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This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular informs Fire and Rescue Authorities and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service of progress with the Fire and Resilience Programme.		

Fire and Resilience Programme Highlights – May 2009

Issued by:

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FRS Development Division

Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue
Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and
Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

Summary

This continues the series of monthly 'highlights' notes to inform Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) of progress with the Programme.

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1.0 New Dimension

CLG RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC) REPORT

- 1.1 On 12 March 2009 the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published their report on the New Dimension Programme, with eight conclusions and recommendations for the Department to consider. This followed publication of the National Audit Office's value for money review on 31 October 2008 and the subsequent PAC Hearing of 10 November 2008.
- 1.2 Following careful consideration of the Committee's recommendations, the Department published its formal response, via Treasury Minutes on 20 May 2009. This can be found on The Stationery Office (TSO) web-site at the web-link below. The New Dimension response is the Tenth Report and can be found between pages 41-48: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm76/7622/7622.pdf>

2.0 Firelink

PHASE A

- 2.1 All scheduled interim solution installations and connections to current English control rooms are complete. Of some 1,200 base stations earmarked for upgrading for extra resilience, an average of 96% have so far been upgraded in England (100% in London), 95% in Scotland and 78% in Wales. This generally reflects the status of rollout in each country at this stage.

PHASE B ROLLOUT

- 2.2 Operational rollout to FRS appliances and officers' cars continues to go well. 24 English FRSs are now complete and a further 15 are in the process of fit out. FRSs are generally pleased with the quality of installation work, and with the technology and training provided.
- 2.3 Phase B rollout of the combined voice and data solution in Scotland is due to start in June, and in Wales in July. More than 4,500 vehicles are fitted with Firelink equipment, equivalent to over 50% of the final target of 8,440. With the assistance of Regional Rollout Boards and FRSs, adjustments to start and finish times for some FRS rollouts were achieved within existing regional rollout windows.
- 2.4 As expected on a rollout of this scale, there have been a number of technical snags needing resolution. Together the project team, FRSs and contractor have resolved all the problems that have arisen.

PHASE C PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- 2.5 The first stage of Phase C rollout, the provision of a test bed in the Airwave reference centre within the EADS complex at Newport, is now up and running. The prototype Firelink RCC interface equipment (SAN H) has successfully completed its Proof of Concept testing, and has been delivered to RCCs in the SW, EM and NE regions.

- 2.6 The Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) requirement and software specification has been fixed by FiReControl, the associated hardware has been ordered by Firelink, and a draft joint plan is being drawn up.

3.0 FiReControl

FORMAL OPENING OF NORTH WEST REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE

- 3.1 On Monday 27 April 2009 North West FiReControl Ltd hosted an event to formally open the Regional Control Centre building for corporate business, ahead of the facility becoming fully operational in early 2011.
- 3.2 Fire Minister Sadiq Khan unveiled a plaque and told attendees that “the lease handover is an important milestone and a symbol of the commitment to ownership and making a success of FiReControl in the North West region.”
- 3.3 The opening event was attended by elected members, Chief Fire Officers and other stakeholders who were briefed on the Fire and Resilience Programme, and updated on the progress of FiReControl and what it means for North West FiReControl Ltd.

FIRECONTROL BUSINESS CASE

- 3.4 The FiReControl Full Business Case was published on 6 May. It makes the detailed case for Government investment in networked Regional Control Centres (RCCs) in England to enhance the country's resilience and reflects feedback from the public consultation on the 2008 Business Case.
- 3.5 The 2009 Business Case has been published, incorporating the feedback from the consultation on last year's Business Case and Regional Cases. It can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/resilienceresponse/firecontrol/businesstcase/>
- 3.6 The Business Case headline messages are:
- FiReControl will provide vastly enhanced capability to the FRS which will benefit the general public, firefighters and control room staff at no additional cost to Fire Rescue Authorities (FRAs).
 - Total project costs to be met by CLG have stabilised at £380m.
 - Once the new network is established, a significant number of FRAs are expected to make savings as a result of the implementation of FiReControl. These are to be retained by the FRA and may be reinvested in local priorities.
 - Central government will pay £8.2m per annum to the remaining FRAs in the form of FiReControl payments. This will ensure that all the FRAs break even and that no FRA will bear an additional cost as a result of FiReControl implementation.

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