

Circular number	<b>18/2008</b>	Date issued	<b>29 April 2008</b>
This circular is	<b>For information</b>	No response required	
This circular is	<b>Relevant to the National Framework</b>		
Status	<b>This circular informs Fire and Rescue Authorities and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service of progress with the Fire and Resilience Programme.</b>		

# Fire and Resilience Programme Highlights – April 2008

## Issued by:

**Stephen Cloughton**

**Programmes, Finance and Performance Division**

## 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 Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
The Chief Fire Officer**

## Please forward to:

## Summary

This is the second of a new series of monthly 'highlights' notes to inform Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and senior staff in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) of progress with the Programme. Suggestions are welcome about how to make the notes most useful to FRAs and the FRS; any comments should be sent to the contact below.

## For further information, contact:

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### 1.0 New Dimension: CFOA Assurance Body

- 1.1 As the New Dimension Programme draws towards the end of the roll-out phase for vehicles and equipment, CFOA is taking an increasingly direct role in the operational organisation of the future management of the assets through the Association's National Resilience Board.
- 1.2 The new arrangements have been developed in partnership with CLG and the LGA and, although still in transition, are already at a point where management controls are passing from CLG to CFOA.
- 1.3 Of particular significance was the transfer to CFOA of the national resilience assurance team on 1 April. This 23 person team, which is fully funded by CLG, will be responsible to the CFOA lead, Terry Standing (CFO Gloucestershire FRS), for supporting the many elements and facets which together form the national capability. The team's principal role will be to reassure CFOA, and thereby Government, that national resilience is being maintained through the application of common and consistent standards throughout the country for such things as training, logistics, operational practices, vehicles and equipment.
- 1.4 Also from 1 April, CFOA has taken the lead in organising those elements of New Dimension training which are to be provided nationally.
- 1.5 Over the next few months CFOA, working through the National Resilience Board, will take control of all key New Dimension delivery workstreams. This means that the FRS will take on responsibility for managing practices, procedures and technical advice for, in turn, high-volume pumps (HVP), detection, investigation and monitoring (DIM), urban search and rescue (USAR) and finally, in August 2008, enhanced command and support (ECS) operations. CLG will continue to provide the funding to support the operation of the Board and the centrally-organised training.

### 2.0 New Dimension: Enhanced Command Support Vehicles

- 2.1 New Dimension will provide resilient, enhanced command support for the national response during serious emergencies. During the response, ECS vehicles will be located at strategic holding areas to assist the co-ordination of FRS resources in support of the incident commander.
- 2.2 Delivery of all nine enhanced command support vehicles is due by the end of May. The vehicles will be fully tested before roll-out to the FRS, which is currently expected to be completed by the end of July. This is the final stage of capital investment in the command and control capability.
- 2.3 The new ECS vehicles are similar to the basic DIM vehicles, but are fitted with resilient communications equipment. Telephone systems will be installed, together with satellite equipment and radio systems, including those which meet the requirements of Firelink.

### 3.0 Firelink

- 3.1 Phase A roll-out is now well under way in England and Scotland; with Wales still in the planning stage. Within England, between 70-90% (depending on region) of the resilient radio network is now built; almost all control rooms have now had their Firelink terminal equipment fitted; and last month we started the process of fitting out eight vehicles per FRS with Firelink as a familiarisation set. After an initial learning process, the installation work has been conducted broadly on time and to a very high standard. Phase A is due for completion by August, once testing has finished in the last of the regions (East of England).
- 3.2 Phase B, involving the roll-out of Airwave radios to the remaining vehicles in each FRS, is due to be completed by mid 2009.

### 4.0 FiReControl Data Toolkit

- 4.1 Data, rather than voice, is at the heart of the FiReControl system. The project's IT supplier, EADS, has been working hard to produce a toolkit to enable FRSs to begin migrating their data onto the new system. The first release of the toolkit will enable preparation of gazetteer data, which is one of the largest and most important data sets to be used by FiReControl. There has been some delay in making this first release of the toolkit available to the FRSs, but we are now confident it will be available to start being deployed in mid-May.
- 4.2 CLG recognises that the later than planned delivery of the toolkit puts pressure on FRSs, who are keen to start work on data migration activities. EADS remains committed to delivering the system in August 09, in time for 'go live' in October 09 and roll-out thereafter.

### 5.0 Sir Ken Knight's Review of Flooding

- 5.1 The Department's Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Sir Ken Knight, prepared a report on the FRSs' response to last year's floods, which was published on 17 March and is available for download from the Department's website ([www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/floodingreview](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/floodingreview)). The report, 'Facing the Challenge', will contribute to Sir Michael Pitt's final review of the floods, which is due to be published in the Summer.
- 5.2 Sir Ken praised the Service's response, but concluded that more could be done to improve its effectiveness further. Call-handling and mobilising were identified as significant issues, both for FRAs directly affected by flooding and also for those whose emergency fire control rooms assisted in dealing with the large volume of calls. Of particular relevance to the Programme, the Report recognised that FiReControl would provide a high level of national resilience and interoperability not possible from the existing control room arrangements, but that CLG would wish to ensure that RCCs were designed to cope with the high volume of calls generated by widespread flooding.
- 5.3 The Report said that, rather than a statutory duty, the overriding need for an effective response to flooding by FRAs was to ensure the appropriate capability existed to provide a national, interoperable response. A statutory duty would not, in itself, ensure the interoperability of equipment, training and competence. The Report therefore recommended that the appropriate capability was provided to maintain a safe, effective and resilient national response by the FRS.

- 5.4 Some FRAs are of the view that a statutory duty is necessary if they are to receive funding to deal with the effects of flooding. However, the Government's 'new burdens' rule is not confined to the imposition of statutory duties. A new burden is defined as any policy or initiative which increases the cost of providing local authority services. This includes duties, powers, or any other changes which may place an expectation on local authorities. If it is the Government's policy that local government should do something which involves a net additional cost, then the Government is committed to funding the net new burden.

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