

Circular number	3/2010	Date issued	26 February 2010
This circular is	For information	No response required	
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 – January/February 2010

Issued by:

Barbara Stewart

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
London Fire Commissioner
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

Summary

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

For further information, contact:

Barbara Stewart
Fire and Resilience Directorate
Communities and Local Government
Zone 3/B1 Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Direct line **0303 444 2940**

Fax

E-mail barbara.stewart@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Website

www.communities.gov.uk

1.0 NEW DIMENSION

IN-SERVICE MANAGEMENT (ISM)

- 1.1 On 16 December 2009 (FSC 74/2009) CLG announced the appointment of the new chair and 4 Board members to Firebuy Ltd, the Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPBs) responsible for national procurement for the Fire and Rescue Service in England. CLG also published its response to the consultation on the future – “in-service” management of the Fire and Resilience Programme. This confirmed the NDPBs wider future contract management role.
- 1.2 The ISM Transition Board which manages the development and implementation of governance arrangements held its first monthly meeting on 21 January 2010. This group reports and makes recommendations to the Oversight Board which provides the strategic guidance, direction and monitoring of ISM arrangements. It held its first bi-monthly meeting on 11 February 2010. There is a further ISM Working Group working with stakeholders and contractors on the detailed processes and interfaces between users and contractors.

NEW DIMENSION TRANSFER OF ASSETS

- 1.3 Fire and Rescue Authorities will be aware of FSC 52/2009 issued in September 2009, through which, CLG sought sign-up by FRAs to the transfer of ownership of New Dimension assets. To date, CLG has received notification from over half of all FRAs agreeing to the transfer and several more FRAs have indicated that this issue will be considered at their forthcoming authority meetings or committees.
- 1.4 At the request of the Fire Finance Network in January, the Department has since agreed that the transfer can be enacted next financial year (on 1 April 2010), where authority's have difficulty with this being undertaken this financial year (31 March 2010) as originally planned.
- 1.5 Work is now being undertaken by the Department to prepare for the transfer (particularly relating to the financial and accounting issues) and to ensure that the relevant Transfer Agreements are signed and sealed accordingly.
- 1.6 Where particular FRAs have declined asset transfer or responded with additional queries on the issue, the Department will be providing responses in due course.
- 1.7 A copy of FRS Circular 52/2009 on New Dimension asset transfer can be found at the link below:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsc592009>

COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT (CAA)

- 1.8 The Audit Commission's first Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA) were published in December 2009. CAA produces 2 judgements:
 - an Area Assessment for each of the 152 local strategic partnerships, and
 - An Organisational Assessment for each fire and rescue authority (FRA)

- No red (indication of concern) or green (very prominent contribution in Local Area Agreement delivery) flags were given to FRAs.
- 45 FRAs received an Organisational Assessment (Isle of Scilly was exempt in 2009), 27 (60%) of which received the top two scores.
- 17 (37%) of FRAs received the top two scores for Use of Resources.

More detail can be found on the One Place website at:

<http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

2.0 FIRECONTROL

HOUSE OF COMMONS CLG SELECT COMMITTEE

- 2.1 Following their call for written evidence, the Select Committee held two sessions for oral evidence on 8 February. This was part of their inquiry into FiReControl.
- 2.2 The first session heard evidence from Matt Wrack (FBU General Secretary), John Bonney (CFOA President) and Councillors Brian Coleman and James Pearson (LGA). The second session was with Fire Minister Shahid Khan MP, Sir Ken Knight (Chief Fire and Resilience Advisor), Shona Dunn (Director for Fire and Resilience, CLG), Robin Southwell (EADS) and Roger Diggle (EADS).
- 2.3 The sessions were well attended and provided the opportunity for Select Committee members to hear a range of view on the project. Their report is expected in March.
- 2.4 Views expressed in the sessions were well covered in the media – particularly in regional and trade press titles.

COMPLETION OF BUILDING PROGRAMME

- 2.5 The London Regional Control Centre (RCC) in Merton has now reached practical completion. This is the last of the nine RCC buildings to be completed and so marks the end of the building programme. It has been completed on time.
- 2.6 Cllr Brian Coleman, Chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) visited the building in early February.

PROGRESS ON THE PROJECT

- 2.7 Early station end equipment (ESEE) for mobilising resources in local fire stations continues to be rolled out. Installation began in Buckinghamshire on 22 February and continues in Devon & Somerset and Oxfordshire FRSs.
- 2.8 Installation of mobile data terminals (MDT1As) have been completed in fire appliances in five fire and rescue services. A further ten FRSs are now having their MDT1As installed. The 'train the trainer' courses on their equipment have now finished.

2.9 Views are invited by 5 March on the consultation on the principals behind the agreement between local authority controlled companies (LACC) and Communities and Local Government. The consultation was published at the beginning of December. Responses should be sent to firecontrolagreement@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

3.0 FIRELINK

3.1 We are now reaching the end of Firelink radio installations with completion of roll-out in London Fire Brigade within sight. The improvement in the clarity of voice communication over the Firelink system has often been remarked upon by FRS personnel.

3.2 The next phase will be the roll-out of mobile data terminals (MDT2) in preparation for transfer to the Regional Control Centres. Members of the Firelink team have attended regional roll-out boards to provide an update on the MDT2 planning work which has been undertaken so far. In the summer we will be holding a series of workshops covering the issues relating to the transfer from legacy systems to MDT2. Information on the workshops has already been sent to Fire and Rescue Services. If you would like further details please contact your Firelink regional delivery team.

Barbara Stewart

FRS Development Division