



North West Fire and Rescue Management Board Bulletin

Issue 2
February 2009

Welcome to the second North West Fire and Rescue Management Board Bulletin. The quarterly bulletin aims to inform you about developments and initiatives that are being delivered by the fire and rescue services in the region.

Regional Fire Control

Since the last Newsletter CLG have announced a rescheduling of the Project timescales, hence the new cutover dates for the North West will be:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Greater Manchester | February 2011 |
| 2. Merseyside | June 2011 |
| 3. Cumbria | August 2011 |
| 4. Cheshire | August 2011 |
| 5. Lancashire | August 2011 |

Work is ongoing to assess the impact of this delay on the FRS and RCC.

The Data Capture and Migration Toolkit 1 was delivered to the FRS in mid January, with initial training taking place at the RCC which will now enable work to progress on the review of the gazetteer information.

Fire Control Staff Visits

December 2008 saw visits by the first groups of North West Control staff to the new premises in Warrington. Over four days staff were able to tour the Control Centre, listen to a presentation by the new Regional Control Centre Director, Dominic Whelan, meet the Project Team and ask questions.

It was also an excellent opportunity for the Project Team to meet staff and to answer their questions, listen to their concerns and hear their thoughts and ideas on the RCC.

Although many complex aspects of the project are currently being developed, the team were able to give an update into the stages the project was going through and the complex technology involved.

Staff were interested to hear that the emphasis was on flexibility in rostering, that there would be no change to the roles undertaken by staff in the move to the RCC and that the new equipment meant that they would have access to advanced technology and the opportunity to handle a broader range of emergencies than at present.



As announced at the RCC visits, an email address has been set up where staff can communicate directly with us. Should you have any questions, ideas, suggestions etc. regarding the RCC please send them to nwrccd@googlemail.com. We value your input and wish to give you the opportunity to play a part in the development of the centre.

HR Update

You may recall in the first edition of this bulletin that we advised that we would provide an update on the progress on the HR Activities and that this would cover both the period from transfer from FRS to RCC and the future as an employee of the RCC.

NW Fire Control Ltd has contracted two companies to assist in the development of two key pieces of HR work. Workplace Systems have been appointed to develop rostering options and BASIS to develop options for the terms of conditions for employment for new entrants. Work is progressing and both companies are expected to deliver their proposals for review very soon.

In December, the RCCD hosted four Control Staff visits to the RCC during which a draft timeline of some of the HR activities was shared with those present. This provided a timeline for some of the key information to enable staff to start to make informed decisions on their personal future.

It should be noted that these are provisional dates and as soon as a more informed picture on the progress against these dates is known this will be shared.

- March/ April 2009 (tbc) - T&C & Rostering models agreed
- Nov / Dec 2009 - Staff Selection
- November 2010 - Staff Training commences (Initial staff Pool)

Other activities that are underway include a review of the Organisation Design and job roles, exploring the options for selection and recruitment of new entrants; all of which need to be completed to enable staff selection to commence.

FireLink

What is Firelink?

Communities and Local Government is investing £1 billion through its Fire and Resilience Programme to increase resilience, enhance capability and improve efficiency in England's Fire & Rescue Services (FRS). Firelink is one of the projects in this Programme and involves the radio communication link that will enable FRS resources to be despatched in response to emergency calls. The Firelink project will provide a new single digital wide-area radio communication system for the FRS in England, Scotland and Wales. This involves installing new equipment in fire vehicles including new radios and mobile data terminals.

The radio link provides the conduit through which fire vehicles, will be mobilised in response to a 999 call. It will also provide the FRS incident commander with an external support link for the duration of the incident. The single system will mean that firefighters will be able to communicate across FRS boundaries within Great Britain.

The new system will also enable the more effective deployment and management of resources on a local, regional or national level. Firelink, combined with New Dimension and FiReControl, will enable the FRS to deliver a stronger and more effective emergency response.

Benefits

Resilience

The network has back-up power supplies, standby radios and land-line links;

Modernisation

Common radio equipment and radio procedures will allow FRSs to communicate across borders when required, and also enable efficient common training to be provided;

Improved performance

This will come from the far greater voice quality of digital radio, automatic vehicle location, and mobile data systems;

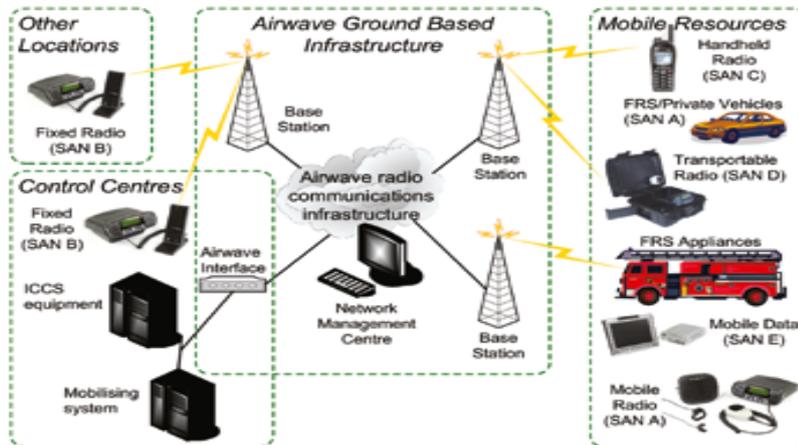
Delivering the technology to support FiReControl in England

Firelink will provide the radio communication infrastructure required for the Regional Control Centres.

The Airwave network

The Firelink solution is based on the Airwave network, which is also being used by the military, police and ambulance services. The Airwave network will provide the FRS

with radio coverage to meet the operational requirements of the FRS and has been designed to be resilient to serious failure.



When will Firelink happen?

Phase A of Firelink has been completed, many appliances and officers cars have been successfully fitted with and been trialling the equipment for a number of months. It is now confirmed that many of the outstanding issues highlighted during this assurance process have been resolved by CLG and Airwave, however, this has resulted in slight delay in the project schedule and a revised rollout order for the North West is as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Cheshire and Cumbria | - February 09 to May 09 |
| • Greater Manchester | - May 09 to August 09 |
| • Merseyside | - May 09 to July 09 |
| • Lancashire | - May 09 to August 09 |

This will provide the initial equipment and functionality that will rollout into legacy control rooms and appliances, prior to the cutover of fire and rescue services to the new RCCs.

What next?

The following capabilities will be provided in appliances:

- All appliances will be fitted with a mobile data terminal (MDT), provided by the Firelink project. This will be able to send and receive data via the Firelink radio system and, as a back-up, via a commercial data bearer, and will have GPS location, wireless LAN and a black and white printer.

Update from Government Office North West

Local Area Agreements – 2009 Refresh

Partnerships are working to review their performance and targets set within the current Local Area Agreements. Across the North West, Fire and Rescue Services are showing excellent progress towards delivering what are seen as challenging targets against both NI 49 - Number of primary fires and related fatalities and non-fatal casualties (ex precautionary checks) and NI 33 - All Deliberate Fires (Anti-Social Behaviour Fires). Increasingly and just as important is the growing understanding of how FRS activities can greatly impact on and contribute towards the success of other key local area priorities. Examples of this innovative practice, engagement and learning are now being collated for dissemination through the new NWFRSs Knowledge Hub/Portal.

Regional Workshop CDRP Business Crime - North West Business Crime Consultation Event

The above event looked at the increasing risk to business from crime and Anti Social Behaviour (ASB). The event was put together by GONW working in Partnership with NW Co-Operative Group. Getting Fire on the agenda proved to be an enormous success with both Partnership and Business managers alike. A presentation on managing the fire risk was made by Cheshire FRS on behalf of the NW FRSs.

Regional Workshop for CDRP Anti-Social Behaviour Leads

GONW hosted a regional workshop for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Co-ordinators on the 13th October 2008 in Lancashire. Fire and Rescue managers attended and also presented a specific workshop aimed at profiling the facts about ASB and fire. The workshop, which was jointly run by Cheshire and Merseyside covered topics including:

- All deliberate fire data and its relationship with Crime and ASB (NI 33)
- Financial impact of ASB fires

- Examples of how FRSs across the NW are engaging with Young People and Partners to help reduce ASB and its effects on our communities.

Cannabis Farm Workshops

Through GONW a series of workshops aimed at highlighting the dangers and regional activity associated with Cannabis Farming were organised with SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency) and Local partnerships. Fire and Rescue was represented locally at each of the events, which proved to be valuable in building a wider understanding about the emerging nature of this very real and specific risk across the North West. A further meeting to consider risk information sharing is planned with SOCA through the NW CFOA Operations group.

NW - Big Drink Debate results

The results from the largest survey of its kind involving more than 300,000 residents across the North West were published in November 2008. The report highlights a number of key issues that will form the basis for forward action planning at the regional and local partnership level. Fire and Rescue is represented at the regional level by Adrian Luty who will be looking to set up a more formal dissemination programme with key representatives from each of the North West Brigades. Full details on the findings can be viewed through the following link.
<http://www.ourlife.org.uk/>

Future Events

20th February 2009 – Merseyside FRS, on behalf of the North West will host a conference and workshop with the YJB (Youth Justice Board), Police, HMP, GONW and NWIEP to look at transformational working with young people at risk. The event will look to produce a regional networking strategy, mapping intervention across all agencies involved with young people at risk of offending/re-offending.

Following on from the NW Fire and Rescue Innovations event, a further national workshop is being planned for 2009. The event will be run in conjunction with CLG (Fire) and the wider national Government Office network. The event will be used to develop the scope for a national FRS network aimed at sharing information, knowledge and Practice.

Further information regarding any of the items relating to the GONW can be obtained from Adrian Luty at GONW.



North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership



Progress is continuing on the programmes that are being developed in partnership with NWIEP.

The Sustainability group have completed baseline assessments to determine each FRS current position when compared to ISO 14001 and a gap analysis has been developed. Action plans will now follow which will enable FRSs to improve their performance.

The Community Leadership pilot cohort has been completed and following feedback from staff a number of changes have been made to the course. Cohort two commenced in March and the course was made up of staff from all FRSs in the region.

The Innovation group has continued to develop the AGMA portal whereby information can easily be shared throughout the FRS in the region. The group have also successfully delivered the following two events;

Knowledge Management (KM)

Fire and Rescue, working with The University of Manchester (Centre for Local Governance), North West e Government Group (NWeGG) and Government Office North West, hosted the first ever regional event to look at the strategic development of KM in Understanding Place and Managing Information. The event was attended by more than 60 key Managers from across the NW, representing sectors including Health, Police, Fire and Local Government. Key outcomes include:

- An agreement to set up a NW Strategic Group with terms of reference
- Set up and run a NW Knowledge Network / on line community of practice to disseminate practice and learning
- Develop a regional strategy and KM model

The full event outcomes and next step actions can be found on the newly created IDeA (Improvement & Development Agency) Community of Practice (CoP) at: <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/login.do>

NW Fire and Rescue Innovations Event

Fire and Rescue senior managers from across the North West came together for the above event held on Wednesday 19th November in Lancashire. The event forms part of the NW Fire and Rescue NWIEP delivery programme, aimed at building Innovation through the sharing of information, learning and practice.

The day focussed on partnership working, aligned to the shared priorities and relationships within Local Area Agreements (LAA) and the new emerging framework for Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA). A priority outcome for the event was the formation of a new NW Fire and Rescue LAA/CAA Community of Practice. The Community of Practice will sit within the new and developing North West Fire and Rescue Knowledge Hub/Portal.

The event, which was supported by NWIEP, brought together key representatives from NWIEP, GONW, the Audit Commission and CLG (Fire), all of whom shared a common message, describing innovation (smarter working) as an important driver in building both real and sustainable added value to what we do, and more importantly what we deliver.



Dominic Whelan - Regional Control Centre Director (North West FiReControl Ltd)

Dominic Whelan commenced his appointment as Regional Control Centre Director for the North West in November 2008.

Dominic moved into this post following 20 years of military service as an Army Officer, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His last appointment in the Army was as Commanding Officer for a Royal Artillery Regiment based in the North West. In this position he was CEO of a unit that had to recruit, train, prepare and provide individuals to deploy on military operations. Previous to this he was based in the Permanent Joint Headquarters in Middlesex where he was Head of Personnel for all of the UK overseas operations. During this period he was responsible for the design and implementation of HR (Personnel) requirements for the UK operation in Afghanistan and the roll out of a major HR change programme to the overseas theatres of UK military operations.

Previous service included tours of duty in UK, Germany, Cyprus, Bosnia and Kosovo and Iraq. In the latter, whilst deployed in Basra on operations in 2004, he was a key member in the team that created the first Permanent Joint Operations and Coordination Centre for all Iraqi civil and military emergency services in southern Iraq.

