

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 MAY 2010

**FIRE SERVICE COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM – THE
FiReControl AND FireLink PROJECTS**

**Report by Assistant Chief Fire Officer Colin Thomas (Oxfordshire's Senior
User for the FiReControl and FireLink Projects and Joint Regional
Project Board Member)**

Project Summary

- **CLG Project Planning Review** Following on from an announcement that the supplier of the mobilising system had been changed the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is carrying out a comprehensive review of the planning assumptions for the FiReControl project. The results of this work are expected to be known in June 2010. The outcome could require a further delay to implementation. The final decision will rest with Ministers and any announcement could be further delayed as a result of the election. Meanwhile Oxfordshire continue to work to the current plan with a cutover to the Regional Control Centre (RCC) in July 2012. Contingency planning based on a mid 2013 cutover continues.
- **Select Committee** The report from the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Select Committee review of the progress of the FiReControl project was issued in April 2010. It is highly critical of both CLG and EADS management of the project (the prime contractor for FiReControl) but does not criticise the supporting role of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). However, while critical of performance so far, it concludes that it is still better to proceed, putting in place the necessary improvement in CLG and contractor performance, rather than cancel the project. The report is available on the CLG website and links to this have been placed on the project pages on the internal and public Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) website.
- **Consultation** The next SE Consultation Forum will take place in May 2010. The "Reasonableness" policy for TUPE is currently being consulted on and the expectation is that a process to determine the Control staff preferences as part of the TUPE work will take place later this year with each individual staff member potentially impacted by the project being involved. This is a vital element of the project and we continue to ensure our staff and their representative bodies are fully engaged in this process. In addition a review of current support to these staff is underway.
- **Early Station End Equipment (ESEE)** The installation of the FiReControl ESEE equipment at all our fire stations was completed in March 2010. The programme ran to time and budget producing high quality replacement station ends. OFRS will have integrated all the new terminal equipment with our mobilising system by the end of April 2010. This is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that all relevant Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (OFRS) mobilising and communications equipment and systems are refreshed or replaced in preparation to cut over.

- **Current Resilience** Detailed planning for the partial replacement of our existing call concentrator system (the software and hardware that “presents” and integrates incoming telephone and radio calls to the Fire Control Operator) has commenced with a goal that the replacement system will be operational by the end of the year.
- **Data Migration** As part of the planning review CLG has tasked all FRSs with reviewing their migration planning and developing the supporting business processes. This is a major piece of work. This task was issued in April and CLG have given a target date of 2 June 2010 to complete activity. Following assessment OFRS have informed CLG that this is unachievable with our current workload. Discussions are underway to agree a revised deadline.
- **Ways of Working (WoW)** We are supporting the South East workshops in support of the new CLG process but remain concerned over the ongoing delay to the release of documentation.
- **Early Deployment of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)** Roll-out of the programme to fit Mobile Data Terminals started in our appliances on 19 April 2010. This initial hardware deployment phase is planned to be completed on 16 July 2010. A detailed project plan involving vehicle movements, fitting testing and the training of all staff is in place. The MDTs will have a core capability of mapping with hydrant data (with GPS), hazardous material information and car safety information for crash recovery work. Full operational capability, including local risk information and standard operating procedures will be developed over the following months following a period of initial roll out evaluation.
- **South East Fire Regional Control Centre LTD (SEFRCC) Activity** Councillor Rodney Rose remains as the nominated Director on the SEFRCC Board. Recent activity has been to authorise consultation (including with individual Fire Authorities) over several Human Resource policies which will determine aspects of the organisational design and processes for the “Staffing for Go Live” Plan which is a key determinant of successful transfer of function. Councillor Rose is the lead Director for Health and Safety matters and has been overseeing the actions of the SEFRCC Service Support Manager in creating the Safety Management System for the Regional Control Centre. Staff from Oxfordshire are providing support where appropriate.

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