



The FiReControl Business Case

Part 1

Regional Case for North West

▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪ North West ▪

∴ New Dimension ∴



North West Regional Case

Contents

1 The case for FiReControl	4
What is the FiReControl Project and why is government investing in it?	5
What is the Business Case and why is Part 1 being published now?	7
What are the financial implications for the regions?	8
Who will own and run the new networked Regional Control Centres?	10
2 The Regional Case	11
Regional overview	11
Benefits	17
Implementation costs/funding	23
Ongoing costs and savings	26
Regional delivery capability	28
Feedback	32

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 £1 billion 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.

- 1.6 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?

- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 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

- 1.9 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

- 1.10 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.

- 1.16 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?

- 1.17 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.
- 1.18 This document has been developed following a comprehensive and transparent process of engagement involving the Local Government Association and Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.19 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.
- 1.20 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 FRAs, 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.

Regional costs, savings and resilience payments				
	Current control room costs* (£1000s)	Forecast RCC running costs (£1000s)	Cost/saving (£1000s)	Resilience payment (£1000s)
EE	7,439	7,373	66	0
EM	5,390	6,262	-872	872
Lon	8,683	10,898	-2,215	2,215
NE	4,803	5,405	-602	602
NW	8,828	8,426	403	0
SE	10,232	8,767	1,466	0
SW	7,056	6,992	64	0
WM	6,746	7,457	-710	710
YH	5,952	7,124	-1,172	1,172
TOTAL	65,130	68,703	-3,573	5,571

Notes to table:

- i. All figures in Financial Year 2006-07 prices
- ii. Resilience payments subject to periodic review

1.29 More detailed information can be found in the nine regional cases¹.

Who will own and run the new networked RCCs?

- 1.30 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.
- 1.31 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.
- 1.32 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.
- 1.33 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.

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 West. 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 As this is Communities and Local Government's Regional Case the costs and savings included in this document are based upon common national assumptions. This allows 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 in England is provided with the best control and mobilisation response capability to help them protect the public.

Regional overview

- 2.6 The North West Region consists of five Fire and Rescues Services (FRS) – Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside. All are Fire Authorities with the exception of Cumbria which is part of Cumbria County Council. Greater Manchester and Merseyside are both metropolitan authorities.
- 2.7 The North West is unique in that it also has two national borders; with Wales in the south and Scotland in the north. Neither of these countries are involved in the FiReControl Project but both will be receiving new radio equipment as part of the Firelink project to allow national interoperability.

Figure 1: Regional map



- 2.8 The North West benefits from very good road, rail and air links. The M6 motorway and West Coast main line (London – Glasgow) both pass through the region.
- 2.9 The population of the North West is 6.85 million. It is a very diverse region with the cities of Manchester and Liverpool being amongst the most culturally and ethnically mixed cities in Europe.
- 2.10 The region hosts international airports in Manchester, Liverpool and Blackpool. There are a number of significant industrial sites in the region including Sellafield Nuclear Power Station, the Port of Liverpool, Trafford Park Industrial Estate, BAE Systems and EVC Chemicals. The North West Region also hosts in excess of 20 per cent of England's total motorway network (second only to the South East region) and a significant stretch of the West Coast Mainline railway.

2.11 The tables below indicate the population numbers and the number of emergency calls received by the constituent FRSs within the north west region.

Table 1: Region population by FRS		
Authority	Population¹	%
Cheshire	999,884	15%
Cumbria	496,151	7%
Greater Manchester	2,553,837	37%
Lancashire	1,449,686	21%
Merseyside	1,353,596	20%
Total	6,853,154	100%

Table 2: Total emergency calls received		
Authority	Total Calls²	%
Cheshire	20,942	12%
Cumbria	7,659	4%
Greater Manchester	66,442	38%
Lancashire	33,149	19%
Merseyside	46,652	27%
Total	174,846	100%

FRS Overview – Cheshire

- 2.12 The political boundaries of Cheshire are currently in the process of being redrawn. At present there are six local authorities which make up Cheshire County Council together with two unitary authorities; Halton and Warrington. The proposed intention is that the six local authorities will be combined into two unitary authorities; City of Chester & West Cheshire, and Chester East.
- 2.13 Cheshire combines a mix of rural communities and built up industrial towns. The centre and south of the county are predominantly rural but the northern industrial belt contains many petro-chemical and chemical plants situated along the banks of the River Mersey with the county hosting the second highest number of top tier COMAH³ sites in the country.

¹ These figures which are for 2006 are drawn from:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/fireandresiliencestatisticsandrefirestatistics/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.

³ Control of Major Accident Hazards.

- 2.14 The service is currently managed by a Fire Authority made up of 21 elected members. The control centre is located centrally within the county at Winsford.

FRS Overview – Cumbria

- 2.15 Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) is the only FRS in the North West that is not a stand alone Fire Authority, as it forms part of Cumbria County Council. Cumbria is sub divided into six district councils: Allerdale and Copeland in the west, Carlisle & Eden to the north and east and Barrow and South Lakeland to the south.
- 2.16 It is a large rural service covering the area from the Lake District to the Pennines in the east and from the industrialised West Cumbrian coast to the estuaries in the south of the county. There are 38 fire stations, five full time and 33 retained, serving the county.
- 2.17 Major industrial risk premises in the county include the BAE Systems shipbuilders at Barrow in Furness and the Sellafield Ltd site at Sellafield on the west coast of the county.

FRS Overview – Greater Manchester

- 2.18 Greater Manchester is the second largest FRS in England. It covers an area of approximately 500 square miles and serves a culturally diverse population of 2.5 million people.
- 2.19 The county consists of ten metropolitan boroughs. There is a mix of high density urban areas, suburbs, semi rural and rural locations in Greater Manchester, but the county is predominantly urban.
- 2.20 The Service is currently managed by a Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) made up of 30 elected members.
- 2.21 Greater Manchester has a higher percentage of the motorway network than any other county in England and Manchester International Airport is the fourth largest in the United Kingdom.
- 2.22 The Fire and Rescue Service headquarters and control room is located at Swinton, in Salford.

FRS Overview – Lancashire

- 2.23 Lancashire Combined Fire Authority is responsible for the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in Lancashire. It is made up of 25 elected councillors drawn from Lancashire County Council (19), Blackburn with Darwen Council (3) and Blackpool Council (3). It covers an area of 1,187 square miles and is made up of six Area Commands: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, Central and Pennine. Within these areas there are 18 whole-time, 17 retained and four day crewed stations.
- 2.24 The FRS headquarters and control room are both located at Fulwood, near Preston. The Service Training Centre is based at Euxton, near Chorley.
- 2.25 The county has good road and rail links with the M6 motorway and West Coast Main railway line both running north/south through the area.

FRS Overview – Merseyside

- 2.26 Merseyside FRS covers an area of approximately 650 square kilometres and the Metropolitan County has a population of 1.4 million people. Liverpool John Lennon Airport is one of Europe's fastest growing airports. There are road and rail tunnels under the river Mersey and large dock and port facilities on both sides of the estuary. The Fire Service Headquarters is located at Bridle Road, Bootle and the Mobilising and Communications Centre is located at Derby Road, Bootle.

North West Regional Control Centre (RCC)

- 2.27 The North West RCC is located at Lingley Mere, Warrington. The RCC benefits from its proximity to both the M62 (Junction 8) and M6 (Junction 22). Rail access is via Sankey Station (approximately one mile away) on the Liverpool to Manchester railway line.
- 2.28 The building is now complete and Communities and Local Government will shortly commence a formal handover process to the Local Authority Controlled Company which will operate the RCC.

Location

North West Regional Control Centre
 Lingley Mere Business Park
 Lingley Green Avenue
 Warrington
 WA5 3UZ

Table 3: Key facts relating to FRSs within the region (i)

FRS	Service Establishment Operational	Service Establishment Support	Control Establishment	Command and Control System	Annual Incidents	Stations	Appliances (pumps)	New Dimension Assets
Cheshire	772	209	25	Remsdaq	24,482	24	35	2 x IRU 1x HVP 1xDIM
Cumbria	846	82	17	Fortek	12,170	38	50	1xIRU 1xHVP 2xDIM
Greater Manchester	2174	403	63	Motorola Procad	80,000	41	83	2xIRU 2xHVP 1xMDU 1xDIM 1xMDDU
Lancashire	1218 (FTE)	267	41 (FTE)	AssetCo (formerly Marconi)	26,033	39	63	2x IRU 1x HVP 1x MDU
Merseyside	1057	438	41	Fortek Vision	50,272	26	52	1x IRU 1xHVP 1xMDU

Key:

IRU: Incident Response Units

HVP: High Volume Pumps

MDDU: Mass Decontamination Disrobe Unit

MDU: Mobile Detection Units

DIM: Detection Identification Monitoring

FTE: Full Time Equivalent

(i) Information provided by respective FRSs and correct at time of publication.

Distances from Existing Control Room Locations to RCC

2.29 Whilst it is recognised that distance from home is of most relevance to staff, the following table provides an indication of the distance from current control rooms in the region to the new RCC.

Table 4: Distance from existing Control Room to RCC		
Fire & Rescue Service	Location	Distance (miles)⁴
Cheshire	Winsford	22
Cumbria	Cockermouth	127
Greater Manchester	Swinton	21
Lancashire	Fulwood	32
Merseyside	Bootle	20

Benefits

Increased resilience

2.30 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 periods and spate conditions also providing effective back up to a control centre should it become unavailable.

Emergency calls overflow

2.31 Currently the control rooms in the United Kingdom are not linked, when the North West Region experiences spate conditions or deals with a major incident calls that exceed the call handling capacity of the local control rooms are passed to adjoining control rooms by British Telecom or Cable & Wireless using agreed protocols. Unfortunately, the adjoining control rooms do not have any means of mobilising resources to attend such an incident and can only pass the call back to the home control room for it to then mobilise resources in response. This process creates delay in getting resources to an incident with control room staff being engaged in dealing with the calls made to bordering FRSs, but being unable to mobilise resources to assist.

2.32 The networked Regional Control Centres (RCCs) will allow a call made to the North West (which may be experiencing spate calls and/or a major incident) to be answered by operators in any of the other eight RCC buildings. The location of the caller and the incident will be accurately identified and pinpointed on a map using caller location technology and a geographical information system. Then, depending on the nature of the incident and its assigned priority level, resources can be immediately mobilised to the incident without the home RCC needing to be involved.

⁴ Distances are taken from an online route planner.

Secondary control/fallback

- 2.33 Currently, due to local control rooms having no networked facility with bordering controls, they have to provide a secondary control room which acts as a fallback facility in the event of any problems at the primary control room. This results in the duplication of expensive facilities in each FRS to provide some form of local resilience. Fallback agreements are in place which would allow an FRS to vacate its primary control room and the calls to be taken by another control room in the intervening period whilst the secondary control room is made ready. These processes in some instances involve the neighbouring FRS providing a reduced level of service – including reduced attendances mobilised to incidents – in the period that they provide this fallback service.
- 2.34 Regional Control Centres (RCCs) will provide a seamless fallback service, in the very unlikely scenario of an RCC becoming unavailable, calls will immediately be diverted to the other RCCs. Calls can be answered and resources mobilised with the emergency caller and operational crews being unaware that the home RCC was not involved in the process.

Resilient Systems and Buildings

- 2.35 In addition, the new RCCs have been constructed to meet enhanced standards of physical resilience and security. They have been designed to meet stringent government security standards and have the ability to operate at full capacity for seven days whilst isolated from any mains services. The information, communications and technology services are also being built to meet the government's Critical National Infrastructure standard to ensure service levels, integrity of data and confidentiality of information are all maintained.

Enhanced capability

- 2.36 The staff that work in existing control rooms do an excellent job and through the FiReControl Project control room operators will be provided with the best in class technology to enhance the critical service they provide to the public.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)

- 2.37 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.
- 2.38 Currently three of the five FRSs in the North West Region have MDTs on appliances. These are updated dynamically when appliances are on station. One of these is dynamic and provides status messaging.

- 2.39 MDTs will provide crews with access to a range of information – including road routing information, site specific plans, chemical information, hydrant information, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) and Autodata (contains detailed manufacturers' vehicle information to assist crews at vehicle accidents and fires). The Firelink/FiReControl MDT solution will enable the data stored on the equipment to be automatically updated each time the appliance re-enters the station and also enables data communication and status messaging between the appliance crew and the RCC.

Automatic Vehicle Location System (AVLS) and Satellite Navigation

- 2.40 The MDT will contain a Global Positioning System (GPS) transmitter allowing the exact location of the appliance to be known enabling the nearest suitable resource, in terms of time taken to arrive at the incident, to be mobilised. This system is called the Automatic Vehicle Location System.
- 2.41 AVLS is currently available in one of the five FRSs in the region. The others mobilise the nearest appliance on either the basis of the location of the home station or the station area/zone in which the appliance is located. However, appliances and their crews are increasingly working in the community on a wide range of activities while maintaining an operational response requirement and this mobilising system may not always reflect the exact location of the appliance when offering it for mobilisation to an incident.
- 2.42 The topographical knowledge of fire appliance drivers is currently supplemented by paper and electronic maps in the five FRSs in the region. The FiReControl Project will supplement the local knowledge of drivers through the provision of satellite navigation technology showing the quickest route to an incident, updated with known road closure information.

Caller Location Technology

- 2.43 Within the control room environment technology advances will enhance the range of information available to control room operators.
- 2.44 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 allows the billing address of the phone from which an emergency call is being made to be displayed to the Control Room Operator, augmenting their professional call handling skills and quickening the task of confirming the caller's location. The technology can also be used to help locate the whereabouts of a mobile phone caller by identifying the network cell from which the call is being made. This is particularly useful when callers are reporting incidents on the road network and are unaware of their exact location, for example on the motorway. EISEC and ALSEC technology also assist in identifying hoax callers and reducing the number of times FRS resources are mobilised unnecessarily.

- 2.45 EISEC is currently available in two of the five existing control rooms and ALSEC in none of them. Caller location for mobile phone users is not currently available in any of the FRSs in the North West region.

Integration with Back Office IT Systems

- 2.46 In some FRSs the data generated by the control room solution feeds automatically into back office systems, for example training records and fire safety recording systems, via an electronic interface. Through the provision of further interfaces the data generated in the RCC will be able to be used to update and inform FRS back office systems.
- 2.47 All five FRSs in the region currently have some integration of their IT systems although the extent of this varies widely from near full integration to a very limited scope.

Provision of Live Incident Data

- 2.48 The live incident and resource information provided in the RCC will be available in the FRS for managers to view and consider how best to manage their resources at times, for example, of high incident volumes or a major incident. This will be provided at a computer terminal in an FRS location, typically the HQ. Consideration is being given to this information being made available via a web browser allowing it to be viewed securely at any computer connected to the internet⁵.

⁵ One FRS in the region can currently view live incident data at all stations by utilising a web-based browser linked to the mobilising system.

Table 5 below details the technology currently available to FRs across the North West Region.

Table 5: North West Current Capabilities						
Technology	Cheshire	Cumbria	Lancashire	Manchester	Merseyside	
MDTs/VMDS	✓	✓	✓	x	x	
Information available to the fireground	✓	✓	✓	x	x	
AVLS	x	x	x	x	✓	
Status updates (appliances)	x	x	✓	✓	x	
Dynamic Mobilising	x	x	✓	✓	✓	
EISEC	x	✓	x	x	✓	
GIS (Ctrl only)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
GIS (integrated into Service)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	
Full premise based gazetteer	Parish x	Street x	Street x	Street x	Premise ✓	
Terminology	MDT – Mobile Data Terminals VMDS – Vehicle Mounted Display Systems AVLS – Automatic Vehicle Location System EISEC – Enhanced Information System for Emergency Callers. (Automatically identifies the location of a caller making an emergency call – landline and mobile phones) GIS – Geographical Information System					

Providing an efficient service

- 2.49 The five North West control rooms currently have a total establishment of 188 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) posts. The control rooms across the region currently have consistent levels of staffing throughout the 24 hour period (except Merseyside). Because activity levels are not consistent throughout the 24 hours, control staff carry out a number of non core activities during periods of low activity. Some of these tasks will be classed as 'out of scope' activities and remain with each FRS rather than be transferred to the RCC. This may provide a small number of redeployment opportunities for those staff who do not transfer to the RCC. There is the potential for some regional collaboration to process these 'out of scope' activities in the future.
- 2.50 The introduction of the RCCs will allow capacity to be better matched to business demand. The bulk of the work in the RCC will be focused on the 'core' activities of call handling and mobilisation. Matching capacity to demand (call volumes) will involve changes to staffing levels, processes and some working arrangements.
- 2.51 The primary purpose of the staffing model is to inform financial estimates made in the Business Case.
- 2.52 The steady-state staff numbers produced by the staffing model serve only as an indication and any decision about staff numbers, processes and working arrangements such as shift patterns and working hours will be made by the Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) Board.

Table 6: Current staffing levels

FRS	Firefighter Control	Crew Manager	Watch Manager	Station Manager	Group Manager
Cheshire	16	–	8	1	–
Cumbria	8	4	4	1	–
Greater Manchester	40	4	12	–	7
Lancashire	24	8	8	1	–
Merseyside	28	4	8	–	1
Total	116	20	40	3	8

Staffing Model – Proposed Staffing Levels

- 2.53 These are **indicative** numbers only based on the Communities and Local Government staffing model and represent the number used to inform the Business Case. The final decision on staffing numbers will be decided by the LACC Directors. This decision is not yet made.

Table 7: North West baseline staff numbers produced by the staffing model

	Operations managers	Team leaders	Resource team leaders	Control room operators	Total
Transition	6	16	6	68	96
Steady state	6	16	6	56	84

- 2.54 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.
- 2.55 Key items for consideration when determining staffing levels for the RCCs are call volumes, shift patterns, employee leave entitlement (training, maternity/paternity and holidays etc.) and the level of sickness absence anticipated. Assumptions for each of these have been made in the staffing model and have been assessed by representatives from the nine regions. The figures provided above are based upon these common assumptions. Thus, if a region decides to employ a different shift pattern or anticipates higher sickness levels, for example, then there is likely to be an impact on actual staff numbers required.

Transition and Steady State figures

- 2.56 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, therefore it is necessary to 'overstaff' in order to provide the required resilience and performance standards within the reduced network size.
- 2.57 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.
- 2.58 The additional costs of these arrangements, over and above steady state staffing, will be met by Communities and Local Government.

Implementation costs/funding

- 2.59 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.

- 2.60 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.
- 2.61 Since the beginning of financial year 2005-06 up to the close of financial year 2007-08 the North West region has received a total of £1.9 million in New Burdens funding. A further £7.4 million has been allocated for financial years 2008-09 to 2010-11. The table below provides a breakdown by Fire and Rescue Authority and by year of these amounts.

Table 8: North West New Burdens breakdown

Authority	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	Totals per FRS
Cumbria County Council	£12,998	£52,986	£128,299	£208,472	£131,599	£137,561	£671,915
Cheshire Fire Authority	£15,230	£52,986	£177,393	£179,326	£117,599	£122,718	£665,252
Lancashire FRA	£19,025	£52,986	£224,957	£254,841	£153,871	£161,175	£866,855
Greater Manchester FRA	£25,498	£52,986	£283,346	£299,339	£204,279	£122,701	£988,149
Merseyside FRA	£21,257	£52,986	£203,857	£213,005	£139,998	£123,155	£754,258
Totals per year	£94,008	£264,930	£1,017,852	£1,154,983	£747,346	£667,310	£3,946,429

Regional/Company Funding (paid to nominated lead authority)	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	Totals per FRS
Greater Manchester	£150,143	£135,832	£261,301	£963,225	£2,178,159	£1,702,031	£5,390,691

Not all of the funding has yet been allocated for 2008-09 to 2010-11.

Ongoing costs and savings

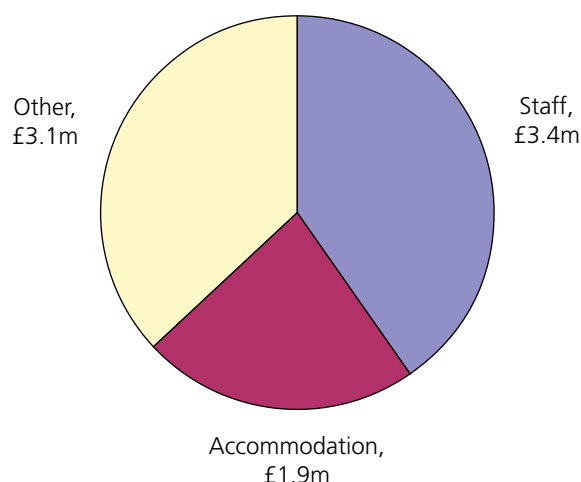
- 2.62 In the North West region it currently costs £8.8m per annum to run all of the FRS control rooms. The total annual cost of running the new RCC is estimated to be £8.4m per annum. This represents a net saving of £0.4m per annum.
- 2.63 This assessment represents an 'early years' position in the sense that it is expected that additional savings 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

- 2.64 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.
- 2.65 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.
- 2.66 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. 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

- 2.67 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 LGA 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.

Figure 2: North West Regional Control Centre costs**Staffing**

2.68 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

2.69 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

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

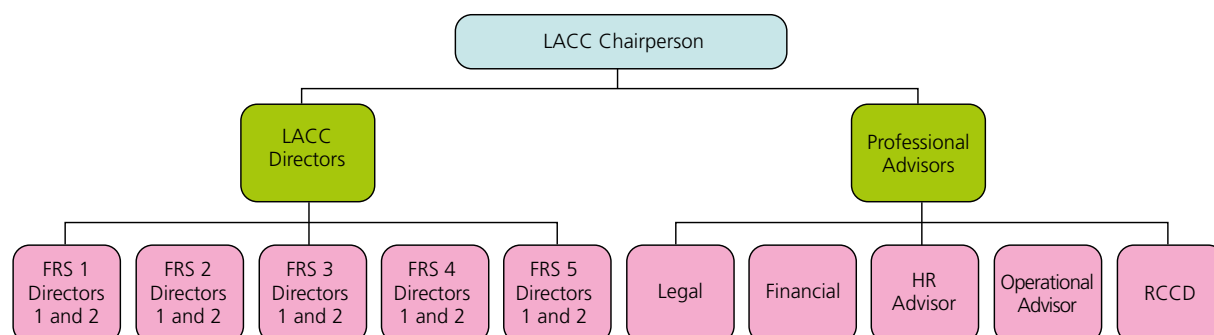
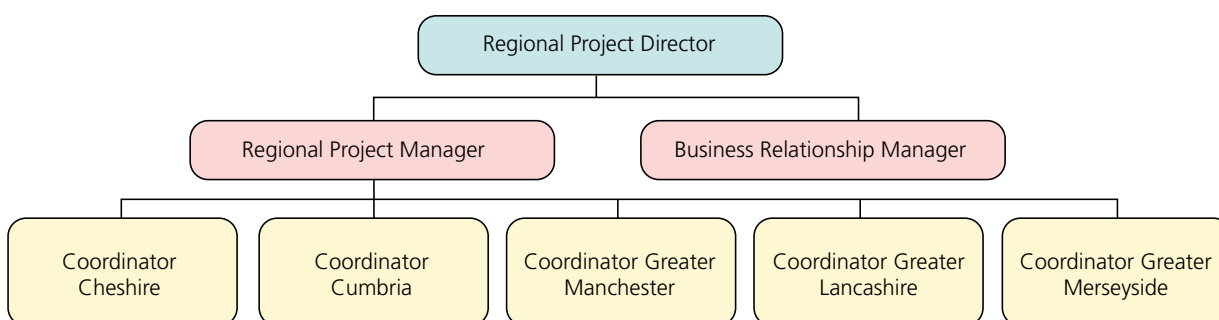
2.71 Communities and Local Government are going to consult on how these costs are shared. The preferred mechanism is sharing costs on the basis of proportion of Council Tax base and this is the basis of the figures presented here.

Intra-regional cost apportionment

2.72 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

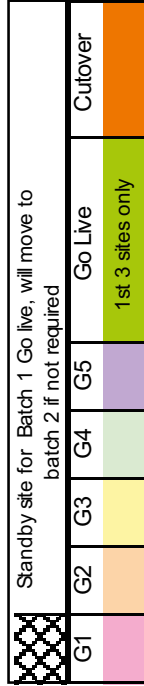
- 2.73 The North West Region has a comprehensive project management and delivery structure in place that is designed to ensure the appropriate governance, decision making and consultation processes operate.
- 2.74 The Regional Control Centres (RCC) will be run by a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) consisting of a board of ten members, two from each of the five constituent Fire & Rescue Authorities. The LACC is supported by FRS Senior Officers who provide professional advice to the directors.
- 2.75 The registered company name of the LACC is the North West Fire Control Company Ltd and it was formally incorporated in September 2007.
- 2.76 A Regional Control Centre Director (RCCD) has been appointed by the LACC to run the RCC.
- 2.77 To manage the transition of the North West from five local control rooms to one RCC, there is a Regional Project Board with a Regional Project Director as its head. The Regional Project Board is made up of lead Principal Officers from each FRS together with lead Finance, Legal and HR Officers. Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Coordinators also attend this board.
- 2.78 The work that is undertaken at a regional level to prepare for the RCC transition is led by a Regional Project Manager (RPM) who chairs the Project Delivery Group (PDG). The Project Delivery Group consists of the FRS coordinators, day to day contacts, Communities and Local Government staff as well as EADS, FireLink and Airwave representatives.
- 2.79 Each FRS has a coordinator who is responsible for ensuring all transition activities required for the transition process are completed to the agreed timescales in the transition plan.
- 2.80 Each of the North West FRSs has now put in place a steering group/project team to coordinate, deliver and monitor the activities required to deliver the project within that service.

Figure 3: Governance structure**Figure 4: Delivery structure****Transition and cutover**

- 2.81 The region and constituent FRSs are following a transition plan that has been developed from the generic plan produced by Communities and Local Government. The plan lists the activities that need to be completed to prepare for cutover to the RCC and Communities and Local Government provide criteria that constitute success in each of these.
- 2.82 Within the transition plan are the dates for a number of Checkpoints and Gateways that must be reached for successful preparation and transition. Each month, FRS coordinators report their progress for each activity in a particular checkpoint or gate to demonstrate progress against the transition activities. Coordinators use an electronic recording tool – DART (Delivery Assurance Reporting Tool) to report progress each month. This tool allows reports for the RPD and RPM to be generated each month.
- 2.83 Once a checkpoint and/or gate is reached the RPD is requested to sign off that particular checkpoint or gate to verify that the service as completed those activities and is ready to progress further through the transition plan.

Table 9: Transition timeline for the North West Region

Key: CP = Checkpoint
G = Gate



Transition Timeline for the North West Region

Week Com starting Saturday : → FRS: ↓	Batch No	04/10/2007	04/04/2008	28/02/2009	25/07/2009	05/09/2009	26/09/2009	23/01/2010	06/03/2010	27/03/2010	05/06/2010	24/07/2010	21/08/2010	04/09/2010	25/09/2010	23/10/2010	25/12/2010	08/01/2011	22/01/2011	12/03/2011	26/03/2011	
North West Region	6	CP1	CP2	G1		G2			G3		G4		G5	CO		G4		G5				
Greater Manchester	6	CP1	CP2	G1		G2			G3		G4		G5	CO								
Merseyside	8	CP1	CP2		G1			G2				G3				G4		G5	CO			
Cheshire	9	CP1	CP2				G1			G2						G3	G4			G5		
Cumbria	9	CP1	CP2				G1			G2						G3	G4			G5		
Lancashire	9	CP1	CP2				G1			G2						G3	G4			G5		

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 10: Cutover dates for North West Region		
FRS	Batch	Cutover Date
Cheshire	9	28/03/2011
Cumbria	9	28/03/2011
Greater Manchester	6	06/09/2010
Lancashire	9	28/03/2011
Merseyside	8	24/01/2011

2.84 The Scheduled cutover dates in respect of each FRS are listed in table 10 above, these are accurate as at date of publication.

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:

London	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0093 – 4
North West	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0095 – 8
North East	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0097 – 2
Yorkshire & Humberside	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0099 – 6
South West	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0101 – 6
East Midlands	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0103 – 0
East	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0105 – 4
West Midlands	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0107 – 8
South East	ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0109 – 2

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

Reference number: 08FR05356/nw

ISBN 978 – 1 – 4098 – 0095 – 8

© Crown Copyright, 2008. Printed on paper comprising no less than 75% post-consumer waste

ISBN 978-1-4098-0095-8

ISBN 978-1-4098-0095-8



9 781409 800958