



**NEWSLETTER – Edition 4**  
**October 15, 2009**

### News in brief

- The Regional Joint Consultative Committee met at the RCC on October 7, and the FBU recommended adoption of the policies on family care provisions, sickness absence, alcohol and substance misuse, bullying and harassment in the workplace, disciplinary procedure and grievance procedure. These policies were then formally adopted at the meeting of the Local Authority Controlled Company Board two days later – see story, right, for more Board decisions.
- Visitors to the RCC this month have included the Regional Flood Working Group – made up of all four FRSs - who held their meeting here for the second time.

### **Colin is reappointed to role**



*Colin Stockwell was reappointed as Company Secretary for two years following the meeting of the LACC Board at the RCC on 9 October.*

- A workshop for Directors of the North East Fire Control Company Ltd is due to be held at the RCC at the end of October.
- **Got a query about the RCC? Email [ahumberstone@nercc.co.uk](mailto:ahumberstone@nercc.co.uk)**

# We're getting there, says Chair Brenda

There's a long way still to go, but steady progress is being made – and the end results will be well worth the wait.

That's the view of Cllr. Brenda Forster, who was reappointed as Chair of the Local Authority Controlled Company Board at the Company's meeting on 9 October.

Cllr. Forster, a Redcar and Cleveland councillor, said she was delighted to be continuing in the role.

"The delay to our go-live that was announced earlier this year was disappointing in some ways, but in other ways very positive, because it gives us the time we need to make sure the technology is completely right," she said.

"The time will pass very quickly as we work together to put everything in place – such as training – to make sure we succeed. I'd like to thank all the staff for the patience and co-

operation they have shown – we appreciate it." Other decisions made at the Board meeting, held at the RCC, included approval of the statement of accounts for 2008/9 and the scope of work and priorities for July to December 2009.



*Cllr Brenda Forster*

The Board also approved the content of the updated Risk Register, and approved the taking up of third party rights in relation to CLG's facilities management contract with VT Flagship.

The Board also agreed that a number of human resources (HR) policies that have now been through the full local consultation process should be adopted and reviewed annually – for further details, see the News in Brief panel on the left.

## DVD film crew visits the region

A film crew which is making a DVD about a day in the life of an emergency call will be in the region later this month.

The crew has been commissioned by Wenna Tudor, Communication Manager of the South West RCC, who is co-ordinating the filming of the DVD on behalf of RCCs across the country.

The idea is to show how an emergency call will be dealt with when the RCCs go live,

and to outline the benefits that FiReControl will bring to the fire service and the public through improved technology and the creation of a resilient network where the RCCs can back each other up at spate times.

In this region, John Adamson of Durham and Darlington FRS and RCC Director Kevin Robson are being interviewed for the film. The DVD will be available for all FRS staff to see when it is finished.



## Project update



**By Helen Bashford, Regional Project Manager**

Following the announcement made during the summer, we have now confirmed the rollout order and dates for FRSs in the North East:

- Tyne and Wear – May 2011
- Durham and Darlington – July 2011
- Northumberland and Cleveland – September 2011

Clearly, delays to the go-live raise a number of risks and issues. An impact assessment has been carried out on all four FRSs, and it has confirmed that there are no immediate risks to the operational continuity of the existing Control Rooms. Other risks have been mitigated through the installation of mobile data terminal (MDT)1As.

The statement by the Fire Minister advised that the delay was due to further time required to resolve the technical problems associated with developing the IT system and to ensure that the FRS requirements can be met.

A new approach to delivery has been agreed with EADS with the aim of providing greater assurance on short-term milestones and closer engagement with FRSs.

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## Durham MPs tour centre

County Durham MPs John Cummings and Phil Wilson came on a fact-finding visit to the RCC in September as part of a meeting with Durham and Darlington Fire Authority.

Mr Cummings, MP for Easington, and Mr Wilson, MP for Sedgefield, visited the centre with Durham and Darlington FRS Chief Executive Susan Johnson, and were given a tour and a briefing by RCC Director Kevin Robson.

Susan Johnson said: "Both MPs commented on the high quality of the building and the excellent working environment for staff, and they acknowledged the huge investment made to date by the Government in this major project which would undoubtedly make a difference to national resilience. Cllr. Gordon



Tennant, Chair of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority, reiterated the Service commitment to working collaboratively with Services in the North East to deliver the project, but also stressed the need to ensure that milestones were met by the various contractors working on the project.

"He also asked that Ministers commit to sustainable funding of the project as the pressures on public spending increase."

*Mr Cummings is pictured above, left, with his parliamentary assistant Grahame Morris, right, and Mr Wilson, centre, on their visit to the RCC*

## Have you filled in the questionnaire yet?

Many thanks if you have – the information is going to be really useful! The questionnaire went out recently with an invitation from RCC Director Kevin Robson to all Control Room staff asking if they would volunteer to play a valuable part in a series of discussion groups.

These groups will look at a range of issues that will affect staff when they move to the RCC. Issues to be discussed include matters such as workwear, rest rooms and the catering facilities – and the discussion groups will help the Company to make the right decisions.

The issues don't come under TUPE transfer measures and are not part of the formal

consultation, but they are important to people and to the successful running of the RCC.

The questionnaire, compiled by HR Adviser Laura Sellers, will give the Control Room volunteers at the discussion groups some information to work with.

"We genuinely want to know what people would prefer, so we're grateful to everyone who has filled in the questionnaire. It will really help the volunteers who are coming along to take part in the discussions," she said.

The first group will take place on 13 November, and if you would like to join in, please contact your Control Room Manager.



# Working hard to get the right technology solutions

Project update by Helen Bashford – continued from P2

The Government also re-stated its commitment to meet all upfront costs associated with the implementation of the project and the principle that no FRA will bear any additional costs as a result of FiReControl.

Over the last month I have been working with the project delivery team and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to confirm some of the key deliverables in relation to the work FRSs and the region need to complete.

In reality, although go-live is May 2011, FRSs will need to have data ready, new ways of working implemented and new mobile data terminals (MDTs) and station end equipment installed in time to begin testing – this is 12 months from now.

#### Key dates include:

- **User assurance testing** begins in September 2010 (Q3) and will depend on FRSs delivering an element of their data to facilitate testing.
- **Operational assessment testing** – the end-to-end testing of all the elements of the FiReControl solution – begins in January 2011.

The next major work will focus on **attribute based mobilising**, as the North East gears up for being a pilot region to test the attribute based mobilising model.

Staff from the region are giving their expert opinion at the latest solution establishment workshops, which have been focusing on call and incident management and mobile data terminal (MDT) applications.

The workshops - led by technology contractor EADS - are designed to make sure the FiReControl project gets the best possible systems and technology for staff to work with when it goes live.

In the workshops, end-users are working with EADS and their subcontractors to help the Department for Communities and Local

Government make key decisions about the systems and technology. The sessions are being held at EADS headquarters in Newport, Wales.

People from the North East taking part include Project Business Design Manager Alison Jagers, Workstream Member Andrew Lineham and Senior Operations Manager Sue Cameron.

The workshops will run until December, and follow the successful completion of a series of component-focused sessions, which were also attended by staff from the region.

## North East takes part in project healthcheck

Staff from the North East have been taking part in the Office for Government Commerce's annual healthcheck on the FiReControl project.

The review – which has a national perspective – is focusing on two themed areas: progress with technology contractor EADS and arrangements for supporting FRS and RCC readiness.

A number of regional stakeholders were selected to take part, and in the North East, RCC Director Kevin Robson, RPM Helen Bashford and LACC Chair Cllr. Brenda Forster took part in telephone interviews.

The findings are not widely published, but rather reported direct to CLG as part of their project assurance process.

