



# FIRE BRIGADES UNION

GENERAL SECRETARY : MATT WRACK

Established 1918

BRADLEY HOUSE, 68 COOMBE ROAD, KINGSTON UPON THAMES, SURREY KT2 7AE

Telephone: 020 8541 1765

Facsimile: 020 8546 5187

E-mail: office@fbu.org.uk

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Our Ref: MW/sll

14 May 2010

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

## **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - REGIONALISATION OF EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROLS**

I am writing in regard to the new Government's stance on the CLG FiReControl Project (Regionalisation of Emergency Fire Controls).

In the light of comments made before and during the election by Conservative spokespersons, Firefighters will be watching closely the steps taken by the new Government. You may recall that you were asked by a Firefighter (Graham Donaldson) in Yorkshire on 26 April about the Fire and Rescue Service. You said:

*"One thing we would do to try and stop waste is the Regionalisation of the Fire Service, the so-called 'Fire Control Scheme'; it was going to cost £100 million, it's now costing £420 million. We will want to stop that in its tracks."*

We also noted the comments on FiReControl in Conservative policy green paper, *Control Shift: Returning power to Local Communities* (February 2010), which stated:

*"We will... abandon plans to regionalise Fire Control (while providing new measures to enhance resilience in the case of a national emergency)." It added: "A Conservative government will follow the Scottish example and ditch this botched project, where such regional centres have not yet gone live. We will, instead, upgrade a small number of existing fire control centres to enable them to act as national 'super-centres' in the extreme case of a national emergency." (p.27, p.31)*

Contd/2...

We are also aware of Liberal Democrat opposition to Regional Controls. In March this year, the then Party Spokesperson Julia Goldsworthy told the FBU's *Firefighter* magazine that the Government should think again over FiReControl. She said:

*"The Liberal Democrats are opposed to the Government's plans to centralise Fire Control. This project will mean vital local knowledge is lost and this could risk the response time to incidents. The project has already proved to be too expensive and is likely to make the Service less rather than more responsive. We have called for the project to be stopped and for existing Control Rooms to be upgraded as necessary to ensure the communications benefits sought by Government are delivered by local Fire Brigade Control Rooms, as they will be in Scotland and are in Wales, without the need for Regionalisation."*

Given the wide political agreement between both Government parties on this issue we would like an undertaking from you that the FiReControl project will be scrapped, with a timetable for this process and for the upgrading of existing Control Rooms.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', written in a cursive style.

**MATT WRACK**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**

cc: The Rt. Hon Nick Clegg MP - Deputy Prime Minister, Lord President of the Council  
Eric Pickles MP - Secretary of State Communities and Local Government