

FiReControl  
**Questions and Answers**  
Reschedule Announcement July 2009

General Reschedule questions

**1. Is there still a case for FiReControl?**

Yes. Ministers are strongly committed to the significant benefits FiReControl will deliver to the Fire and Rescue Service and the public. FiReControl will be a key part of the critical national infrastructure; it will improve the quality of service to the public – for example in ensuring calls are answered promptly during major incidents – and increase the country's resilience by linking the resources of all regions.

The major benefits of FiReControl are:

- A more resilient system that supports FRSs in responding to major emergencies. The Regional Control Centre (RCC) network will enable back up arrangements and improve business contingency arrangements.
- Improved systems and better technology providing a more effective response to emergency calls. They will deliver networked access to up-to-date information on the nearest and most appropriate resource to any incident. This will improve local, regional and national mobilisation.
- Enhanced capability for dealing with emergency call surges and spate conditions. There will be common systems, procedures and mobilising protocols. All FRSs will have the full range of capability, which only the most advanced FRSs currently have.

**2. What progress has been made?**

The project has made significant and tangible progress. Eight of the nine Regional Control Centre (RCC) buildings are finished and work to fit them out has begun. London is on schedule for completion in 2010. All eight Local Authority Controlled Companies (LACC) have been set up (London will be run by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority) and have appointed directors and key senior management staff. New station end equipment in local fire stations is currently being installed.

**3. What is the reason for the delay?**

Progress has been slower than planned on some areas including the integration of the solution elements such as the main IT system build and operational processes. We have been monitoring progress closely with our delivery partners and as a result have developed a new delivery plan and schedule.

As stated by the former Minister for Fire, Sadiq Khan, in his written Ministerial Statement to the House of Commons on 26 November 2008 certainty of delivery dates can only be identified once the earlier stages of the project are complete.

#### **4. Is this a failed Government IT project?**

This project has not failed. We are making progress and believe the IT solutions are viable and deliverable within the new timescales. The long-term benefits outweigh the problems of short-term delays.

FRS control rooms are critical to public safety. We must ensure that all risks are fully controlled and addressed before introducing the new solution into service.

#### **5. What is the new schedule? And has the roll out order changed?**

The new timetable extends current target delivery dates by ten months. This allows additional time for:

- reworking parts of the FiReControl system where needed in the development process
- the FRS to prepare and upload data, and complete all their other preparations
- the Local Authority Controlled Companies to fully establish their own policies and complete their preparations
- a range of other contingencies.

The first Regional Control Centres will now start taking calls in spring 2011. There are some changes in order. We are publishing a more detailed timetable showing the planned cut over dates for individual FRSs.

#### **6. Which regions will 'go live' first?**

There are four regions working towards the first 'go live' date (East Midlands, West Midlands, South West and North East) although we expect only three will go live initially. This allows for contingency if one is not able, for some reason, to cut over.

#### **7. How confident are you in the new schedule?**

We are confident that the new approach and changes made to the schedule will deliver the project effectively and efficiently. However we have built in sensible allowances for contingencies at many levels within the new schedule and we will continue to monitor progress carefully in every part of the project so we can take any action needed in the future.

#### **8. What is the new delivery approach and why do you think it will work? What is different?**

The new timetable is based on an enhanced approach to delivering the FiReControl project. We believe it will enable EADS (the main contractor), the FRS and CLG to work more effectively together. It is based on a realistic and practical assessment of what needs to be delivered. There will also be a more

open monitoring regime that will enable us to check incremental progress and tackle problems much earlier, before they result in any slippage.

We have agreed a new approach for delivering the overall solution. EADS has put their Chief Technical Officer [Mark Bentall] on the project. A significant part of the CLG team are relocating to work with EADS in Newport. The FRS is making available substantial expertise to work alongside EADS and CLG. This new approach will allow EADS and their suppliers to better understand the business needs, enable better solution development on project elements and lead to decisions being made in a timely way.

We have also agreed with EADS that we will have more detailed visibility of the project plans, with a greater breakdown of deliverables and introducing short-term milestones, so we can identify any potential slippage – and take action – straight away.

The new delivery approach has been developed in close discussion with EADS, FRS, senior CLG officials and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA).

**9. What options did you look at and why did you decide to carry on with both the FiReControl project as a whole and EADS as the main IT system contractor?**

Ministers asked officials in CLG to review a wide range of options, including more radical ones, over the last few weeks. As a consequence Ministers decided that continuing with the Project and with EADS as the main contractor was the best option with the long-term benefits outweighing any short-term costs of delay. Other options do not deliver the level of benefits nor the value for money that the current FiReControl model does.

**10. Will FiReControl be delivered in time for the Olympic and Paralympic Games [27 July to 12 August, 29 August to 9 September 2012]?**

The main Olympic/Paralympic venue is in London although other FRS areas will be hosting Olympic events. The planned cutover date for London is September 2011 – ten months before the Olympics and Paralympics. We have discussed this position with officials in London and agreed to work closely with them to review risks and develop contingency arrangements should these be needed. LFEPA has enormous experience of managing major events and incidents.

The central Olympic/ Paralympic location (the Village) in London will operate as an independent unit with its own communications centre covering Police, Ambulance and Fire resources within the Village. The London control room and RCC network will support the Olympic control unit as required if additional resources are needed.

The FiReControl cutover approach does not require all FRSs to have moved their control room operations into the RCC network in order to support London and other FRSs with Olympic and Paralympic events.

### **11. Will this delay increase the risk to public safety?**

Public safety is always of utmost importance. The FRS does an excellent job in maintaining public safety. Some FRSs around the country have already installed modern technology. In the future, through FiReControl, every FRS will have access to the technology of the best. This will enable them to work together and back each other up at busy times far more easily.

We will monitor with FRSs the position of 'end of life' equipment in control rooms.

FiReControl is part of the Government's £1bn plus Fire & Resilience investment programme which aims to improve national resilience and FRSs' ability to respond to major events as well as day-to-day incidents. The programme is being rolled out incrementally:

- **New Dimension** provides the FRS with specialist equipment and training including high volume pumping for flooding, urban search and rescue for building collapse, mass decontamination and command support capability
- **Firelink** – almost two-thirds of FRSs in England now have a resilient, digital wide-area radio communications system in appliances, cars and control rooms. This will be extended to a mobile data service when FiReControl starts rolling out.
- **FiReControl** is already installing key replacement equipment such as station end equipment to assist fire and rescue authorities whose current equipment is reaching 'end of life' and requiring increased maintenance.

### **12. What is being done to ensure FRSs are not adversely affected by this delay?**

CLG has consulted the Fire and Rescue Service to understand the impact of the delay in each FRS and will work with them to ensure there is no adverse impact. We will continue to monitor the situation and discuss what additional support may be needed.

FiReControl is already installing key replacement equipment such as station end equipment to assist fire and rescue authorities with dated technology. We are committed to ensuring that legacy systems are sustainable, notwithstanding the delay.

## Costs and Savings

### **13. How much is this delay going to cost?**

Our focus is on making sure that the full benefits of the project are delivered to the FRS and through them, to the public. We firmly believe that the benefits for the long term outweigh the additional short-term costs.

CLG costs will increase by up to £40m as a result of the rescheduling – the total cost of the project is now expected to be £420m.

We are seeking to minimise the cost of rescheduling through efficiency savings on project costs. We have also reached an innovative commercial deal with EADS which sees us enter an agreement to a share of the royalties from future sales of the system. As well as offsetting costs to the taxpayer, the deal will strengthen the working relationship between CLG and EADS.

[The precise details of any contractual settlement are commercially confidential.]

#### **14. Who will pay the additional cost of the delay and where is the money coming from?**

Communities and Local Government has made a commitment to meet all the upfront costs associated with the project in accordance with new burdens principles. None of the additional cost will fall on Fire and Rescue Authorities.

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#### **15. How does this affect the FiReControl business case published in May 2009?**

The FiReControl Business Case published in May demonstrated that there is a strong case for FiReControl. The FiReControl project will deliver a resilient network which enhances FRS capability and achieves economies of scale. The project remains affordable and the main delivery risks continue to be managed proactively. The additional costs of the delay are in line with those estimated in the business case for a delay of 10 months. We will be updating the cost figures contained in the FiReControl Business Case in due course to reflect the rescheduling. We plan to discuss with regional treasurers the most appropriate means for communicating any changes to headline costs and savings figures.

#### **16. Will the delay have an impact on the potential FRA savings?**

No, the reschedule has no effect on FRA savings. The FiReControl Business Case published in May indicated that nearly half of Fire and Rescue Authorities will realise a saving through FiReControl. They will be able to keep these savings and reinvest them in frontline services. Other FRAs will be eligible for an annual FiReControl Payment. No Fire and Rescue Authority will

bear an additional cost as a result of the implementation programme, or changes to it.

### Stakeholders and staffing

#### **17. Was the FRS involved in deciding the new timeline?**

The revised timescales were developed in consultation with the LGA, CFOA and the FRS. A number of FRS representatives sit on key FiReControl decision making and advisory boards and were essential in providing feedback on the new delivery approach. We are strongly committed to delivering FiReControl with the fire and rescue community. Around a third of the national FiReControl team are FRS secondees who bring valuable experience and insight to the project.

#### **18. How are the FRSs being involved going forwards?**

Over the coming months CLG will work closely with each of the FRSs to explain the new schedule.

The Minister has written today to FRA Chairs and Local Authority Controlled Company Chairs, copied to Chief Fire Officers. Shona Dunn, the Director of CLG's Fire and Resilience Directorate, will write to Local Authority Controlled Companies and Regional Management Boards offering to visit and explain the changes.

Within the Project's governance structure, there is a range of working groups on which key FRS stakeholders are represented and aid project delivery. These cover areas such as Local and Regional Delivery, Legal, Finance and HR. The Local Government Association and CFOA are both represented within these groups and are members of FiReControl's Project Board.

CFOA has three full time representatives (four from August) working on the FiReControl project who ensure the FRS is engaged with the project and provide assurance back to the FRS that the project will deliver a solution that meets their needs.

## **North East**

### **When will North East Regional Control Centre cut over now?**

On current planning assumptions we expect the North East to be in the first group, with the RCC beginning to take calls in spring 2011.

### **How much is the delay costing in the North East?**

There are no additional costs to the Fire and Rescue Authorities as a result of the delay.

### **What happens to the staff already recruited?**

CLG will continue to fund the staff recruited and this provides an additional resource for regional activities to support and deliver the project. However, detailed staffing decisions are for individual regions.

### **Our region has Olympic and Paralympic events – will the delay risk their safety?**

All other Olympic and Paralympic event locations outside London will have an appliance on site. This is the same arrangement that is used successfully for the many other major national and international events hosted every year both in London and around the country, eg the Glastonbury festival.

We will continue to monitor and be alert to any additional risks that might arise for the Olympic and Paralympic locations.