

FiReControl Transition Governance – Roles and Responsibilities

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Paul Raymond, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205

1 Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of documents issued by Communities and Local Government (CLG) in respect of the proposed transitional process, transition governance roles and responsibilities and suggests a suitable response.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

Respond to the Transition Governance Roles and Responsibilities document issued by CLG in the form of the draft response attached as Appendix 1, or any other form considered appropriate by the Authority.

3 Background

The FiReControl Project is a nationally established project to provide nine regional fire control centres to operate emergency call handling and mobilisation services for fire services, and the project is to be delivered regionally.

To date CLG has entered into contracts for the construction of regional control centre buildings and for the supply and maintenance of an information technology network and associated infrastructure services.

The National Framework Document for Fire Authorities 2006-08 provides that fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) are to establish regional control companies to ultimately operate regional control services on behalf of each FRA in a region.

The West Midlands Regional Management Board (RMB) has, pursuant to the above provisions, set up a regional control company comprised of 5 directors,



who are to be elected Members, 1 from each of the 5 constituent FRAs (i.e. Shropshire, Staffordshire, Hereford & Worcester, Warwickshire and West Midlands).

CLG has issued 2 documents for Members attention:

- the response form; and
- the paper "Transition Governance Roles and Responsibilities" a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2.

CLG is requesting the Chair of each FRA to sign and submit the response (attached as Appendix 1) to the document "Transition Governance, Roles and Responsibilities" by 16 July 2007 confirming that they will ensure that their management structures support certain specified principles set out in the document.

It states in the correspondence that the agreement is being signed (by the FRA) on the understanding that CLG are solely requesting, at this stage of the project, confirmation that its Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) already had adequate project management structures or will have such structures in place no later than September 2007.

It also states that at this stage of the project, no FRA commitment is being sought with regards to meeting project milestones previously communicated. However, it does seek assurances that the FRA is currently developing a detailed transition plan with the objective of seeking to meet the critical checkpoint, gate and cut over dates as advised.

This document has been revised substantially to reflect the legal concerns raised by officers over the first version.

Officers can advise that there is currently a funded project manager in place and that the funding provided thus far by CLG is being used to recruit a team that we estimate will have the necessary capacity to meet the deadlines currently advised. Funding for these posts is only secure until the end of 2007 / middle 2008 so we cannot make absolute assurances that this commitment can be secured beyond these dates, especially with the uncertainties surrounding funding out of Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07). The FRA therefore may only be able to agree to the principles but until detailed plans are available including information on funding available up to cut over, the Authority may not be able to agree that they have structures in place to support all specified principles.

As Members will note in the next section, the CLG require the Authority to agree to a range of 'principles'.



4 The Principles of Shared Responsibility

As can be seen in Appendix 1 there are 16 principles requiring agreement by the Authority. These are detailed below with supporting information and suggested responses.

- a) **Accountabilities and responsibilities within local and regional project structures will be aligned with lines of authority to enable individuals to fulfil the requirements of their role, e.g. project managers will have appropriate control over budgets, FRS resources and timescales for delivery of activities.**

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority (S&WFA) Position.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) is the Programme Director and the Head of FiReControl Convergence is the Programme Manager. As such they are both vested with the appropriate authority and responsibility. As stated in paragraph 19 of the report (Appendix 2) these officers are not currently indicating that they will leave until after this date, however, Members should note that it is difficult to secure this commitment as officers may leave on promotion at any time during this intervening period.

- b) **There will be a single point of contact, with responsibility for leading on delivery and assurance of FiReControl preparations within the FRS – the CFO or a named Principal Officer. This implies no legal accountability or personal liability on the part of this individual.**

S&WFA Position

The DCFO is the lead officer on delivery and he will report to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) who will be the officer with ultimate responsibility for assurance.

- c) **There will be a single point of contact, with responsibility for leading on delivery and assurance of FiReControl preparations at RCC level – the RCC Director, representing the RCC Company Board, or a nominated member of the Board. This implies no legal accountability or personal liability on the part of this individual.**

S&WFA Position

Although Members may feel inclined to support this principle it is very difficult to assure that this statement will be the case. The Regional Control Centre (RCC) Company Board is comprised of 5 Board Members one from each of the FRAs in the West Midlands Region, although Members can seek to influence the Board it will be for this independent Board to decide on arrangements such as this.



- d) Each FRA is accountable for the preparations for and transition of its FRA at the local level.**

S&WFA Position

The FRA is ultimately accountable (through the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004) for ensuring that it has adequate means for taking emergency calls and dispatching resources. As the FRA is mandated by the National Framework Document to support transition to the Regional Fire Control Members are expected to accept this accountability. However, alongside the accountability Members of the FRA would probably expect firm support from the CLG and national teams to ensure that the Authority has sufficient resources to support this accountability.

- e) The RCC Company (LFEPA in London) is accountable for the preparations at the RCC.**

S&WFA Position

Members are asked to agree that as a Board Member of the RCC the Authority will ensure that the Company accepts this principle but S&WFA cannot assure this at this stage.

- f) FRAs are responsible for defining their local project governance and management arrangements.**

S&WFA Position

Members are asked to accept this principle.

- g) RCC Companies, when set up, will be responsible for the regional project Governance and management Arrangements relating to RCC establishment activities. Until the companies are in place, regional project teams will undertake this role.**

S&WFA Position

Members will be aware that as a Board Member of the RCC the FRA may well seek to ensure that the Company accepts this principle but the Authority cannot guarantee company acceptance at this stage.

- h) If relevant to existing structures, FRAs through CFOs and regional project boards, need to inform or consult with RMBs within the terms of their constitutions on issues which are relevant to FiReControl and require a coordinated input across the region that no individual FRA can implement.**

S&WFA Position

Current agreements within the West Midlands Region are that once the RCC Company is operating it will be independent of the RMB and will inform and consult only with the constituent FRAs.



- i) **Responsibilities for coordinating contractor delivery will be devolved to the regions and FRSs with appropriate reporting to the national team.**

S&WFA Position

Members are asked to agree this principle.

- j) **Responsibilities for providing assurances will fall across all parties.**

S&WFA Position

This is a very general statement with little specifics and a broad impact. As a principle however, Members are asked to accept it.

- k) **Clear project communication and reporting lines will be established within an FRS, and from an FRS to the FRA, regional and national teams.**

S&WFA Position

The CFA's programme management process uses PRINCE2 methodology for internal communication assurance and the RMB operates a Regional Project Board structure to ensure regional communication. National Communication is also through the Project structure (Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and CLG and Local Government Association (LGA)). Additionally the National Project Team provides a reporting tool that S&WFA use. Members can therefore accept that this principle is already operating.

- l) **All communications between the FRS and the National Team must take place via the regional teams to ensure a common and consistent understanding is achieved across the teams.**

S&WFA Position

In general the FRA is recommended to agree with this but where the Authority needs to discuss information that is specifically about local needs or is 'business in confidence' it needs to reserve the right to communicate in a manner decided by the FRA Members at that time.

- m) **There will be clear escalation routes established within an FRS, and from an FRS through to the FRA, regional and national teams including the wider CLG environment.**

S&WFA Position

The Authority is requested to concur that it can confirm that it agrees with this principle

- n) **All escalation between the FRS and the national team must take place via the regional teams to ensure a common and consistent understanding is achieved across the teams.**

S&WFA Position



The Authority is requested to concur that it can confirm that it agrees with this principle

o) The Region will use the Unicorn tool for reporting to the national team

S&WFA Position

The Authority is requested to concur that it can confirm that it agrees with this principle.

p) The FRS will use the Unicorn tool for reporting to the national team via the regional team, unless the regional team are undertaking the reporting on behalf of the FRS.

S&WFA Position

The Authority is requested to concur that it can confirm that it agrees with this principle

5 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report as the document to be signed by the Chair requires only an agreement of principles. However, to actually deliver on these principles will require significant levels of funding. As yet it is unclear how much will be provided by central Government.

6 Legal Comment

As the report recommends a response to suggested principles only, there are no legal implications which arise directly out of the recommendation. The draft response deals with issues arising from the 16 suggested principles and makes it clear where the Authority's ability to agree certain principles is limited or qualified. The progress of the FiReControl Project continues to be supported by advice and scrutiny from the Authority's solicitors together with solicitors for the other constituent authorities in the West Midlands region.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

This report is purely an update on a Government request for project support and so the recommendations within the report have no direct impact on people. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1 FiReControl Transition Governance, Roles and Responsibilities – Response Template

Appendix 2 Transition Roles and Responsibilities version 1.0



9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	*
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link	*	Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	*
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*



**FiReControl Transition
 Governance, Roles and
 Responsibilities**

Not Protectively Marked

**Version 1.1 (response
 template only)**

Annex 1 (revised)

RPT0697 – FiReControl Transition Governance, Roles and Responsibilities –
 Response Template (please return both pages, attached together, in response)

Responses should be sent, by 16th July, to:

Peter Betts,
 Director of Fire Resilience,
 Communities and Local Government,
 9th Floor,
 Eland House,
 Bressendon Place,
 London
 SW1E 5DU

Chairs of FRAs, with the agreement of their FRA as a whole, are requested to confirm that they understand the principles set out in the paper RPT0697 – Transition Governance, Roles and Responsibilities and that they will ensure that their management structures can support these principles.

This agreement is being signed by the FRA on the understanding that the CLG are solely requesting, at this stage of the project, confirmation that its FRS already has adequate project management structures or will ensure that such structures are in place no later than the end of September 2007.

It is noted that, at this stage of the project, no FRA commitment is being made with regards to meeting project milestones previously communicated. However, the FRA is currently developing a detailed transition plan with the objective of seeking to meet the critical checkpoint, gate and cut over dates as advised.

Principle	Paragraph reference
Accountabilities and responsibilities within local and regional project structures will be aligned with lines of authority to enable individuals to fulfil the requirements of their role, e.g. project managers will have appropriate control over budgets, FRS resources and timescales for delivery of activities. <i>S&WFA Position The DCFO is the Programme Director and the Head of FireControl Convergence is the Programme Manager. As such they are both vested with the appropriate authority and responsibility.</i>	18

<p>There will be a single point of contact, with responsibility for leading on delivery and assurance of FiReControl preparations within the FRS – the CFO or a named Principal Officer. This implies no legal accountability or personal liability on the part of this individual.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The DCFO is the lead officer on delivery and the CFO will be the officer with ultimate responsibility for assurance.</i></p>	19
<p>There will be a single point of contact, with responsibility for leading on delivery and assurance of FiReControl preparations at RCC level – the RCC Director, representing the RCC Company Board, or a nominated member of the Board. This implies no legal accountability or personal liability on the part of this individual.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>Although we can support this principle we cannot assure that it will be the case. The RCC Company Board is comprised of 5 Board Members one from each of the FRAs in the West Midlands Region, it will be for this independent board to decide on arrangements such as this.</i></p>	19
<p>Each FRA is accountable for the preparations for and transition of its FRA at the local level.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The FRA is ultimately accountable (through the Fire & Rescue Services Act) for ensuring that it has adequate means for taking emergency calls and dispatching resources. As we are mandated by the National Framework Document to support transition to the Regional Fire Controls Members are required to accept this accountability. However, as part of the accountability the FRA also seeks assured support from the CLG and National teams to ensure that the Authority has sufficient resources to support this accountability.</i></p>	21
<p>The RCC Company (LFEPA in London) is accountable for the preparations at the RCC</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>As a Board Member of the RCC the Authority will strive to ensure that the Company accepts this principle but S&WFA cannot make assurances at this stage.</i></p>	22
<p>FRAs are responsible for defining their local project governance and management arrangements.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>This principle is accepted</i></p>	23

<p>RCC Companies, when set up, will be responsible for the regional project Governance and management Arrangements relating to RCC establishment activities. Until the companies are in place, regional project teams will undertake this role.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>As a Board Member of the RCC the FRA will strive to ensure that the Company accepts this principle but the Authority cannot make assurances at this stage.</i></p>	23
<p>If relevant to existing structures, FRAs through CFOs and regional project boards, need to inform or consult with RMBs within the terms of their constitutions on issues which are relevant to FiReControl and require a coordinated input across the region that no individual FRA can implement.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>Current agreements within the West Midlands Region are that once the RCC Company is operating it will be independent of the RMB and will inform and consult only with the constituent FRAs.</i></p>	24
<p>Responsibilities for coordinating contractor delivery will be devolved to the regions and FRSs with appropriate reporting to the national team.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>Principle Agreed</i></p>	26
<p>Responsibilities for providing assurances will fall across all parties.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>In principle this very general statement with little specificity and a broad impact is accepted.</i></p>	28
<p>Clear project communication and reporting lines will be established within an FRS, and from an FRS to the FRA, regional and national teams.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The Shropshire & Wrekin CFA's programme management process uses Prince2 methodology for internal communication assurance and the RMB operates a Regional Project Board structure to ensure regional communication. National Communication is also through the Project structure (CFOA and CLG and LGA).</i></p>	30
<p>All communications between the FRS and the National Team must take place via the regional teams to ensure a common and consistent understanding is achieved across the teams.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>In general the FRA agrees with this principle but where the Authority needs to discuss information that is specifically about local needs or is 'business in confidence' the Authority reserves the right to communicate in a manner decided by the FRA.</i></p>	31

<p>There will be clear escalation routes established within an FRS, and from an FRS through to the FRA, regional and national teams including the wider CLG environment.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The Authority can confirm that it agrees with this principle</i></p>	31
<p>All escalation between the FRS and the national team must take place via the regional teams to ensure a common and consistent understanding is achieved across the teams.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The Authority can confirm that it agrees with this principle.</i></p>	31
<p>The Region will use the Unicorn tool for reporting to the national team</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The Authority can confirm that it agrees with this principle.</i></p>	16
<p>The FRS will use the Unicorn tool for reporting to the national team via the regional team, unless the regional team are undertaking the reporting on behalf of the FRS.</p> <p><i>S&WFA Position</i> <i>The Authority can confirm that it agrees with this principle.</i></p>	16

I, _____, confirm that I as Chair of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, confirm that my Authority's management structures:
(b) will actively support these principles by 30th September 2007.