

**SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
26 OCTOBER 2009**

**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)

Purpose/Background

- Regular update for the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Project Summary

- General assessment – The pace of project related work is increasing. We have now completed the electrical enabling work in our fire stations for the installation of the early station end equipment with the first trial installation scheduled for November this year. At the same time we are continuing to review documentation on the harmonising of procedures and processes across the English Fire Services. The planning for the project to install mobile data terminals in our operational vehicles has started. These systems, effectively a computer in cab, will enable crews to access a far greater range of information at incidents than is currently available. We expect this programme to start on 20 April 2010. We continue to proceed (albeit slowly) with migrating our Gazetteer data to the formats required for the RCC systems. This should be aided by the upgrade of the CLG provided system to do this on 30 September and by its eventual replacement in the new year with a system that will allow us to start work on the remaining 11 data sets. Whilst our planned cutover of July 2012 appears a long way off, the sheer volume of work that must be done in good time, and to a high standard, represents a significant risk, particularly in terms of the resource required to accomplish it.

Ongoing Work

- **Consultation** – The Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) has now held the second Consultation Forum issuing new documentation to representative bodies and FRSs for formal consultation. The response time for the first round of documentation has been extended until 4 November in order to give more time for meaningful responses. The FRS is fully engaged with this to ensure our staff have access to all of the information and that their views are represented to the LACC during the consultation period. Our priority is to ensure our staff are fully supported and informed during this process.
- **Early Station End Equipment (ESEE)** – We have now completed all the enabling work to upgrade the electrical infrastructure in our fire stations in preparation for the fitting of FiReControl Early Station End Equipment (ESEE).

A trial installation of the FiReControl equipment at Bicester Fire Station is planned for late November 2009 to allow us to extensively test the equipment and ensure it integrates seamlessly with our existing mobilisation system. The full installation programme is then planned to start on 11 January 2010 and should take around 12 weeks to complete. We cannot afford to have this roll-out delayed as the installation of the mobile data terminals follows immediately after it and the same specialist staff are required to support both activities but could not do so in parallel. We are also currently half way through an 8 week project to replace the Alerter Aerials and feeders at all our fire stations to ensure that our front line system to mobilise our fire fighters performs as well and is as resilient as possible. The current pace of project work is posing a challenge for our Communications and Project support team.

- **Data Migration** – The upgrade of our Data Conversion and Migration Toolkit 1 (DCMT1) is planned to be completed on 30 September. We should then have access to an up-to-date version of the National Land and Property Gazetteer information (NLPG) which will greatly aid the work to match our Gazetteer data to the new system. A successor to DCMT1, DCMT2, is expected to be available early in the new year. We hope that this new system will be integrated onto the Oxfordshire County Council network, which should make the work to migrate all the rest of the required data more efficient. Nonetheless, the preparation of the necessary data for RCC use is both a critical and labour intensive activity. We have recently attempted to estimate the work involved and our current (and tentative) estimate is a total resource requirement of 1220 person days. This does not include the current work we are doing on the Gazetteer.
- **Ways of Working (WoW)** – This work is ongoing with 58 of the 68 initial 'Principles' documents reviewed. Once this process is complete we should start to receive the full documents which should set out in detail all the FRS activity, processes and procedures we will need to adopt to work effectively with the RCC. This is another potential resource intensive activity.
- **Internal Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)** – A significant number of activities, many currently carried out in our Control Room, will not be supported by the RCC. It has been decided that the SE Region's FRSs will look at this in a coherent manner using a BPR process used by Hampshire. To that end, Hampshire staff are coming to brief us on the process on 5 November 2009. Following that we will carry out the necessary analysis on our RCC support tasks to allow a SE picture to be available by March 2010.
- **Early Deployment of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)** – This project is a combined FireLink and FiReControl activity with FireLink installing the hardware and FiReControl the software. We are planning to hold our first detailed planning meeting on 5 October 2009. A limited amount of national level planning information has been issued which we will use as a basis for this work. There are a significant number of activities required to successfully introduce this new equipment. We need to ensure we can support the programme to fit it in our vehicles (very much like FireLink Phase B). We need to ensure we can prepare our data to be loaded on the devices and be

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able to maintain and update it in use. We will require ICT assistance to allow wireless connectivity and have raised a Project Brief to cover this. Importantly, all our operational and related support staff will need to be trained – a significant task on its own. We expect the installation to start on 20 April 2010.

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Glossary

CLG	<i>Communities and Local Government</i>
DCMT1 (2)	<i>Data Conversion and Migration Toolkit 1 and 2 – Computers and software to translate our data to RCC standard formats</i>
EADS	<i>European Aerospace and Defence Systems – lead FiReControl company.</i>
ESEE	<i>Early Station End Equipment replacement programme</i>
IRS	<i>Incident Reporting System</i>
ICT	<i>Information and Communication Technology – The OCC ICT Department</i>
JIG	<i>FRS Joint Implementation Group</i>
MDT	<i>Mobile Data Terminal</i>
PDA	<i>Pre-Determined Attendance at incidents</i>
RCC	<i>Regional Control Centre</i>
WoW	<i>Ways of Working (this used to be called Convergence – the process of harmonizing procedures across FRSs)</i>
ACO	<i>Assistant Chief Fire Officer</i>
DCO	<i>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</i>
FCM	<i>Fire Control Manager</i>
BPR	<i>Business Process Re-engineering</i>
NLPG	<i>National Land and Property Gazetteer</i>
LACC	<i>Local Authority Controlled Company – the Company that runs the RCC</i>