish the business case in February. However elected members and other stakeholders suggested it would be more meaningful to publish the Business Case in June 2008 when more information is known. A Business Case assumptions review group involving a range of stakeholders had its first meeting on 1 April. Regional costs and savings will be included in regional annexes which will be published with the Business Case in June.*

Lease handover in North East

11. *On 17 March, the Department officially handed over the lease of the RCC building in Durham to the North East Company at an event attended by Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda.*

South East regional event

12. *On 25 March the South East held a regional event for elected members and principal officers at the Charing Cross Hotel in London. The purpose of the event was to update attendees on FReControl and Firelink and answer questions. South East regional project director Martin Burrell hosted the day. Other speakers included LGA FReControl representative Cllr Jerry Willmott and Fire and Resilience programme director John McCarthy.*

Avon joins the South West LACC

13. *Avon Fire Authority (AFA) has appointed a Director to the LACC which will run the South West RCC in Taunton. At a meeting on Friday, 28 March AFA members agreed that as the project to merge all fire control rooms in the South West moves into a critical phase, it was time to appoint a Director to represent the interests of its staff. Avon has not yet*

signed up to the RCC and no decision on this will be made until the full business is published in June 2008.

Minister inspects Swedish emergency call handling technology

14. *Fire Minister Parmjit Dhandu and FiReControl project manager Richard How went to Stockholm to view the SOS Alarm which is responsible for taking emergency calls and coordinating rescue work in Sweden. Their network of control rooms handles emergencies in a similar way to the FiReControl network and will use some of the same technology. It was useful to see how these technologies are applied in Sweden.*

Flood report supports FiReControl

15. *Sir Ken Knight's flood report was published on 17 March. The report sets out the findings and recommendations from the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's review of the operational response by the Fire and Rescue Service to the wide scale flooding in England during the summer of 2007.*
16. *The findings from the review underpin and support the rationale for FiReControl:*

"FiReControl is a significant national project which will enhance resilience, including capacity for call handling." Chapter two – paragraph 45
17. *The report can be downloaded from the Department's website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/floodingreview>*

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