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This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This circular informs Fire and Rescue Authorities and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service of progress with the Fire and Resilience Programme.		

Fire and Resilience Programme Highlights – March 2009

Issued by:

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FRS Development Division

Addressed to:

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

Please forward to:

Summary

This continues the series of monthly 'highlights' notes to inform Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) of progress with the Programme.

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1.0 New Dimension

TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF NEW DIMENSION ASSETS

- 1.1 Currently New Dimension capability is owned by CLG, however, in line with the agreement with the LGA and CFOA at the outset of the Programme, CLG is looking to transition ownership of the capability over to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) as part of the long-term strategy. From an FRA perspective this unites ownership with use, and provides FRAs with control over the assets they host.
- 1.2 In November 2007, CLG consulted FRAs on a draft Transfer of Ownership Agreement for the New Dimension assets. Since then, there has been considerable progress on the long term strategy to support FRAs in taking on the transfer including:
- the announcement in July 2008 of £80m funding until 2010/11
 - the commencement of the £100m long-term maintenance contract covering all New Dimension assets
 - the establishment of an assurance framework and body managed through the FRS National Resilience Board (see section below on this)
- 1.3 Earlier this month CLG published Fire Service Circular 16/2009 providing a Consultation Response document following the initial consultation on asset transfer along with a revised version of the Transfer of Ownership Agreement, for further comment.
- 1.4 Through this second round of consultation, CLG are looking for FRA sign-up in principle to the transfer of ownership, subject of course, to any minor clarifications/amendments on the transfer agreement that FRAs may have.
- 1.5 CLG recognises that any formal sign up to the transfer will need to go through relevant FRA Committee or Board structures for approval in due course, but at this present time we are merely seeking to establish that FRAs are favourable to the concept of the transfer and that they would be in the position to recommend to their Committees to proceed with this.
- 1.6 The Circular on New Dimension asset transfer is at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/fsc162009>
- 1.7 Responses from FRAs are sought by **27 April 2009**.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CFOA FOR THE NATIONAL RESILIENCE ASSURANCE BODY

- 1.8 As part of the New Dimension long term strategy a significant amount of work has been undertaken over the last year to further develop the operational assurance role. This role will ensure that New Dimension equipment, training and capability competence are maintained and monitored to secure national interoperability, consistency and the most effective and safe operation.

- 1.9** CLG has worked closely with CFOA and the LGA over the future operational assurance and governance arrangements for New Dimension capability and discussed how this will be managed in the long-term. In the interim, the assurance function was managed through a Transition Board comprising Terry Standing, CFO Gloucestershire as Chair, Jon Hall, ACFO Hereford and Worcester as Vice Chair (currently acting Chair), Cllr Jeremy Hilton as the LGA representative and CFOA leads for the various New Dimension capabilities.
- 1.10** At the beginning of March 2009, both CLG and CFOA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalising the arrangements for the provision of the assurance function until 2010/11. At this point, the previous Transition Board evolved into the fully-fledged National Resilience Assurance Board, supported by the National Resilience Advisory Team (NRAT). As part of the terms of the MoU, CLG is funding the National Resilience Assurance Body over £5m per year, covering costs associated with the NRAT as well as money for minor asset refresh and centralised training.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE NEW DIMENSION PROJECT

- 1.11** The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published its report on the New Dimension Programme on 12 March 2009. This follows publication in October 2008 of the National Audit Office's value for money review on New Dimension and the subsequent PAC Hearing of 10 November 2009, attended by CLG's Permanent Secretary, Peter Housden and the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Sir Ken Knight.
- 1.12** Government welcomes the Committee's recognition that the specialist New Dimension equipment has enhanced the FRS' ability to respond to terrorist attacks and other large-scale emergency events. A copy of the report can be found at:
- <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmpubacc/249/24902.htm>
- 1.13** Government will carefully consider the conclusions and recommendations that the PAC Report makes and, indeed, has already taken action broadly in line with some of those recommendations. A formal response is due to be published by CLG by 11 May 2009.

2.0 Firelink

PROGRESS ON MAIN FLEET ROLLOUT

- 2.1** Main fleet operational rollout to FRS appliances and officers' cars is progressing well. Ten fire and rescue services are now complete and a further 11 are in progress. FRS are generally pleased with the voice quality of the radios and the supporting training provided.
- 2.2** Installation work is increasingly being completed within the working day - thanks to a combination of accumulated lessons learned and FRS cooperation.

- 2.3 Pre-installation work has now been completed in a number of other FRSs and will continue to be managed as the rollout progresses.

PROGRESS ON PHASE C PLANNING

- 2.4 With Phase C now approaching, closer working arrangements are being put in place between Firelink and FiReControl. The prototype Firelink Regional Control Centre (RCC) interface equipment has been designed and built – and has successfully completed its Proof of Concept testing. These have now been delivered to RCCs in the South West, East Midlands and North East Regions.
- 2.5 Plans for the initial deployment of Mobile Data Terminals are being developed, following consultation with the FRS in England. Contract changes are being negotiated with Airwave and EADS to facilitate this deployment.

3.0 FiReControl

STATION END SURVEYS AND EQUIPMENT

- 3.1 Station End surveys have been underway throughout the FRS in England. The survey results will identify any early work required, including where the station end equipment will go, allowing FRS to complete this preparatory work.
- 3.2 Over 500 surveys will have been completed by 31 March with the entire programme expected to be completed by October 2009. This will provide those FRSs who are in the first batch to cutover to FiReControl the optimum time to complete work within their stations.
- 3.3 The rollout of early Station End equipment in Staffordshire and North Yorkshire is now complete.

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