

IMPROVING RESILIENCE 02



FiReControl location announcements

FiReControl will deliver an integrated national network of Regional Control Centres in England. The locations of eight new buildings have now been announced.



Image: Lingley Mere Business Park Development Company Limited
Artist's impression of the new Regional Control Centre for the North West, in Warrington.

The new control centres will equip the Fire and Rescue Service with a modern, efficient infrastructure that will provide a more effective system that will better protect the public.

Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Minister for Fire

What is the FiReControl project?

The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) is currently undergoing one of the most ambitious programmes of change in the public sector. We are moving towards a service ready for the challenges of the 21st century: modern, well managed, focused on prevention and working with the communities we serve. The FiReControl project is a key part of this programme, and will establish a national network of regional control centres to ensure a resilient and efficient FRS.

There are wide differences in technology and operating procedures across the 46 FRS control rooms that currently exist in England. They were not designed to deal in a co-ordinated fashion

with major regional or national incidents, such as wide-scale flooding or a national security threat. Their work tends to come in peaks and troughs: most do not take enough calls to realise economies of scale, yet they can be overwhelmed by surges in demand.

Since 1999, a number of independent reviews have highlighted these concerns. Following the 9/11 attacks, Mott McDonald recommended the creation of a single national network of nine fire control centres, one for each Government Office region. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted and then acted on this recommendation, in order to provide a better service to the public.



Image: Helios (Belmont) Limited

Artist's impression of the new control centre for the North East, located in Durham's Belmont Business Park.

The FiReControl project began in 2004 and will:

- **improve resilience:** the system will be able to cope with major incidents, power failures, difficult weather conditions and other challenges
- **deliver more effective responses to incidents,** however big, and allow the Service to deal with surges in demand
- **send appliances more quickly** by automatically tracing caller location and enabling staff to mobilise directly to appliances via Firelink
- **improve safety for firefighters** by giving them better information to deal with the incident on arrival and on the way there. Firefighters will still be based at local stations
- **enhance the role of control centre staff** within the Service and **equip them all with the latest technology,** which has a proven track record.

The buildings

Over a year of intensive research and planning has gone into the specifications for the new buildings. They will provide staff with high-quality, secure and attractive places to work. The buildings will fit in with their local surroundings and exceed environmental and health and safety standards. Control staff from across the country, at all levels, have contributed to the design process by making it clear what is important to them.

In August 2005, Fire Minister Jim Fitzpatrick announced the locations of seven of the new buildings. The location of the South East's control centre was announced in October 2005. The London region was not part of the accommodation procurement.

Information on all eight sites and the chosen developers is available on the CD that comes with

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this edition of *FRS*. The CD includes a Q&A on the site selection process, pictures and artists' impressions of the planned buildings, and a computer-generated 'fly-through' with voice-over, which gives a good visual representation of how the new control centres might look.

The Regional Control Centre locations

North East – Belmont Business Park, Durham

Belmont Business Park is located on the outskirts of Durham City. It is just off Junction 62 of the A1(M) motorway, and is well situated for the mainline station at Durham, with Newcastle upon Tyne located approximately 15 miles north and Sunderland 9 miles north-east.

The new control centre will be built in highly landscaped surroundings, in keeping with other developed plots in the park, to create a pleasant working environment.

North West – Lingley Mere Business Park, Warrington

Lingley Mere Business Park is a three-minute drive from Junction 8 of the M62, and is well connected by Sankey railway station and Warrington Bank Quay railway station.

The FiReControl building will be located within a parkland setting. The existing landscape has mature native woodland, managed landscaping and open grassland areas. There are shopping and leisure facilities close by and plans for a restaurant and childcare facilities at the site.

East of England – Cambridge Research Park

Cambridge Research Park is a 112-acre award-winning site, situated to the north of Cambridge on the A10, with easy access to the A1, A14 and M11. It is also just 2.5 miles away from Waterbeach station.

The setting at Cambridge Research Park is impressive. The park incorporates a wildlife reserve and lakeside decks encourage occupiers to enjoy the landscape, as does the surrounding network of footpaths and cycle tracks. The park has its own on-site café bar.

East Midlands – Willow Farm Business Park, Castle Donington

Willow Farm Business Park is accessed from the A50(T), which provides a dual carriageway link between Junctions 24 and 24A of the M1 and the M6. Bus routes provide links to Nottingham and Derby.

The development's high-quality structural landscaping, as well as its ecological value, reinforce the quality of the location. The nearby town of Castle Donington has a wealth of shops and services.

West Midlands – Wolverhampton Business Park

Wolverhampton Business Park is 4 miles from Wolverhampton station, which provides regular services to Birmingham. The Midland Metro provides a further link to Birmingham. The immediate surrounding area is set to become a major public transport hub, with plans for a park-and-ride facility just north of the M54 motorway junction.



Image: CCD

Still from the 'fly-through' showing the outside of a control centre.

Wolverhampton Business Park provides an attractive blend of state-of-the-art buildings for business use, complemented by on-site amenities, including a health and fitness club.

Yorkshire and Humberside – Paragon Business Village, Wakefield

Paragon Business Park is a well-established retail park. The M1, M62 and M1/A1 link are within 2 miles, and Westgate mainline railway station is just over a mile away. A local bus service runs into the site and connects with wider West Yorkshire transport links.

A crèche, health and leisure and food facilities are all available at the site, and Wakefield town centre is less than 2 miles away.

South West – Blackbrook Business Park, Taunton

Blackbrook Business Park is a modern development on the edge of Taunton, adjacent to the out-of-town shopping centre. There is easy access to the M5 and Taunton station from the site.

Situated in a setting of landscaped surroundings with a lake, the new building will provide an



Image: CCD

The new control rooms will provide staff with high-quality, attractive places to work.

attractive working environment. There are health and leisure facilities nearby, and Taunton town centre is within easy reach.

South East – Kite's Croft, Fareham

Kite's Croft is an award-winning, mixed-use 35-acre site close to Fareham, Hampshire.

The site has excellent transport links by road, via the M27, A3(M) and the M3.

Situated on a picturesque coastline, the new control centre at Kite's Croft will have good access to retail, leisure and other amenities. Southampton and Portsmouth city centres are both approximately 10 miles away.

How were the sites chosen?

During the initial stages of procurement, developers were invited to put forward sites for consideration. The evaluation team reviewed the developers' technical capability and financial standing. Evaluation of the sites was against criteria such as:

- the risks from flooding and flight paths
- demographics and proximity to a population of sufficient density
- development timescales
- proximity to IT communications
- good transport links.

After a comprehensive evaluation process, which included site visits by the technical evaluation team, a shortlist was drawn up in each region. The shortlisted developers were invited to submit tenders.



Image: Yorkcourt Properties

Artist's impression of the new Regional Control Centre for Yorkshire and Humberside, less than two miles from Wakefield town centre.

All of the tender bids were evaluated according to technical, planning, legal, site-specific, security and resilience criteria, as well as cost. The highest scoring bids in the tender process were chosen.

Do the buildings represent value for money?

The procurement has followed a rigorous tender process, run under EU procurement rules, which ensured that developers put forward competitive bids in an open market.

What happens next?

Developers are in the process of obtaining planning permission. In parallel, they are working up the detailed designs. These will include the façade of the building, the electrical and mechanical services and the security systems. Construction of the first wave of control centres is expected to start in the next six months.

When will construction begin?

Once planning permission is obtained and detailed designs completed, construction will begin in some regions in 2006. The first control centres are planned to 'go live' in 2008.

More information about FiReControl

For full background information on the project and the infrastructure services procurement, and for other updates, please see the FiReControl website: www.firecontrol.odpm.gov.uk

You can also write to us at: firecontrolwebsite@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

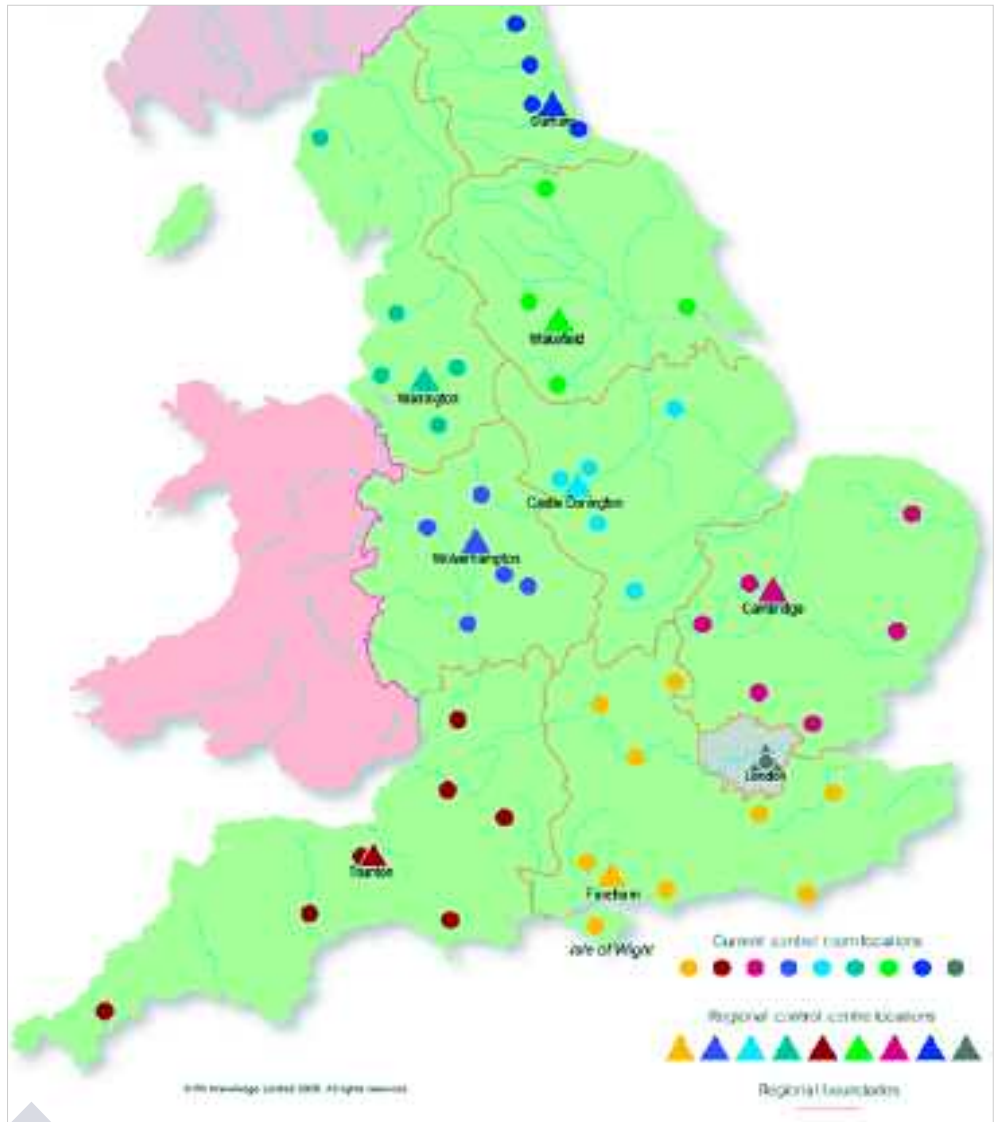


Image: PA Consulting

National map showing the locations of the existing control rooms in England, and of the planned regional control centres.



Image: CCD

Still from the 'fly-through' showing the entrance to a control centre.



Image: CCD

The double-height control room that will form the hub of each Regional Control Centre.