

18 June 2010

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## **FiReControl**

### **Summary**

Members will receive an update on the FiReControl project from Roger Hargreaves, Programme Director at CLG. Members are also asked to note the LGA's briefing on the CLG Select Committee report on FiReControl.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- receive an update on the project
- note the Select Committee's report

### **Action**

As decided by members.

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## FiReControl

### Background

1. At the February 2010 meeting of the Fire Services Forum, Members expressed a number of concerns over FiReControl, stating that the quality of information available to Fire and Rescue Authorities on the project and project milestones was below the expected standard, and that uncertainties over implementation of the project were proving detrimental to local planning assumptions and staff morale.
2. Members asked that an up-to-date project plan for the FiReControl project, with clear milestones, be brought forward by officers. This has not been made available to us by CLG at the time of writing this report. Fire and Rescue Authorities maintain that confidence in the project remains low as equipment that has been provided to the service, such as Mobile Data Terminals, are of poor quality and do not always function well.
3. Since the Forum discussed the FiReControl project at its meeting in February, there have been two significant developments: the publication of the Select Committee report and a new government in power.

### CLG Select Committee report

4. On 1 April, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee published its report into FiReControl. The Select Committee came to the same conclusion as the LGA: that the FiReControl project was “inadequately planned, poorly executed, and badly managed” and that fire authorities should not be out of pocket as a result of delays in the project. The Committee concluded that given the investment of public funds already committed, and the projected benefits, CLG should press ahead with the FiReControl project as it would cost £8 million more to cancel the project than if it were left to proceed. This conclusion was contingent on CLG resolving project management and contractor issues, and working more closely with end users to meet the target ‘go-live’ date of mid-2011.
5. The Committee asked that the Government report progress to the Select Committee after the general election. A briefing with a covering letter from the Chairman was sent to Forum members on 15 April (attached at **Appendix 1**).

### Position of the new government

6. At the time of writing this report, uncertainty remains over the future of the project. The new Government is currently examining the case for and against

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continuation of FiReControl, and is expected to come to a more concrete position on the project within the next few weeks.

7. Bob Neill MP has been appointed by the Government as the new Fire Minister, and the LGA Group is of course very keen to ensure that we have an early discussion with the Minister, and continue to be involved in discussions with the project contractors and with other partners involved in successful delivery of the project and to ensure that the Group continues to represent and champion the views of member Authorities.

## **Financial Implications**

8. The previous Government committed that any costs arising from the FiReControl programme will be fully met by CLG under New Burdens principles. This includes development and implementation of the new ICT infrastructure and grants for any agreed net additional costs incurred by authorities in implementing the change, including those resulting from project delays. The new Government's position is not known.

## **Implications for Wales**

9. This is an England only project and therefore none identified.

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