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**Fire and Resilience Programme Highlights – July 2008**

**Issued by:**
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**Addressed to:**
The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
The Chief Fire Officer

**Summary**
This is the fifth of a series of monthly 'highlights' notes, to inform Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) of progress with the Fire and Resilience Programme.

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1.0 FiReControl

1.1 Part 1 of the FiReControl Business Case was published on 8 July. The document, consisting of nine regional cases, focuses on the regional picture, including financial implications and benefits for the regions. It also provides a high level rationale for the project. It is available at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/resilience/firecontrol/businesscase/

1.2 Part 2 of the FiReControl Business Case, containing the core of the national case, will be published later this Summer.

1.3 A new FiReControl leaflet has been developed to increase awareness about the project for newly elected members and others new to the project. It explains what the project is, why it is being undertaken and how the new networked system will run. The leaflet is available to download at: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/firecontrolleafletjune08

1.4 Copies of the leaflet can be ordered from 020 7944 2623.

2.0 Firelink

2.1 Updated information about the new Firelink radio network, including a Frequently Asked Questions section, will be online from 6 August, at www.communities.gov.uk/fireandresilience

2.2 A new leaflet, developed for Firelink, will be available for download in this section.

2.3 Copies of the leaflet can be ordered from 01273 365 213.

2.4 A new Health and Safety DVD about the Airwave network is now available. It will be distributed by Airwave to all Chief Fire Officers and other relevant stakeholder groups, and can be ordered for distribution within your FRS from Mohammed.Rafiq@airwavesolutions.co.uk

3.0 New Dimension

3.1 On 28 July, Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda announced a three-year funding package of £80m to the Fire and Rescue Service for sustaining the New Dimension specialist resilience equipment over the CSR07 period. This follows consultation with Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) on the transfer of ownership of New Dimension assets, during which FRAs requested further information on long term funding to maintain the capability, before agreeing to the ownership transfer.

3.2 The announcement on 28 July also confirmed that Vosper Thornycroft Critical Services (VTCS) have been awarded the contract for the long-term maintenance of New Dimension assets. The contract will run for 16 years, with an option for up to four one-year extensions and will help to ensure that interoperability and national resilience requirements are maintained. Commencement of the contract is expected later in the Autumn.
3.3 Fire Service Circular 36/2008, published on 28 July, provides an update on the New Dimension Long Term Capability Management (LTCM) project, including further details on the long-term funding allocation and the maintenance contract.

4.0 National Resilience Extranet

4.1 Communities and Local Government are working jointly with the Cabinet Office to develop a National Resilience Extranet (NRE) as a means of securely sharing information between all local, regional and national responders. Successful delivery of the NRE is a key strand of the Government’s strategy for enhancing the resilience of responder telecommunications. Further details can be found at http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk/preparedness/resilient_telecommunications/govt_strategy.aspx

4.2 The NRE will enable efficient and secure exchange of information (accredited to RESTRICTED level) during both routine planning and response to emergencies, spanning events ranging from sudden impact to rising tide.

4.3 While some local responders have already implemented multi-agency private networks at a local level, the coverage of such systems is far from comprehensive and there are no agreed standards in place covering their functionality.

4.4 Delivery of the NRE will be funded by central government, with ongoing costs covered through payment of subscriptions by those who use the service. For this reason, affordability to users has been a key consideration. Access to the service will be possible through a variety of means including the government secure intranet (GSI), the police national network (PNN), and secure internet access by means of accredited token.

4.5 An invitation to tender for the NRE was published last December and following evaluation of bids received, a preferred supplier has been identified. We hope shortly to be able to move to contract award and intend to follow this up with a three-day requirements workshop in the Autumn to which key stakeholders, including the FRS, will be invited. We are looking at a target date of mid-2009 for delivery of the NRE.

4.6 There has been significant interest in this initiative across a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including central government departments, local authorities, the emergency services and utilities.

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