

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No

MEETING: 21 SEPTEMBER 2009

SUBJECT: FIRECONTROL PROJECT: UPDATE

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,
THE FINANCE OFFICER**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the current status of the FiReControl Checkpoint and Gateway activities, which the project team is required to report against to Communities and Local Government (CLG).

2 RESCHEDULING THE PROJECT

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the proposed 'go-live' date for this Authority to migrate all emergency call taking and incident management facilities to the Regional Control Centre has now been rescheduled and is currently planned to take place during May 2011.
- 2.2 This new date remains a challenge to deliver against given the amount of outstanding work. However, assurances from Government in respect of equipment and system delivery, and the fact that the Minister has stated the date will be subject to a closely monitored milestone schedule, provides some degree of confidence that this can be achieved.

3 THE FUNCTION OF GATEWAYS AND CHECKPOINTS

- 3.1 The FiReControl Project is an extremely complex and demanding undertaking which, to be successful, requires a significant amount of work to be completed by several different groups in a co-ordinated and controlled manner.
- 3.2 To ensure that this work is properly undertaken and to ensure that key stakeholders are provided with adequate assurances of this, a transition plan has been developed which sets out, in detail, what needs to be achieved by whom and by when, in order for the project to be delivered successfully.
- 3.3 These activities have, in turn, been grouped into a number of checkpoints and gateways for each individual Fire and Rescue Service and each of the nine regions. They are built around key dates in the project timetable and are currently subject to re-alignment by CLG due to the re-scheduling of the project. However, in accordance with the previously published schedule, this Authority has reached Gateway 1a which is the subject of this report. The remaining checkpoints and gateways are expected to be confirmed as follows:-

- Checkpoint 1: Contract signature and 6 months (October 2007) – reported to Members in November 2007; (Minute 76 (i) 2007 refers)
 - Checkpoint 2: Contract signature and 12 months (April 2008) – reported to Members in April 2008; (Minute 135 (i) 2008 refers)
 - Gate 1: Cutover minus 18 months (April 2008) – reported to Members in April 2008; (Minute 135 (i) 2008 refers)
 - Gate 1a: additional gateway following the first rescheduling of the project;
 - Gate 2: Cutover minus 12 months (October 2008 now revised to May 2010);
 - Gate 3: Cutover minus 6 months (Dec 2010);
 - Gate 4: Cutover minus 3 months (Feb 2011);
 - Gate 5: Cutover minus 2 weeks (May 2011).
- 3.4 At each of these key points the Chief Fire Officer, or nominated Principal Officer, must confirm that all of the associated activities relating to the Fire and Rescue Service have been delivered to a standard which will enable the project to move on towards final completion.
- 3.5 By adopting this approach evidence will be provided to support the decision making process of the Chief Fire Officer in respect of confirming, or otherwise, that the Fire and Rescue Service is ready to cutover to the Regional Control Room. The areas of work contained within the additional gateway (Gate 1) now need to be reported against and the information below highlights the progress that has been made.

4 CURRENT CHECKPOINT/GATEWAY STATUS

- 4.1 Within the Gateway 1a report there are seventeen areas of reportable work falling to this Fire and Rescue Service. In terms of progress for Gateway 1a the following can be reported:
- Areas of work completed – 14 – primarily involving the production of management and communication plans, further development and mitigation of risks and the implementation of the national Incident Reporting System (IRS);
 - Areas of work in progress – 3:
 - Determine which processes must be redeployed – 70% complete;
 - Support RCC to consult on draft regional staffing numbers – 60% complete;
 - Commence formal consultation with RCC on RCC draft matters – 80% complete;
 - Areas of work awaiting information – 0.

4.2 With regard to all elements, evidence has been supplied to CLG to support the progress reported.

4.3 It should be noted that regarding the formal consultation on draft matters and staffing numbers some substantial progress has been made in terms of the commencement of the Regional Joint Consultative Committee which is holding regular meetings concerning these and other issues. It is envisaged that progress will continue to be made notwithstanding the Fire Brigade's Union published position of:

- No compulsory redundancies
- LACC to recognise the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services; and
- The Terms and Conditions of all staff, existing and future new starters, to be governed by the current Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

4.4 The above items are being considered by the LACC Board and remain a matter for that body to further deliberate on.

4.5 The further extension in the timescale for completion of the work announced by the Minister is to be broadly welcomed as it formally acknowledges the outstanding workload which still requires to be completed prior to go live. However, even with this extension, the project remains a challenging one which will require significant effort on the part of all concerned to ensure that the new go live date is achieved. An assessment by the regional project team clearly indicates that all of this additional time will be needed in order to complete the necessary work to ensure a successful transfer to the RCC by May 2011.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control; the realisation of efficiencies; the most appropriate use of limited resources; and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as high utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place. The complete risk assessment is available on request from the Chief Fire Officer.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Clearly the increase in time prior to go live places an additional burden on costs. However CLG have confirmed that all costs continue to be underwritten and therefore there are no financial implications on the Authority in respect of this report.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this specific report.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this specific report.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 The Gateway 1a sign-off stage has been reached and, with the exception of the areas identified above, this Fire and Rescue Service has undertaken the work necessary and substantial progress towards the expected outcome had been made.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members are requested to:

- a) Endorse the progress made to date;
- b) Receive further reports as each Checkpoint and Gateway date is reached.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- FiReControl Transition Governance Roles and Responsibilities Paper (RPT 0264)