

**10 February 2010**

**Firelink and FireControl Projects Update**

**Report by the Chief Officer**

Contact: Area Manager Bob Ratcliffe 02380 644000 Extension 2008

**1 Summary**

1.1 The Firelink (National Radio Scheme) and the FireControl Regional Control Centre (RCC) projects are national projects under the control of the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG).

1.2 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's dedicated project team continue to manage the associated work with each project. The Service is also represented within the South East regional project team and associated working groups. Cllr Roger Price continues to represent the Authority as a member of the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC).

**2 Recommendation**

2.1 That this project update be noted.

**3 Introduction and Background**

**3.1 Firelink Project**

The installation of new radios to all fire engines was completed last year. The installation of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) commenced prior to Christmas and will be completed by the end of March this year. This latest provision provides a keyboard, screen and printer, within the cab of fire engines and will provide crews with information such as:-

- Road maps
- Location of water hydrants
- Location of other water supplies (lakes, ponds and rivers)
- Plans of buildings/major risks
- Technical information on vehicle design and hazards for reference at Road Traffic Collisions
- Hazardous Materials information

This new equipment contributes to the improved provision of information at an incident, this issue is being closely monitored by the Health and Safety

Executive following an inspection last year.

### **3.2 FireControl Project**

3.2.1 The date for the South East RCC to 'go live' is March 2012. The first of the nine regional Services to switch to the RCC are Hampshire and West Sussex. The remaining seven Services will transfer to the new RCC over the following eight months and is due for completion in November 2012.

3.2.2 Whilst project work progresses to the current timelines, Services within the region continue to consider the maintenance of their existing Command and Control systems in the event of further project adjustments. Hampshire's resilience plans for our current system extend to 2014. Early consideration is now being given to ensure our capability to provide a command and control system beyond 2014 should this be necessary. In addition, there is now a South East regional project to develop options for a contingency arrangement should the Fire Control project be abandoned by government.

3.2.3 As previously reported a Select Committee Inquiry regarding the FireControl project is planned for the 8<sup>th</sup> February. The Select committee wishes to establish:

- Progress with the project so far.
- The reasons for the cost and time overrun which the project has experienced.
- What, if any, changes need to be made to the Government's plans for proceeding with the project.

As previously agreed, a submission has been made to the inquiry by the South East Regional Management Board (RMB). Chief Officer John Bonney will be representing the Chief Fire Officers Association at the inquiry. Outcomes from this inquiry will be reported to Members in due course.

### **3.3 Out of Scope (Strategic Gap)**

This work is managed by the Service's project team and involves consideration of all roles and responsibilities currently carried out by our Control staff other than the receipt of emergency calls and the mobilising of fire engines and officers. These additional responsibilities will not be transferred to the RCC and will have to be re-allocated within the Service.

### **3.4 LACC**

The planned LACC meeting was cancelled due to adverse weather and is now scheduled for the 5 February. A verbal update will be provided at the Authority meeting .

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 At this time it is difficult to confirm what the additional financial implications will be resulting from the FireControl and FireLink projects. It is felt however, from currently available information, there may be an additional burden falling to the Authority regarding the charges associated with the use of the Firelink scheme.
- 4.2 Once the Regional Control Centre is fully operational it is anticipated that both the FireControl and FireLink projects will result in additional funding burdens for the Authority. Further information regarding the financial implications will be reported when known.

## **5 People Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 There are no issues arising from this report and it is considered compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the People Impact Assessment for this project.

### **Background Information**

The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report:

None

NB The list excludes: (1) Published works and (2) Documents that disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.