

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 London Commissioner
The Chief Fire Officer**

Summary of contents in this issue

(The title below is a link to the bulletin page)

Title: The FiReControl Project

The announcement of the termination of main contractor Cassidian's (formerly EADS Defence and Security) contract and the decision to close down the project.

The FiReControl Project

1. Background

- 1.1 FiReControl set out to replace England's 46 standalone fire and rescue control rooms with a resilient network of nine control centres. The project started in 2004 and the eight-year contract for the main integrated system was awarded to EADS Defence and Security (now branded Cassidian) in March 2007.
- 1.2 The last Government announced two major delays – in November 2008 (nine months) and July 2009 (ten months). The Fire Minister Bob Neill MP made it clear in June 2010 that EADS must deliver to time, cost and quality. No additional taxpayers' money could be invested in the project and delivery of a system with reduced quality or functionality was not acceptable. In September the Secretary of State expressed his serious concern over progress on the project.

2. Termination on contract and closure of the project

- 2.1 The Fire Minister has announced today that, following extensive discussion, Cassidian, the main FiReControl contractor, and the Department for Communities and Local Government have jointly decided that the requirements of the project cannot be delivered to an acceptable timeframe. The contract will be terminated with immediate effect and the FiReControl project closed down.
- 2.2 The Department and Cassidian have reached an acceptable settlement over the termination although the details of this will remain commercially confidential.
- 2.3 The Minister's clear objectives were to give operational certainty to the Fire and Rescue Services and financial certainty to taxpayers. Today's decision will achieve these objectives.
- 2.4 The Department for Communities and Local Government will now take the necessary steps to close down the project in an efficient and orderly way. All assets from the project that can be used for the future benefit of Fire and Rescue Services will be identified and arrangements made for maintenance of those early products already delivered, e.g. the on-board computers on fire appliances delivered through the Firelink project and an early version of mobilising equipment in local fire stations. Department for Communities and Local Government will contact those concerned with close down operations with information on funding arrangements.
- 2.5 The Department Communities and Local Government intends to publish a consultation paper shortly on the future of control room services in England. This will explore options for the fire and rescue community to achieve some of the aims - if they consider these still to be correct - of improving efficiency, enhancing technology and building resilience. This will be based on principles of localism and no solution will be imposed on Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- 2.6 The Department will discuss the future use of the control centre buildings with representatives from all Fire and Rescue Authorities. An arrangement has been reached, in principle, with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority for the London Fire Brigade to move their existing control service and technology, along with some other functions, into the new control centre building in Merton. This might be a precedent for other arrangements.

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The FiReControl Project

2.7 The Minister's statement can be found at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/1803629>

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