

Report No: RMB/14/08
Meeting Date: 8 October 2008
Agenda Item No: 10

REPORT TO THE SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

PROPOSED LACC/RMB DECISION GOVERNANCE FOR THE REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE

KEY ISSUE/DECISION

To seek the Board's approval as to proposed decision governance arrangements for the RMB and the LACC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the implementation of the Regional Control Centre project proceeds, a number of strategic corporate decisions will need to be made and clarification of the decision making process that needs to be in place. Because of the unusual governance circumstances surrounding the project, officers are experiencing difficulty when deciding which 'Board' (RMB/LACC) they need to seek approval from.

This Report seeks Director / Member approval on the delineation between decisions to be made by the RMB, involving FRS related issues, and those to be made by the LACC on 'delivery' issues in the future.

CONSULTATION

The proposal has been discussed informally with both the RMB, LACC and Chief Fire Officers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Regional Management Board approves the proposed decision governance model as indicated at Appendix 'A' of this Report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

As contained within the Executive Summary.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2006-2008 stated that Regional Management Boards (RMBs) must:

“..... establish regional control centres as an operational priority”.

2. In addition, the Framework also stated that Fire and Rescue Authorities, through RMBs, must;

Work closely with the Government to ensure that the phased transition from existing control rooms to the new control centres is integrated with the roll-out of Firelink and delivered by the end of 2009/10;

Ensure that the local authority companies who will run the control centres on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authorities are established by 1st August 2006 in the South West, East Midlands and North East; by 1st January 2007 in the West Midlands, North West and South East; and by 1st May 2007 in Yorkshire and Humberside and the East of England;

Ensure that the new control centres comply with national guidance to be issued on staff roles, training and mobilising procedures (including fallback and recovery) and resilience;

Ensure that they observe national guidance on operating and mobilising procedures and associated systems. This requirement does not extend to standards and levels of resource deployment to emergency incidents, which are a matter for local Fire and Rescue Authorities to determine through IRMPs;

Ensure that they establish the necessary interfaces with the national network and constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities; and

Ensure that the control centres observe convergence and resilience requirements to be issued and that the staff maintain data for which they are responsible according to standards that will be defined.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

3. Therefore RMBs must integrate RCCs with the Firelink radio system, set up LACCs and comply with national guidance. However, in the new National Framework 2008-11 the emphasis appears to shift away from the RMBs and back toward separate Fire and Rescue Authorities;

4. “Fire and Rescue Authorities must:

Make preparations to move their control service to the Regional Control Centre network, complete the tasks in the FiReControl transition plan in line with the dates set out, and carry out any tasks specific to their FRS necessary for the move of their control service.

Participate actively and constructively in existing regional arrangements for the transfer of the control service to the RCC.

Ensure that the local authority controlled company in their region is established by the FRAs, working through their RMB, as soon as possible, and in good time to carry out formal requirements as a good employer and to take on the lease of the building as quickly as possible after practical completion.

Enter into agreements, at least six months before cut-over;

- a. With the RCC company in their region for the delivery of the control service on their behalf by the RCC
 - b. With Communities and Local Government and other Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide national co-ordination of the RCCs where necessary and to provide a flexible approach to the use of all FRS resources
 - c. To ensure that resources can be mobilised across Fire and Rescue Authority borders.
 - i. Co-operate fully with the FiReControl technology supplier, and any relevant sub-contractors.
 - ii. Report progress regularly to Communities and Local Government using the tools provided for that purpose".
5. As a result, there would appear to be a decision problem as to who decides on what area of the plan, when working towards final implementation of the RCC and the CLG remains silent as to a suggested resolution.
6. Further, it would be inappropriate for either the LACC or the RMB to make decisions on areas outside of their control in the future.
7. The RCC project naturally divides itself into three distinct areas of operation:
- Existing arrangements
 - Transitional arrangements
 - Final or 'Steady State'.
8. Despite the implementation of the RCC Project, individual FRSs will retain their legal responsibility for the provision of arrangements to deal with emergency calls under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004. Although they will 'discharge' or outsource the practical delivery of the Service to the RCC, the legal responsibility will still remain for that duty and the staff connected to that duty. Post 'cutover' the staff responsibility only will transfer to the RCC.

IMPLICATIONS

9. It would therefore seem appropriate that the RMB, as a collective of the FRAs in the South East, takes responsibility for 'Existing' and 'Transitional' arrangements, whilst the LACC takes decisions on the way the Service is provided post RCC 'Go Live', - Final or 'Steady State'. It should be noted that these decisions for the LACC only relate to staffing issues, e.g. conditions of service, and not to operational delivery areas such as predetermined attendances which are FRAs' responsibilities.

10. As a consequence, this would then allow for the integrity of existing FRAs to continue, allow the RMB to develop a role of 'purchaser' and allow the LACC to develop its role as 'provider' of a service to FRAs.
11. If this was agreed, the project Director, using the decision framework, would decide as to the most appropriate forum for decision making and make the necessary arrangements. If appropriate, these decisions could be copied to the Board or Company as appropriate for information.
12. In addition, taking into account the development of a sophisticated performance and monitoring system from both CLG and the Fire and Rescue Services, it seems appropriate to make a further proposal of a 'RCC User Group' consisting of, say, four Chief Fire Officers or their representatives and the RCCD. They will take responsibility for the monitoring of the practical delivery of the Service to FRAs.
13. The proposed Governance model in a visual format is explained at Appendix 'A'

CONCLUSION

14. Members are asked to approve the recommendations contained in this Report.

Appendix A

