The FiReControl Business Case

Part 1

Regional Case for North East
North East Regional Case

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1 The case for FiReControl

1.1 The threats we face as a nation are increasing – whether from terrorist action, extreme weather events or other large scale accidents. The Fire and Rescue Service has a central role to play in handling this threat – as already demonstrated at the Buncefield oil terminal fire, London terrorist incidents in 2005 and the flooding in summer 2007. This is why the Government is investing over £1billion in the Fire and Resilience Programme of which FiReControl is a part.

1.2 FiReControl is an integral part of the Government’s mission-critical Fire and Resilience Programme. The vision for the Fire and Resilience Programme is to deliver an effective, resilient capability that will respond seamlessly in all situations, whether they are day to day incidents, large incidents needing a regional response, or major national disasters.

1.3 The programme is made up of three inter-connected projects:

- New Dimension – providing the Fire and Rescue Service with capabilities, specialist equipment and training to deal with a range of major incidents
- Firelink – providing a single national radio system for the Fire and Rescue Service, with high levels of security and resilience, which enables emergency services to communicate with each other
- FiReControl – creating nine new networked regional control centres to improve the resilience of the Fire and Rescue Service control and its ability to respond to major emergencies and incidents.

1.4 This document provides an overview of Communities and Local Government’s case for the FiReControl Project and answers the following questions:

- What is the FiReControl Project and why is the Government investing in it?
- What is the Business Case and why is Part 1 being published now?
- What are the financial implications for the regions?
- Who will own and run the new networked RCCs?

1.5 This is Part 1 of Communities and Local Government’s Business Case, which focuses on the high level rationale for the Project together with the regional picture. Part 2, which will contain the core of the national case, is to be published later this summer.
The case for FiReControl

Communities and Local Government recognises that the 45 Fire and Rescue Authorities, including the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and the Local Authority Controlled Companies (LACCs) which will run the new RCCs have a strong interest in understanding the benefits at a local level and financial implications. To help answer the question “what does this mean for us?” nine regional cases have been developed. These set out the regional context for FiReControl, resilience and operational benefits for regions and individual FRSs, and the financial implications for the region once their RCC becomes operational.

What is the FiReControl Project and why is government investing in it?

FiReControl will create a resilient national network of nine new Regional Control Centres (RCCs) across England to replace the existing 46 stand alone Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) control rooms. Highly trained staff will provide a dedicated service supported by world class technology. This new resilient network will enhance the service provided to our communities by the Fire and Rescue Services when responding to both routine and major incidents.

The 46 stand alone control rooms in England have served their local communities and the country well, and are operated by highly professional and committed staff. Taken as a whole, however, the existing arrangements can not provide a complete solution to the threats, risks and uncertainty the public now faces.

Improving resilience

The main rationale for FiReControl is to strengthen resilience locally, regionally and nationally – giving the Fire and Rescue Service improved call handling and mobilisation capability to respond to incidents of every size and type. The FiReControl project is supported in principle by the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers Association. The report into last year’s flooding by Sir Ken Knight (the Government’s Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor) concluded that the challenges we face today – such as climate change, industrial accidents and the on-going threat from terrorism, means that England needs a modern, networked response capability. FiReControl will enable the Fire and Rescue Service to continue to deliver a first class service to the public even in extreme circumstances – which are becoming more frequent in the 21st century.

Benefits to members of the public

The main beneficiaries of FiReControl will be the public. Although people will contact the Fire and Rescue Service in exactly the same way and will not notice any discernable difference when making a call, there will be a much improved service. The caller’s location (from a mobile or land telephone) will be identified automatically. This is particularly important when someone is unable to give their exact location, for example a child, or a driver on a motorway.
1.11 The control centre computer systems will help the RCC staff to locate and mobilise appropriate resources instantly. And, critically, because there is a network with more control operators available, during a large scale emergency more calls will be able to be answered more quickly. In short, the new network will help the Fire and Rescue Service to save lives.

1.12 Information about the benefits of FiReControl for individual regions and FRSs can be found in the regional case within this document.

**Benefits to firefighters**

1.13 FiReControl will provide important benefits to firefighters, improving their safety and making them better equipped to protect the public. In future all will have access to consistent and timely information through the provision of on-board computers in their cabs. This will provide firefighters with satellite navigation technology and access – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – to vital information such as:

- floor plans to buildings and details of known risks and hazards
- information about safe handling of chemicals and motor vehicle design
- the location of the nearest hydrants and water supplies.

**Benefits to control room staff**

1.14 Control room operators have demonstrated time and again that they do an excellent job and respond magnificently in difficult circumstances. But the technology currently available to them varies significantly across the country. Individual control rooms use different technology and for the most part do not share databases, so they cannot easily work together and help each other out during periods of high demand. The patchwork of existing technology makes it difficult to deploy and manage resources outside of home boundaries when supporting neighbouring FRSs with major incidents.

1.15 The FiReControl network will provide England with a significantly more resilient system. The nine, purpose-built Regional Control Centres will be fully-networked and all control operators will have modern equipment, use the same technology and be able to work together and back each other up at busy times. The new systems will provide control room operators with world class technology to help them do their job even more effectively, including information on the nearest and most appropriate resources to any incident. FiReControl’s implementation should also help to make the provision of mutual support between FRSs more effective.
The nine RCC buildings are designed for purpose and built to a high standard and specification. They form part of England’s Critical National Infrastructure and are designed to meet standards for reducing vulnerability to terrorism and other threats, they will also be very secure buildings for control centre staff to work in. In the event of an interruption to external mains services, such as power or water, the building is designed to continue functioning for seven days. Communities and Local Government have also worked closely with FRS representatives to ensure that the RCCs provide a pleasant, safe and ergonomic working environment for all staff.

What is the Business Case and why is Part 1 being published now?

FiReControl is a major infrastructure investment project for which central government is meeting the upfront and transitional costs. Part 1 of Business Case includes important information on the expected resilience and operational benefits of FiReControl for the public, firefighters and control room staff. It also includes the costs of running the existing control service and the forecast RCC running costs. For the first time Communities and Local Government is providing information on a regional basis to help elected members and principal officers understand what FiReControl means for their region.

This document has been developed following a comprehensive and transparent process of engagement involving the Local Government Association and Fire and Rescue Service.

At the start of any large scale project a number of assumptions need to be made to estimate the overall cost. For example, estimates were required about how much the IT system would cost and the price of the building leases. Over time, as decisions were made, contracts signed and milestones reached, the areas of uncertainty diminish and it is possible to have more certainty about the predicted costs and whether savings are achievable. This continuous process has enabled Communities and Local Government to present each regional case on its own merits.

A Business Case Assumptions Review Group was set up earlier this year to review the key assumptions. This group was chaired by the Local Government Association senior user, and also included FRS principal officers, FRA treasurers, lawyers and human resources professionals. The aim was to provide stakeholders with visibility of the Business Case assumptions and an understanding of how the RCC running costs have been calculated. Some of the assumptions were modified as a result of this process.
1.21 Communities and Local Government also contracted independent accountants to work with all 46 FRAs to capture and verify the costs of running their existing control rooms. This has produced a much more accurate picture of the current costs. Information from this exercise and from the assumptions review allows a comparison to be made between FRS current operating costs and the initial costs of running the new RCC network.

1.22 The previous version of the FiReControl Business Case was published in June 2007 following the signing of a £200m contract with EADS Defence and Security to develop, deploy and maintain the FiReControl IT system. It included accurate figures for the IT contract but other aspects were estimates based upon the best known information available at the time.

1.23 Decisions on how many staff will be employed in the RCCs (and related structures, terms and conditions) are for Local Authority Controlled Companies and LFEPA to determine. Communities and Local Government has produced a staffing model to develop the Business Case, but the actual number of staff employed in RCCs may be higher or lower than indicated by the model.

1.24 Part 2 of the Business Case will contain the core national case, and will be published later this summer.

What are the financial implications of FiReControl for the regions?

1.25 Communities and Local Government is investing over £100m in new IT systems. The Department is also funding the additional costs which Fire and Rescue Authorities incur in moving from their existing controls to the new RCCs. £20m has already been paid to meet the costs of regional project teams and fund the work that the FRSs need to do to prepare for the new network and a further £58m has been allocated so far to enable FRSs to carry out further work over the next three years. Further information about national funding will be included in Part 2 of the Business Case. Details of payments to the region can be found in the second part of this document.

1.26 Communities and Local Government believe that as a result of the assumptions review process and the cost validation exercises described above the assumptions in the Business Case are prudent. However, it is recognised that in a project of this complexity business change will take time and the level of savings between regions will vary.
1.27 Larger regions can expect to make substantial savings immediately while some regions, especially London and the smaller ones, will be unlikely to be able to realise all of the potential savings straight away. Once the new RCCs are established it is expected that the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and the Local Authority Controlled Companies (LACCs) will actively explore ways to manage their costs and identify revenue making opportunities. These might include: selling off former control rooms; reorganising FRS functions and relocating these in the RCC; or, leasing spare capacity in the RCC.

1.28 Details of savings by region and the proposed resilience payments are set out in the table below. Communities and Local Government intends to provide an annual resilience payment to the regions that might incur a net cost. This payment will be kept under review to ensure that public money is used prudently and that no region is penalised by the move to the RCC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional costs, savings and resilience payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Table" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes to table:

i. All figures in Financial Year 2006-07 prices

ii. Resilience payments subject to periodic review
More detailed information can be found in the nine regional cases.1

Who will own and run the new networked RCCs?

The London RCC will be owned and run by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The other eight RCCs will be owned and run by Local Authority Controlled Companies (LACCs). Each regional company is jointly controlled by all the Fire and Rescue Authorities in that region. The purpose of the company is to provide strong and effective leadership with responsibility shared equally between all the Fire and Rescue Authorities in the region.

The local authority company model enables a high degree of local flexibility, with each region making its own decisions on how to run the RCC including in critical areas such as staffing, rostering, facilities management and financial budgeting. Communities and Local Government has produced guidance to help regions to set up their companies and continues to work with all regions to support this process.

The senior management structure of the LACCs includes an RCC Director or Chief Executive, to whom a Senior Operations Manager and a Service Support Manager report. The Senior Operations Manager is responsible for control room operations in the RCC, while the Service Support Manager is responsible for the support services such as security, facilities management and human resources.

Once the network is up and running the ongoing IT costs will be shared between the eight LACCs and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. Communities and Local Government are consulting Fire and Rescue Authorities about the mechanism for sharing these costs.

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1 There are nine regional cases for FiReControl – these can be found at www.communities.gsi.gov.uk
2 The Regional Case

2.1 This is Communities and Local Government’s Regional Case for FiReControl in the North East. It sets out the benefits that the project will bring to communities within the region. It also provides information on the financial position. Two recent exercises involving stakeholders from the region have informed this financial assessment – these were a review of current control room running costs and an exercise to review the expected costs of the new Regional Control Centres (RCCs).

2.2 The costs and savings included in this regional case are based upon common national assumptions which allow for consistency and comparability. It also recognises that costs and savings will vary as a result of decisions made by the Local Authority Controlled Companies (LACCs) which will be running the RCCs.

2.3 Decisions on staffing and other important matters will be made by LACCs and it is these companies that are taking on an increasingly important role as the project progresses toward cutover. Communities and Local Government recognises and values their efforts to achieve successful implementation of the FiReControl Project.

2.4 The valuable contribution made by staff in existing control rooms is also recognised. It is these individuals who continue to provide a critical public service during a time of change and uncertainty.

2.5 The continued and collective efforts toward successful implementation of the FiReControl Project will ensure that every Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in England is provided with the best control and mobilisation response capability to help them protect the public.

Regional overview

2.6 The North East region comprises four Fire & Rescue Authorities (FRAs): Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Durham & Darlington and Cleveland.

2.7 Although much of the region is rural and is home to Northumberland National Park and two World Heritage Sites, (Durham Cathedral and Hadrian’s Wall) the North East is also industrial as it supports the largest concentration of chemical and petrochemical complexes in Europe, as well as gas and nuclear power stations, a metro system and two international airports.
2.8 2.6 million people live in the North East region, which covers 8,771 square kilometres. The majority of the region’s residents live in urban areas such as Newcastle, Sunderland, Middlesbrough and Stockton; with 300,000 living in Northumberland, accounting for almost two thirds of the region’s land area.

2.9 The North East is well connected to the rest of England and Scotland by the East Coast Main Line railway and major road networks including the A1(M), A19, A69 and A66.

2.10 The region borders two other regions – the North West and Yorkshire & Humberside. Scotland lies to the North and although the Scottish Fire Service is not involved in the FiReControl Project, they are receiving new radio equipment as part of the Firelink project which will support communication interoperability with England’s Fire and Rescue Services (FRS).
The Regional Case

The table below provides the Regional Population by Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Population¹</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>558,206</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>600,055</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>309,866</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne and Wear</td>
<td>1,087,581</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North East region</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,555,708</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of calls received in each of these constituent Fire Authority control rooms are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Calls received²</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>14,585</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham and Darlington</td>
<td>14,724</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>7,649</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne and Wear</td>
<td>27,658</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North East region</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,618</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The North East Regional Control Centre (RCC)**

The North East RCC has been developed as part of the national network of nine RCCs across England. The building, completed in March 2007, is located on the outskirts of Durham City at Belmont Business Park. The RCC is easily accessible from the A1(M) motorway, and is a few miles from the mainline rail station in Durham.

The RCC’s address is:
North East Regional Control Centre
Belmont Business Park
Durham
DH1 1TW

¹ These figures which are for 2006 are drawn from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/fireandresiliencestatisticsandre/firestatistics/firestatisticsuk/
² Figures derived from total call and incident volume data for the period 01/11/2005 – 30/11/2006, a 13-month period subsequently annualised to represent annual estimate. Every FRS in England provided equivalent data to feed into the staffing model.
Figure 2: Regional control centre building

Distance from existing control room locations

2.12 Whilst it is recognised that distance and travel time from home is of most relevance to staff, the following table showing the distance from the current control rooms to the RCC provides an indication of the impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire &amp; Rescue Service</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyne &amp; Wear</td>
<td>West Denton</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham &amp; Darlington</td>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>Morpeth</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Hartlepool</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The North East Fire Control Company Ltd

2.13 To oversee the management of the RCC on behalf of the four Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) has been set up. The North East Fire Control Company Ltd was incorporated in January 2007 and took over the lease of the RCC building in December that year.

2.14 The company is managed by a board of eight directors comprising two elected members from each of the four FRAs. The Board is responsible for defining the policy and strategic direction of the RCC. The directors attend bi-monthly meetings and they are responsible for making the strategic decisions for the RCC including staffing numbers, shift patterns, and agreeing service level agreements with each of the four FRAs.

2.15 To advise the Board, the North East Fire Control Company has appointed a range of professionals including a Company Secretary and a Regional Control Centre Director (RCCD). The RCCD was appointed in August 2007 reports directly to the board which develops appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the smooth transition of control functions to the RCC.

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3 Distances are for car journeys according to online Route Planner.
The North East has been identified as one of the first three RCCs to go live and it is planned to be the first of the nine regions to have all of its FRSs cutover.

By March 2010 it is planned that all four FRSs in the North East should have cutover to the North East RCC.

**Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service**

2.18 Tyne and Wear FRS is the largest FRS in the region. It is a Metropolitan Fire Authority covering the two metropolitan local authorities of Newcastle and Sunderland and the three Metropolitan Boroughs of Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside. Although Tyne and Wear FRS accounts for only 6 per cent of the land area it accounts for 43 per cent of the North East's population with 16 wholetime Fire Stations and one retained Fire Station. The area supports a mix of manufacturing and service industries, with a large student population, and a range of well-developed transport links including the Metro light railway system, an international ferry terminal and a busy international airport. In recent years, tourism has become increasingly important as economic regeneration has helped the area develop a reputation for sport, shopping and nightlife. The existing control room for Tyne and Wear is located in West Denton, 15 miles from Tyne and Wear FRS HQ. It is the busiest of the control rooms in the North East.

2.19 Tyne and Wear FRS is in batch 1 of the national rollout timetable, planned to cutover to the North East RCC in October 2009.

**Durham & Darlington FRS (D&DFRS)**

2.20 Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service is a Combined Fire Authority, with 15 Fire Stations, a mix of Wholetime and Retained. There are a number of key heritage sites in the FRS area, as well as Durham & Tees Valley International Airport, rural moorland and wooded river valleys across the west, industrial and commercial towns in the east, and major development occurring in the south. The area also supports a large student population.

2.21 Durham and Darlington FRS is in batch 2 of the national rollout timetable, planned to cutover to the North East RCC in January 2010.

**Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB)**

2.22 CFB is a Combined Fire Authority covering four local authority areas; Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar & Cleveland. The Brigade has nine wholetime and six retained fire stations covering an area of unique risk with a high concentration of chemical and petro-chemical complexes. Major sites include the Wilton International site near Redcar and Seal Sands near Billingham. Also in the area is Tees and Hartlepool Port, the second busiest port in the United Kingdom by tonnage, a nuclear power station at Hartlepool, and a gas fired power station at Wilton International site.
2.23 CFB is in batch 3 of the national rollout timetable, planned to cutover to the North East RCC in March 2010.

Northumberland FRS
2.24 Northumberland FRS covers the least densely populated county in England, with people predominately located along the south-east area of the county in the larger towns of Blyth, Ashington, Cramlington, Morpeth, and Bedlington. Renowned for its natural beauty, Northumberland attracts many visitors to its National Park, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Northumberland FRS has 18 Fire Stations (including an un-crewed station on Holy Island), 12 of which are retained.

2.25 Northumberland FRS is also in batch 3 of the national rollout timetable, planned to cutover to the North East RCC at the same time as Cleveland.

Benefits

Increased resilience
2.26 A fundamental benefit of FiReControl relates to improving the resilience of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) control and mobilisation function. This means improving the ability to maintain levels of service during busy and spate conditions and also providing effective back up to a control centre if necessary.

Emergency calls overflow
2.27 Currently in the event of spate conditions or a major incident, if activity levels exceed the capacity of the home control room, the 999 operator will pass the call to neighbouring FRS control rooms. The call is processed, then passed back to the home control room by a variety of means (telephone, fax etc) in order for them to be able to mobilise resources.

2.28 The neighbouring control rooms do not have any means of establishing whether the call has already been received and processed (i.e. it is a duplicate call), nor do they have any ability to mobilise resources to the incident. They can only process the call and then try to pass the call back to the home control room for it to mobilise the appropriate resources. This process may lead to an increase in the time taken for a mobilising message to be sent.

2.29 The FiReControl Project will deliver nine networked Regional Control Centres (RCCs), which will provide additional capacity for times of peak demand (eg spate conditions). This will mean that if the North East RCC is experiencing a high volume of calls and all operators are engaged, another RCC will be able to take the call then using the same technology and data as the North East RCC, the supporting RCC will be able to establish the actual location of the incident, identify whether it is a duplicate call, and mobilise resources as necessary.
Secondary control/fallback

2.30 In addition to the improved resilience provided during peak demand, the RCC network will provide a seamless fallback service. This means that in the unlikely scenario of an RCC becoming unavailable, calls will immediately be diverted to other RCCs, which will handle the calls, mobilise resources and manage the incident in the same manner as the home RCC.

2.31 Currently, as control rooms in the North East are stand alone and have no networked functionality, each of the four FRSs have a secondary control room which can be put into operation should their main control room become unavailable. This could be for a number of reasons including fire, flood, lightning strike, power or equipment failure. In these circumstances Control Staff would physically move from the main control room to the secondary control room. As it takes time for staff to travel to the secondary control room, the four FRSs in the North East have arrangements in place for other organisations to take their calls until the secondary control room is established. This is known as ‘fallback’. Fallback control rooms are able to process calls, however in many cases they do not have the functionality of the main control room.

2.32 The table below provides detail of the contingency measures in place at each of the FRSs should their primary control room become unavailable.

2.33 Often control rooms have a range of contingency measures in place and evacuation to the secondary control room would be undertaken as a last resort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire &amp; Rescue Service</th>
<th>Fallback Control</th>
<th>Secondary Control Room Location</th>
<th>Time to arrive &amp; establish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyne &amp; Wear (T&amp;W)</td>
<td>D &amp; D FRS</td>
<td>Hebburn Fire Station</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham &amp; Darlington (D&amp;D)</td>
<td>T &amp; W FRS</td>
<td>Durham HQ</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>D &amp; D FRS</td>
<td>Amble Fire Station</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Cleveland Police</td>
<td>Middlesbrough Fire Station</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.34 While all the North East FRSs have a Secondary Control Room, Northumberland also has a tertiary control room available on the same site as the primary control room, at the FRS HQ. This could be used in the event of a failure in the primary control room provided that the FRS HQ site was not affected. The tertiary control room is much quicker to set up than the off-site secondary control room, however it requires the FRS to duplicate and maintain additional facilities.
2.35 FiReControl removes the need for individual FRSs to have secondary controls and fallback arrangements in place, as back up and resilience is inherent within the network. Currently secondary controls provide limited functionality, they take time to establish and require the four FRSs in the North East to duplicate expensive facilities to provide a limited form of local resilience. The FiReControl Project will deliver a national network which will provide a seamless fallback resource on a national scale should the North East RCC services become unavailable.

2.36 In addition to the above benefits, there are two other areas in which the region will benefit from the increased resilience provided by the implementation of the FiReControl Project.

2.37 Firstly, the new RCCs have been constructed to meet enhanced standards of physical resilience and security. They have been built to meet government security standards and have the ability to operate at full capacity for seven days whilst isolated from any mains services. Electricity and water supplies have dual feeds into the building and standby generators with seven days supply of fuel oil are provided to ensure that services are not affected.

2.38 Secondly, the information, communications and technology systems will form part of the Government’s Critical National Infrastructure, ensuring confidentiality and integrity of data.

**Enhanced capability**

2.39 Public safety and the safety of firefighters is at the heart of the FiReControl Project. The staff that work in existing control rooms do an excellent job and through the FiReControl project control room operators will be provided with best in class technology to enhance the critical service they provide to the public. Communities and Local Government are investing around £390m to provide the infrastructure to support FiReControl and the resilient national network across England. This investment avoids the FRS the cost of upgrading their existing technology which would otherwise have required local funding.

2.40 Across the four FRSs in the North East there is currently a range of technology available to support control and mobilisation. The FiReControl Project will equip every FRS in the region (and across England) with best in class technology which will support effective control and mobilisation.

**Mobile Data Terminals (MDT)**

2.41 A fundamental part of the FiReControl Project in terms of enhanced capability for frontline firefighters is the provision of the software for MDTs. The hardware for the MDTs is being provided by Firelink, another strand of the Fire and Resilience Programme, which is delivering a common inter-operable radio communications system. MDTs will be installed in cabs providing firefighters with regularly updated information including road routing information, site specific plans, chemical hazard information, hydrant information, standard operating procedures and information...
about vehicles to assist crews at vehicle accidents and fires. The FiReControl/Firelink MDT solution will enable the data stored on the equipment to be automatically updated with any changes whenever the appliance returns to station. It also enables data communication and status messaging between the appliance crew and the RCC. The use of data communication and messaging rather than a voice-only system is a faster and a more reliable form of communication for Control Room Operators.

2.42 In the North East three of the four FRSs have MDTs. Cleveland’s solution provides full functionality and MDTs have been deployed extensively across the brigade, enabling operational officers and crews to use status messaging and have access to timely, relevant information. Another FRS has MDTs on strategically selected front line appliances and one FRS has standalone MDTs.

2.43 Currently of the three FRSs with MDTs, one FRS utilises wireless live updates, the other two have arrangements in place to provide manual updates.

**Automatic Vehicle Location System (AVLS)**

2.44 The MDTs provided by FireLink, will contain a Global Positioning System (GPS) transmitter, allowing the exact location of an appliance to be known. This enables the nearest suitable resource, (in terms of time taken to arrive at an incident) to be mobilised.

2.45 AVLS is currently available in one FRS in the region, however further work is required including a review of operating procedures before this can be utilised to enable dynamic mobilising.

**Caller Identification Location Technology (EISEC/ALSAC)**

2.46 The Enhanced Information Service for Emergency Calls (EISEC) provided by British Telecom, and the Automatic Location Service for Emergency Calls (ALSEC) provided by Cable and Wireless technology will be available to control operators in the North East RCC to enable them to quickly establish the location of a caller and identify whether they are calling from a mobile phone or landline. This is particularly useful when callers are reporting incidents and they are unaware of their exact location, for example on the motorway. EISEC and ALSEC technology also assists in identifying hoax callers, saving valuable time and reducing the number of times FRS resources are mobilised unnecessarily.

2.47 Currently this technology is available in one FRS in the North East.

**Networked Solution**

2.48 The FiReControl Project will deliver a networked solution, with all nine RCCs able to access relevant gazetteer and mobilising information. This will enable staff at all RCCs to handle calls from across England, furthermore access to a premise based gazetteer will enhance the information available to control room Staff and operational crews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capability</th>
<th>T&amp;WFRS</th>
<th>D&amp;DFRS</th>
<th>NFRS</th>
<th>CFB</th>
<th>FiReControl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDTs in all Front Line Fire Appliances</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic live updates available for MDTs</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers in cabs</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite navigation providing auto routing</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Status Messaging</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVLS – Automatic Vehicle Location</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EISEC at all mobilising positions</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALSEC at all mobilising positions</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of Mobile Phone Callers</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Information System (GIS) at mobilising positions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full premises based Gazette</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic mobilising using AVLS</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T&WFRS: Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
D&DFRS: Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service
NFRS: Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
CFB: Cleveland Fire Brigade
Additional facilities

2.49 The new RCC will provide staff with a modern, ergonomically designed working environment. Excellent sanitary and shower facilities are provided as well as locker rooms for personal effects. Catering facilities are also available and it will be a decision for the North East Fire Control Company to decide how these facilities are utilised.

2.50 Safety for staff and visitors and secure parking will be provided through comprehensive site security arrangements which include perimeter fencing with gated access, electronic access systems, security guard protection and comprehensive CCTV monitoring.

Providing an efficient service

2.51 Currently, the FRSs in the North East control rooms have a total establishment of 110 posts. All four FRSs have consistent levels of staffing throughout the 24 hour period, with staff working two nine hour day shifts, followed by two fifteen hour night shifts. Due to activity levels in the control rooms varying throughout the 24 hour period, staff carry out a number of ‘non-core’ activities during periods of low activity. Work is currently underway in the Region to identify and assess the impact of these ‘out of scope’ activities and the potential for any regional collaboration in delivery of these tasks is also being explored. As the work of the RCC will be focused on ‘core’ activity, some tasks currently undertaken by control room staff may need to be managed elsewhere in the FRS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRS Control Rooms</th>
<th>Control Room Operator</th>
<th>Crew Manager</th>
<th>Watch Manager</th>
<th>Station Manager</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyne &amp; Wear</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham and Darlington</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North East region</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(“Other” for Tyne and Wear includes the Control Manager and 4 support staff and for Northumberland their Training Officer).

2.52 The introduction of RCCs will deliver economies of scale and will allow capacity to be better matched to operational demand.
Matching capacity to operational demand will involve changes to staffing levels, processes and working arrangements eg shift patterns. A staffing model has been developed by Communities and Local Government, however, ultimately it will be for the North East Fire Control Company to decide how this is taken forward.

The Communities and Local Government staffing model allows hypothetical shift patterns and indicative staffing numbers to be generated.

The purpose of the Communities and Local Government staffing model is two-fold:

- to inform financial estimates made in the Regional Case
- to provide a logical and rational basis to inform and assist the North East Regional Control Company to decide on their steady-state staffing numbers.

It is recognised that until all FRSs cut over to the new RCCs, there will be a period of transition and it will be necessary to ‘overstaff’ in order to provide the necessary resilience and performance standards.

The transition and steady-state staff numbers produced by the staffing model are purely indicative and the actual decision about staff numbers will be made by the North East Fire Control Company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Operations Managers</th>
<th>Team Leaders</th>
<th>Resource Team Leaders</th>
<th>Control Room Operators</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steady state</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are for the RCC Control Room, they do not include the senior management team and administrative support staff that will also be employed in the RCC.

The North East is able to re-run the staffing model to assess the impacts if they change certain assumptions. Key items for consideration when determining staffing levels for the RCCs are shift patterns, employees’ leave, training and holiday entitlement and the level of sickness absence anticipated. Assumptions have been made for the Communities and Local Government staffing model however the region has the ability to change the assumptions, for example adopting a different shift pattern, which will impact the numbers of staff required.
2.59 It is ultimately for the Directors of the North East Fire Control Company Ltd to decide on staffing numbers and which shift pattern they wish to adopt for the North East RCC. At the time of publication no decision has been made about staffing numbers or shift patterns.

**Transition and steady state figures**

2.60 The difference between the transition and the steady state staffing numbers is that during the transition phase not all of the RCCs will be live. It is necessary therefore to ‘overstaff’ in order to provide the required resilience and performance standards within the reduced network size.

2.61 NB. This higher transition figure will be maintained for a defined period after all nine RCCs have joined the network in order to allow for a ‘settling in’ period for the network and the RCC staff.

2.62 The additional costs of these arrangements, over and above steady state staffing, will be met by Communities and Local Government.

**Implementation costs/funding**

2.63 Government is committed to ensuring New Burdens falling on local authorities are fully funded. This commitment is called the New Burdens Doctrine. The principle for calculating New Burdens (which applies across government) is that central government will cover the net additional costs to local government generally arising from the provision of its policy objective – those costs over and above what would normally have been spent to deliver the service – and take into account any additional income or savings.

2.64 Communities and Local Government provide New Burdens funding to Local Authorities for implementation of the FiReControl Project as it is recognised that much of the delivery effort and costs fall at a local and regional level.

2.65 Since the beginning of Financial Year 2005-06 up to the close of financial year 2007-08 the North East region has received a total of £2.7 million in New Burdens funding. A further £6 million has been allocated for financial years 2008-09 to 2010-11. Table 8 below provides a breakdown by Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) and by year of these amounts.
### Table 8: North East New Burdens breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>FY 05-06</th>
<th>FY 06-07</th>
<th>FY 07-08</th>
<th>FY 08-09</th>
<th>FY 09-10</th>
<th>FY 10-11</th>
<th>Totals per FRA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Durham &amp; Darlington FRA</td>
<td>£30,153</td>
<td>£52,986</td>
<td>£293,546</td>
<td>£193,464</td>
<td>£95,660</td>
<td>£14,877</td>
<td>£680,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne &amp; Wear Fire and Rescue Authority</td>
<td>£33,948</td>
<td>£52,986</td>
<td>£388,365</td>
<td>£240,983</td>
<td>£84,828</td>
<td>£19,811</td>
<td>£820,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Fire Authority</td>
<td>£32,153</td>
<td>£52,986</td>
<td>£272,038</td>
<td>£205,473</td>
<td>£113,094</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£675,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland County Council</td>
<td>£28,814</td>
<td>£52,986</td>
<td>£248,152</td>
<td>£190,027</td>
<td>£90,946</td>
<td>£13,535</td>
<td>£624,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals per year</strong></td>
<td><strong>£125,068</strong></td>
<td><strong>£211,944</strong></td>
<td><strong>£1,202,101</strong></td>
<td><strong>£829,947</strong></td>
<td><strong>£384,528</strong></td>
<td><strong>£48,223</strong></td>
<td><strong>£2,801,811</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Regional/Company Funding (paid to lead authority)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>FY 05-06</th>
<th>FY 06-07</th>
<th>FY 07-08</th>
<th>FY 08-09</th>
<th>FY 09-10</th>
<th>FY 10-11</th>
<th>Totals per FRA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>£152,271</td>
<td>£135,832</td>
<td>£921,379</td>
<td>£2,919,587</td>
<td>£1,774,696</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£5,903,765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not all of the funding has yet been allocated for FY 2008-09 to FY 2010-11.
Ongoing costs and savings

2.66 In the North East region it currently costs £4.8m per annum to run all of the FRS control rooms. The total annual cost of running the new RCC is estimated to be £5.4m per annum. This represents a net additional cost of £0.6m per annum. Communities and Local Government will fund a resilience payment to cover this cost, this will be reviewed after three years.

2.67 This assessment represents an ‘early years’ position in the sense that it is expected that reductions to net costs are achievable during steady state when the RCC has been operating for a few years. For example, it is expected that some additional efficiencies and/or revenue generating opportunities are likely to develop.

Assessment of current costs

2.68 The assessment of current costs was informed by FRAs’ returns to Communities and Local Government which captured the total full costs of running existing control rooms. These have been verified by an independent third party accounting firm to provide a formal return from each FRA. The returns need to be adjusted in two ways to present a complete and consistent picture.

2.69 Firstly it is necessary to include an amount for ongoing maintaining and updating of existing IT. This recognises that FRAs incur costs for refreshing their existing IT infrastructure. Whilst these costs may have diminished in recent years with the knowledge that FiReControl will be implemented it is fair and reasonable to include an amount which represents the true cost were FiReControl not to have happened. The method for calculating this amount was agreed with the FiReControl Finance Working Group.

2.70 Secondly, it is recognised that some of the reported costs cannot be counted as savings and it would be inappropriate to offset them against future RCC running costs as the costs. For example, Ordnance Survey licences purchased on behalf of FRAs will still be required by FRSs after the move to the new RCCs.

Assessment of future costs

2.71 Future costs can be grouped into three core elements – staffing, accommodation and other costs, the assessment of these has been informed by the staffing model, known contract costs and assumptions developed with professional working groups. A Business Case Assumptions Review Group was set up earlier this year to review the key assumptions. This group was chaired by the Local Government Association senior user, and also included FRS principal officers, FRA treasurers, lawyers and human resources professionals. The aim was to provide stakeholders with visibility of the Business Case assumptions and an understanding of how the RCC running costs have been calculated. Some of the assumptions were modified as a result of this process.
Staffing

2.72 The LACC will have most influence over its staffing costs. The costs indicated in the pie chart are informed by the indicative staffing model which is based upon prudent national assumptions and has been through an extensive review and communication exercise. It should be noted that the staffing model was constructed to provide indicative staff numbers for each RCC in steady state. The numbers it generates are indicative and do not necessarily reflect decisions to be made by the LACC Companies which will employ RCC staff.

Accommodation

2.73 The accommodation costs are largely fixed by contractual payments that will need to be made to the landlord and the facilities management provider. As such these are costs that are known with a reasonable level of certainty. There may, however, be opportunities for LACCs to pursue income generation opportunities to offset accommodation costs. Subject to security considerations and lease conditions the RCCs could prove suitable venues for hosting of other public services/functions, either on an ad hoc or ongoing basis. To present a prudent estimate these revenue generating opportunities are not included in the costs indicated in the pie chart.

Other costs

2.74 These are predominantly IT costs but also include elements such as Group Services and data management.

2.75 Communities and Local Government are going to consult on how these costs are shared. The preferred mechanism is sharing costs on the basis of proportion of council tax base and this is the basis of the figures presented here.

Intra-regional cost apportionment

2.76 The mechanism to be applied for apportioning costs of running the RCC within a region is a matter for the region to decide through their Regional Management Board.
Regional delivery capability

2.77 One of the roles of the North East Regional Management Board is to oversee the delivery of the FiReControl Project and ensure that the obligations defined in the National Framework are met. The North East region has comprehensive project management and a delivery structure in place to ensure the appropriate governance, decision making and consultation processes can operate.

2.78 A Joint Regional Project Board has been established and Principal Officers from each of the four Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) sit on this Board. The Chair of the Board is the Regional Project Director (RPD). Other key stakeholders are represented at Board meetings including the Regional Control Centre Director (RCCD), the Business Relationship Manager (BRM) who represents Communities and Local Government, representatives from EADS, Airwave and FireLink, Legal, Financial and HR Advisors and a Senior User, who is a representative from one of the Fire Service control rooms.

2.79 The Regional Project Manager (RPM) provides regular updates for the RPD and reports to the Joint Regional Project Board on a monthly basis.

Figure 4: Regional Governance Structure
2.80 Each FRS has three (or more) dedicated members of staff working full time on the FiReControl Project including the Transition Manager, the Data Manager and a Workstream Member. At each FRS to ensure wider stakeholder involvement and effective communication, Rollout Boards have been established which are attended by managers from across the service. FRS Rollout Boards are chaired by the Principal Officer (PO), who is the representative of the FRS on the Joint Regional Project Board.

2.81 One of the key features of the North East Region is the commitment of the four FRSs to adopt, where possible a regional approach and ensure that where possible, project team members work in a collaborative way to deliver the outcomes necessary to deliver the FiReControl Project. To assist this work a Regional Delivery Team has been established.

**Regional Delivery Team**

2.82 Currently the North East FiReControl Delivery Team is operating out of the RCC. The Regional Project Manager is supported by the Project Support Officer, the Business Process/Design Workstream Manager, and the IT/IS Data Workstream Manager. They in turn work closely with workstream leads, transition managers, and data managers from each FRS.

**Figure 5: Regional Delivery Team**

![Regional Delivery Team Diagram]

**Transition and Cutover**

2.83 To ensure the successful delivery of this project, the national team have developed a transition plan, which identifies the key activities that need to be completed in order for the project to deliver the required outcomes. Checkpoints and Gateways have been identified at key stages in the process and these need to be passed in advance of cutover.
The Regional Case

Table 9: Transition timeline for the North East Region

Key: CP = Checkpoint
G = Gate
CO = Cutover

The scheduled cutover dates in respect of each FRS are listed in Table 9 above, these are accurate as at the date of publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Timeline for the North East Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week Commencing Saturday: →</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRS: North East Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRS: Tyne &amp; Wear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRS: Durham &amp; Darlington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRS: Cleveland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRS: Northumberland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standby site for Batch 1 Go live, will move to batch 2 if not required
1st 3 sites only
Feedback

Stakeholders will wish to review Part 1 of the Business Case carefully and are invited to provide feedback to richard.how@communities.gsi.gov.uk by the 30 September 2008.
Further Information

The full FiReControl Business Case: Part 1 The Regional Case is available on the Communities and Local Government website. www.communities.gov.uk/firecontrol

This comprises nine separate regional cases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0093 – 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0095 – 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0097 – 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0099 – 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0101 – 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0103 – 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0105 – 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0107 – 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>978 – 1 – 4098 – 0109 – 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are available from the Department’s website or from:

- Communities and Local Government Publications
- PO Box No 236
- Wetherby LS23 7NB
- Tel: 08701 226 236
- Fax: 08701 226 237
- Email: communities@twoten.com

July 2008

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