



The FiReControl Business Case

Part 1

Regional Case for West Midlands

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∴ New Dimension ∴



West Midlands 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 £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 FRs, 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

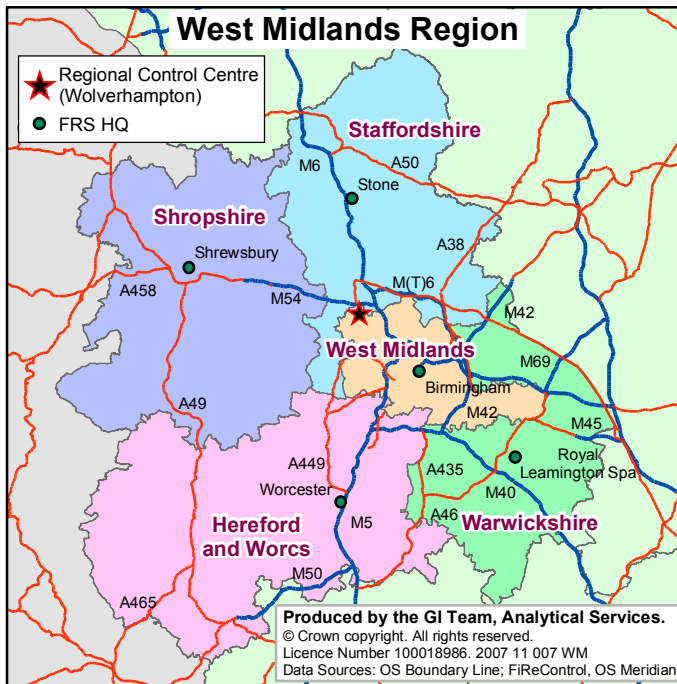
2 The Regional Case

- 2.1 This is Communities and Local Government's Regional Case for FiReControl in the West Midlands. 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 the 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 FRS in England is provided with the best control and mobilisation response capability to help them protect the public.

Regional overview

- 2.6 The West Midlands region is made up of the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) of Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire, Shropshire and Wrekin, Hereford and Worcester, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.
- 2.7 Three of the FRAs, Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire, Shropshire & Wrekin and Hereford & Worcester are Combined Fire Authorities with elected members from the constituent authorities overseeing the running of the Service. Warwickshire FRA forms part of the respective County Council whilst West Midlands is a Metropolitan FRA made up of seven metropolitan boroughs.
- 2.8 The area includes the cities of Birmingham, Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton as well as largely rural areas such as those in Herefordshire and Shropshire. The region is host to a number of industrial sites and 14 per cent of England's motorway network.

Figure 1: Regional map



2.9 As indicated in Table 1 the total population of the region is 5.3 million. This represents around 11 per cent of England’s total.

Table 1: West Midlands population		
Authority	Population	%
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	1,007,000	19%
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority	2,544,000	48%
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin	477,000	9%
Warwickshire	530,000	10%
Hereford & Worcester	742,000	14%
West Midlands region	5,300,000	100%

2.10 The number of emergency calls received in each of these constituent Fire and Rescue Authority control rooms are:

Table 2: Number of calls received in each FRA control room 2005-06		
Authority	Calls received¹	%
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	20,510	16%
West Midlands Fire Service	71,896	57%
Shropshire	8,007	6%
Warwickshire	10,175	9%
Hereford and Worcester	15,707	12%
West Midlands region	126,294	100%

2.11 Operational capacity differs across the five FRs to meet local needs, the number of fire stations varying between 20 and 40 and front line appliances between 26 and 102. The region is further protected with a number of New Dimensions resources including nine Incident Response Units, two Urban Search and Rescue Units, six High Volume Pumps and associated prime mover and support pods.

West Midlands Regional Control Centre (RCC)

2.12 The West Midlands RCC reached practical completion on 20 December 2007, shortly after which Communities and Local Government drew down the lease pending a decision to do so by the West Midlands Local Authority Controlled Company. The RCC will be used in the interim as a base for the regional project team, for holding regional management meetings and for the team from the successful Facilities Management contractor.

Location

West Midlands Regional Control Centre
 Wolverhampton Business Park
 Wolverhampton
 WV10 6TB

¹ 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.

Figure 2 West Midlands regional control centre**Access**

2.13 The RCC has good road and rail access links and there are plans for the immediate surrounding area to be developed as a major public transport hub, introducing direct rail routes to Birmingham and dedicated bus lanes to Wolverhampton town centre.

Distance from existing control room locations

2.14 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 to the new RCC.

Table 3: Distance from Control Room to RCC		
Fire & Rescue Service	Location	Distance² (miles)
Staffordshire	Stone	19
West Midlands	Birmingham	19
Shropshire	Shrewsbury	29
Warwickshire	Leamington Spa	41
Hereford & Worcester	Worcester	40

Benefits**Increased resilience**

2.15 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 and also providing effective back up to a control centre should it become unavailable.

² Distances and estimated travel times are for car journeys according to an online Route Planner.

Emergency calls overflow

- 2.16 Currently, in the event of spate conditions or a major incident leading to activity levels exceeding the capacity of the home control room, the overflow calls are transferred to an alternative FRS. This FRS is able to take the call, ascertain the details and pass them back to the home control for mobilisation when they are able to contact them. This is achieved using telephone, radio or fax machine and in some cases using dedicated lines.
- 2.17 This works effectively from a process point of view but it can create considerable delay in resource mobilisation while the call is passed back to the home control. The delay can be increased by the receiving control being unable to contact the home control due to their high activity levels. Apart from the public safety implications that any delay can introduce, it can also be highly stressful for the Control Room Operator who may have taken a life risk or distressing call which they are not able to effectively mobilise a response to.

Secondary control/fallback

- 2.18 Each service in the region currently has a secondary control room in place that they can put into operation should their main control room be unavailable for whatever reason. In these circumstances control staff would physically move from the main control room to the secondary control room in a geographically different place in the FRS area.
- 2.19 In many cases the secondary control is not equipped to the same standard of the primary control room and is designed to operate only for relatively short periods of time on an infrequent basis. In all cases in the West Midlands the number of operator positions is lower in the secondary control and in three of the five FRS technological functionality is reduced.
- 2.20 During the time it takes to transfer staff to the secondary control and set it up (typically between 30 and 60 minutes) the ability to take calls and mobilise resources from the primary control room is lost. To cope in such situations each FRS in the region has an arrangement with a neighbouring FRS to take calls and hold them until the secondary control is established. This is known as 'fallback'. In some cases fallback control rooms can mobilise the resources of a neighbouring FRS using a rudimentary gazetteer data set and making contact by telephoning the station. In others they can pass the information by radio to the control room staff who are en route to the secondary control to mobilise their own resources by phone or radio using data held in hard copy files.

Table 4: Current arrangements established to deal with fallback conditions

Fire & Rescue Service	Secondary Control Room Location	Time taken to establish (minutes)	Current Fallback FRS Control Room
Staffordshire	Stafford	45 – 60	Shropshire
West Midlands	Smethwick	30 – 45	Staffordshire
Shropshire	Telford	40	Staffordshire
Warwickshire	Warwick	30 – 40	West Midlands
Hereford & Worcester	Droitwich	30	Shropshire

2.21 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. In the event of a Regional Control Centre (RCC) becoming unavailable the system will seamlessly transfer calls to the next available RCC which will have the ability to handle the call, mobilise resources and manage the incident in the same manner as the home RCC. Capacity across the network will be capable of dealing with the loss of availability of an RCC.

Resilient Systems and Buildings

2.22 There are two further areas of improved resilience from which the region will benefit. Firstly, the physical resilience and security of the building which has been designed to operate for seven days without mains services. Secondly, as the building and the technology systems form part of the Critical National Infrastructure they are designed to meet standards for reducing vulnerability to terrorism and other threats and supporting data is subject to high information assurance standards.

2.23 Current FRS control room provision in terms of security varies across the region. The existing control rooms are housed in buildings ranging between 14 and 80 years old with three of these being purpose built. Two of the five control rooms are on sites that are not occupied by any other department or organisation 24 hours a day. Three sites do not have perimeter fencing and security barriers and there are also three without CCTV coverage.

2.24 Following the imminent move of the control function to a new HQ building, West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority will continue to have a secure facility in a building designed for purpose.

Enhanced capability

2.25 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.

- 2.26 Communities and Local Government are investing in the infrastructure to support FiReControl and the resilient national network across England. This investment saves Fire and Rescue Services the cost of upgrading their existing technology which would otherwise have required local funding.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDT)

- 2.27 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 allow electronic safety information to be provided in the cab of a fire appliance to assist crews during operational incidents. The Firelink/FiReControl MDT solution will enable the data stored on the equipment to be automatically updated each time the appliance reenters the station and also enables data communication and status messaging between the appliance crew and the RCC. The use of data communication and messaging not only takes up less time for a control room operator it is also a more reliable form of communication.
- 2.28 Currently three of the five FRSs in the West Midlands region have MDTs on appliances. Two of these provide dynamic status messaging and live updates. One other FRS has status messaging available through its unique radio scheme.

Automatic Vehicle Location System and Satellite Navigation

- 2.29 The MDT will contain a Global Positioning System transmitter allowing the exact location of the appliance to be known. This enables 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 (AVLS).
- 2.30 AVLS is currently available in two of the five FRSs in the region. The others mobilise the nearest appliance on the basis of the location of the home station. Appliance crews of course are not always on station, and are increasingly working in the community on a wide range of activities while maintaining an operational response requirement.
- 2.31 The topographical knowledge of fire appliance drivers and their crews using paper maps is currently relied upon in four of the five FRS in the region. This knowledge will be enhanced by the FiReControl Project through the provision of satellite navigation technology showing the quickest route to an incident and will be updated with road closure information.
- 2.32 Currently one FRS in the region has satellite navigation available via their MDT which has a 'follow me' capability showing the best route.

Caller Location Technology

- 2.33 Within the control room environment technology advances will enhance the range of information available to control room operators.
- 2.34 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 allow 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 speeding up the task of confirming the caller's location. The technology can also be used to locate the whereabouts of a mobile phone caller by identifying the network cell from which they are calling. This is particularly useful for 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.
- 2.35 EISEC is currently available in three of the five existing control rooms and ALSEC in one. Caller location for mobile phone users is available in two FRS in the region.

Integration with Back Office IT Systems

- 2.36 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.
- 2.37 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

- 2.38 The live incident and resource information provided in the RCC will be available in the FRS for managers to view to inform resource management decisions during major incidents or at times of high incident volumes for example. 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 at any computer connected to the internet via a secure access portal.
- 2.39 Live incident data is currently available in two of the five FRSs in the region.

Table 5: West Midlands current capabilities

Technology	Staffordshire	West Midlands	Shropshire	Warwickshire	Hereford & Worcester
Dynamic MDT	x	✓	✓	x	x
Standalone MDT (live updates)	x	n/a	n/a	x	✓
AVLS	x	✓	✓	x	x
Status messaging	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Satellite Navigation	x	x	✓	x	x
EISEC	✓	✓	x	✓	x
ALSEC	x	✓	x	x	x
GIS available in the Control Room	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GIS available in other FRS departments	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Full premise based gazetteer	x	x	x	x	x
Integration of data to back office systems	Limited	✓	Limited	Limited	Limited
Live incident data available to all staff	x	✓	x	x	✓

- 2.40 FiReControl and Firelink will provide the region with the full range of technology listed above. All appliances will be equipped with an MDT which will be able to provide crews with information on-board the appliance about the incident location, incident type and information regarding risks, building plans and chemical hazards associated with the incident. MDTs will also help direct crews to the incident knowing where the appliance is in relation to the incident and showing the route/ directions on a mapping system.
- 2.41 In the RCC proven technology will be used by the operators. This will include a gazetteer covering all premises, road and landmark locations with tools for searching and matching, caller location services to assist in identifying where a caller is located and real-time appliance location information to determine the nearest available resource.
- 2.42 The RCCs will also provide staff with a modern, ergonomically designed working environment. Full separate male and female sanitary and shower facilities are provided and locker rooms for personal effects. Catering facilities are available and it will be a decision for the RCC Company as to how extensive these are.
- 2.43 Currently, in the region four of the five control rooms have separate male and female sanitary facilities and three of five separate shower rooms. A canteen is available to staff in four of the five buildings however in some of these staff are not able to use them as they are in a remote part of the building or another part of the complex.

Providing an efficient service

- 2.44 The control rooms across the region currently have consistent levels of staffing throughout the 24 hour period. Due to activity levels in the control rooms not being consistent throughout the 24 hour period staff carry out a number of 'non-core' activities during periods of low operational activity.

Table 6: Current staffing levels

Authority	Firefighter (Control)/ Control Room Operator	Crew Manager	Watch Manager	Station Manager	Group Fire Control Officer/ Principal Fire Control Officer
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	17	8	4	2	0
West Midlands	36	12	14	1	3
Shropshire	10	4	4	1	0
Warwickshire	9	4	4	1	0
Hereford and Worcester	16	4	4	1	0

- 2.45 There are a number of additional staff members across the region working in areas including training and data management. The introduction of RCCs will allow capacity to be better matched to operational demand. However, the work of the RCC will be focused on 'core' activity and out of scope activities will remain at FRS level. Work is currently underway in the region to assess the impact of these activities and the potential for any regional collaboration in the delivery of those activities.
- 2.46 Matching capacity to business demand will involve changes to staffing levels, processes and working arrangements for example, changes to shift patterns, however this will ultimately be for the Local Authority Controlled Company to decide how this will be taken forward.

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

	Operations Managers	Team Leaders	Resource Team Leaders	Control Room Operators	Total
Steady state	6	13	6	45	70

- 2.47 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.
- 2.48 It is important to note that these figures are derived from the Communities and Local Government staffing model work and represent the number used to inform the Regional Case. The final decision on staff numbers was taken by the board of directors of the company established to operate the RCC in May 2008.

Implementation costs/funding

New Burdens funding for the West Midlands

- 2.49 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.
- 2.50 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.
- 2.51 Since the beginning of Financial Year 2005-06 up to the close of financial year 2007-08 the West Midlands region has received a total of £2.6 million in New Burdens funding to assist in the delivery of the Project. A further £6.6 million has been allocated for this purpose in 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: Implementation funding for the West Midlands

Authority	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	Totals per FRS
Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Fire Authority	£13,678	£52,986	£331,031	£158,803	£94,468	£0	£650,966
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority	£9,965	£52,986	£484,746	£370,543	£229,651	£0	£1,147,891
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority	£11,000	£52,986	£269,128	£143,216	£102,721	£51,092	£630,143
Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority	£11,892	£52,986	£319,276	£122,805	£83,246	£162,964	£753,169
Warwickshire County Council	£10,553	£52,986	£256,054	£142,717	£100,772	£57,798	£620,880
Totals per year	£57,088	£264,930	£1,660,235	£938,084	£610,400	£272,312	£3,803,049
Regional/Company Funding (paid to nominated lead authority)							
West Midlands	£142,199	£135,832	£301,051	£2,030,136	£2,271,028	£461,853	£5,342,099

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

Ongoing costs and savings

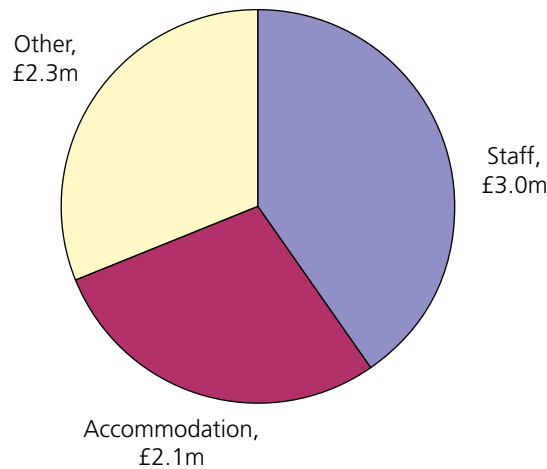
- 2.52 In the West Midlands region it currently costs £6.7m per annum to run all of the FRS control rooms. The total annual cost of running the new RCC is estimated to be £7.4m per annum. This represents a net additional cost of £0.7m per annum. Communities and Local Government will fund a resilience payment to cover this cost, this will be reviewed after three years.
- 2.53 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

- 2.54 The assessment of current costs was informed by Fire and Rescue Authorities' (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.
- 2.55 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.
- 2.56 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

- 2.57 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.

Figure 3: West Midlands Regional Control Centre costs**Staffing**

2.58 The Local Authority Controlled Company (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 which will employ RCC staff.

Accommodation

2.59 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

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

2.61 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.

2.62 Intra-regional cost apportionment

- 2.63 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

- 2.64 The West Midlands region has a comprehensive project management and delivery structure designed to ensure appropriate governance, decision making and consultation processes can operate.
- 2.65 The RCC will be run by the Local Authority Controlled Company – West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited, which has a board of five directors. The directors are all Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) members with each of the five authorities represented. The company has a number of professional advisors to provide guidance on legal, human resource, facilities management and finance issues.
- 2.66 The RCC will be managed on a day to day basis by the Regional Control Centre Director (Chief Executive) who took up the post in early 2008.
- 2.67 The Programme Board of the Regional Management Board in the West Midlands oversees regionally undertaken project work and has established a Regional Project Board (RPB) to ensure delivery of the FiReControl Project. The Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) is an elected member from one of the constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities and RPB is chaired by the Regional Project Director. Each FRS is represented on the board by a principal officer. The regional representatives to the national working groups covering HR, legal, and finance issues also attend. Representative bodies are members of the RPB as is Communities and Local Government's regional representative.
- 2.68 The work to be undertaken at a regional level to prepare for the RCC to operate is led by the Regional Project Manager (RPM). The RPM also chairs the Regional Project Team at which each FRS is represented by a Communities and Local Government funded FiReControl Coordinator employed by their respective FRS. Communities and Local Government are also represented at this meeting as are EADS, the contractor for delivery of the RCC technology systems.
- 2.69 The FRS coordinator is responsible for ensuring all activities required to be carried out at a FRS to prepare for cutover are completed on time and to the appropriate standard.

2.70 Each FRS has established a rollout board to coordinate, distribute and monitor the work required to be carried out.

2.71 The activities that are to be undertaken by regions and FRSs are maintained in a FiReControl generic Transition Plan which is adapted for regional and local needs.

This delivery structure is represented below in diagrammatic form.

Figure 4: Organisational Chart 1

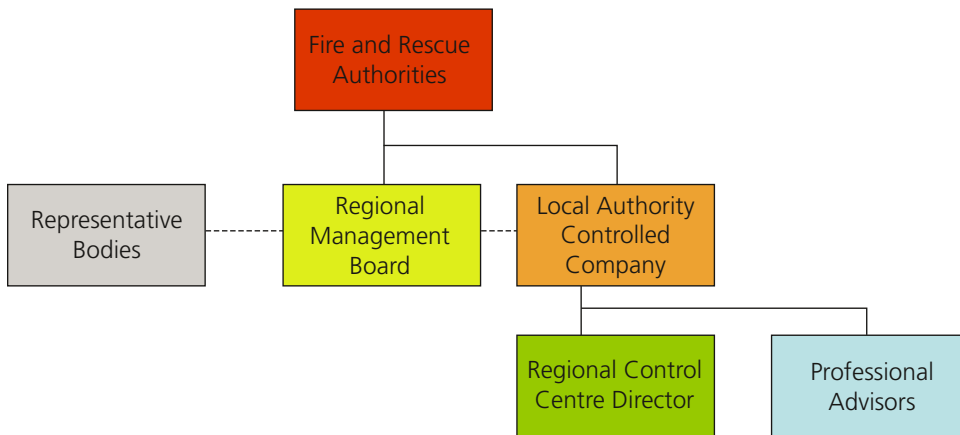
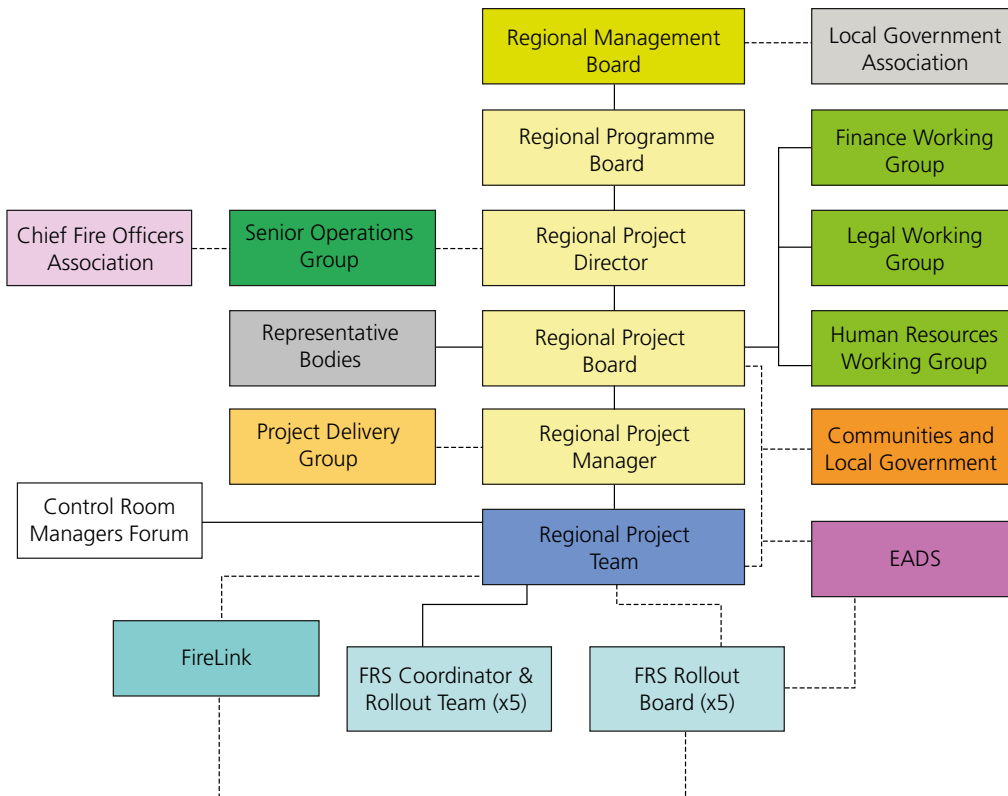


Figure 5: Organisational Chart 2



Transition and cutover

- 2.72 The region and its 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 into the RCC and Communities and Local Government provide criteria that constitute success in each of these.
- 2.73 Within the Transition Plan are the dates for a number of Checkpoints and Gateways that must be successfully passed in advance of cutover. The diagram below shows the timeline for these for the West Midlands region and its constituent authorities and indicates the order in which the FRSs will cutover into the RCC network.
- 2.74 Staffordshire and the region are working to Batch 1 timelines (October 2009) to provide contingency should any of the nominated Batch 1 FRSs and/or regions be unable to complete preparations in time. The cutover date below, however, shows the intended cutover at batch 2.
- 2.75 Taking an extract from this table, the proposed cutover dates for West Midlands region based on current planning assumptions are as follows³:

Table 9: Cutover dates for West Midlands region		
Authority	Batch Number	Date
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	2	January 2010
West Midlands	3	March 2010
Shropshire	4	May 2010
Warwickshire	5	July 2010
Hereford and Worcester	6	September 2010

³ 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: Transition timeline for the West Midlands region

	Batch No	04/10/2007	04/04/2008	05/04/2008	15/09/2008	05/10/2008	17/11/2008	12/01/2009	06/03/2009	15/03/2009	05/04/2009	17/05/2009	05/07/2009	12/07/2009	06/09/2009	15/09/2009	21/09/2009	05/10/2009	17/11/2009	15/12/2009	12/01/2010	17/02/2010	01/03/2010	06/03/2010	15/03/2010	14/04/2010	03/05/2010	17/05/2010	06/06/2010	28/06/2010	12/07/2010	23/08/2010	06/09/2010				
West Midlands Region	1	C1	C2	G1		G2					G3	G4					G5	Go Live																			
Staffordshire	1	C1	C2	G1		G2					G3	G4					G5	Go Live																			
West Midlands	3	C1	C2		G1					G2											G4																
Shropshire	4	C1	C2				G1					G2																									
Warwickshire	5	C1	C2					G1																													
Hereford & Worcester	6	C1	C2						G1																												

This table shows the transition plan dates to which the region and constituent FRAs are working, including the Batch 1 contingency plan for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and the region. The table on the following page shows the intended cutover dates should the contingency plan prove unnecessary.

The scheduled cutover dates in respect of each FRS are listed in Table 10 above, these are accurate as at the 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**

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