



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister
Creating sustainable communities

FIRECONTROL PROJECT

Vision & Scope for Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres

Report ID: RPT 0001

Release: Version 2.0

Release Date: 29/01/04

User Division: FSED

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Date Approved: *[To be approved only at point of formal sign off]*



1. Introduction

This document outlines the vision and scope for the Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres. It takes as a starting point the White Paper “Our Fire & Rescue Service” and identifies the services to be delivered, business improvement goals, and the key principles to be adopted in defining the way in which the services are provided.

The vision and scope are articulated by answering the following questions:

- What factors are driving the need for change within Command and Control of the Fire & Rescue Service?
- What is the scope of the Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centre activities?
- Which responsibilities should be undertaken locally/regionally and which nationally?
- What are the key principles to be adopted in developing the Fire & Rescue Regional Control Centres?

1.1. What factors are driving the need for change within Command and Control of the Fire & Rescue Service?

The factors driving the need for change within Command and Control of the Fire & Rescue Service:

- The existing, locally-based control centres no longer provide a sufficiently resilient or scaleable service, either regionally or nationally. The increased threat from terrorism (including the risk of terrorist acts being directed against the emergency services themselves) and the need to incorporate “New Dimension” scale incidents in contingency planning has highlighted the lack of resilience and fallback mechanisms within current arrangements, and the difficulties that would be encountered in responding to large-scale incidents. Addressing these weaknesses will require major overhaul of the technology, accommodation and processes.
- The cost-effectiveness of existing fire control rooms varies greatly. Rationalisation of control rooms, will deliver economies of scale in call handling and despatch, will bring fire control rooms nationally up to “best in class” levels of cost-effectiveness, whilst maintaining levels of other important factors such as quality and customer care & safe systems of working
- The differing technology environments and business processes within existing control rooms acts as a barrier to delivery of the wider modernisation agenda of Fire & Rescue Service.

The changes needed in response to these drivers will be complex and challenging; however, the goal of delivering real service improvements and long-term cost reductions, outweighs the implementation costs incurred and risks that require appropriate mitigation.

1.2. What is the scope of the Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centre activities?

A detailed analysis of the services, which should be delivered by Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres, and the associated business improvement goals, are presented in annex A.

Core services

There are a number of services which will form the core of the services delivered by Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres. These will be delivered on a common basis nationally and are:

Emergency call handling, in particular from:

- the public, via 999 calls and direct incident reports to the Fire & Rescue Service
- other emergency services and public safety authorities
- commercial alarm monitoring centres (both commercial and residential)
- social services (e.g. community centres and local authority hostels)

Despatch, monitoring and support of operational resources from local Fire & Rescue Services.

Joint management of all scales of incidents, in conjunction with:

- the other emergency services
- transportation & public safety authorities (e.g. the Highways Agency's new Traffic Operations Service).

Participation in contingency planning for major incidents.

Associated business support functions, including:

- updates to Gazetteer, including receipt of requests for updates, data sourcing, data registers and verification
- management of relationships with alarm service providers
- provision of management information concerning service delivery and statistical information e.g. FDR1s for the ODPM
- Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres staff management, duties, HR and finance
- management of IT and facilities support
- national Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres co-ordination, overall service management - e.g. business continuity

Business improvement goals

In terms of business improvement, the performance of existing arrangements in delivering the core call-handling and despatch functions is very high. The business improvement goals are primarily:

- improved capability to continue operations following business difficulties (e.g. loss of a control room, either through outage of services, natural disaster or terrorist incident)
- improved ability to handle large scale incidents
- improved cost-effectiveness, to match current “best-in-class” levels
- transfer of statistical and management information to national Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres co-ordination
- qualitative improvements to the way in which services are delivered, for example to:
 - support IRMP and more targeted use of operational resources

- promote safer systems of work between the Fire & Rescue Service and Regional Control Centres, relating in particular to incident support, information and intelligence.
- bring enhanced collaboration between other emergency services when managing major incidents.

Additional services potentially within scope

In addition to these core services, there are a number of other potential services which Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres could deliver. The scope of these will be subject to further investigation (and there could potentially be regional or local variations in service provision). These additional services include:

- Duty planning on behalf of local Fire & Rescue Services.
- Handling a defined range of non-emergency calls from the public, including providing elements of switchboard functionality.
- Other support functions, such as liaison with water authorities.
- Acting as a centre of excellence in Fire & Rescue Service Command & Control, to support the activities of the Fire Service College.

1.3. Which responsibilities should be carried locally/regionally and which nationally?

As far as possible, responsibilities within Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres should be exercised regionally, to ensure that the service remains aligned with the needs “on the ground”. However, certain functions within Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres will of necessity need to be carried out at a national level. IRMP data will be managed at a regional level and co-ordinated at a national level, to facilitate continued local management of risk, the regional management of resources and the national analysis of data. Figure 2 below sets out the proposed division of responsibilities between the national and regional level.

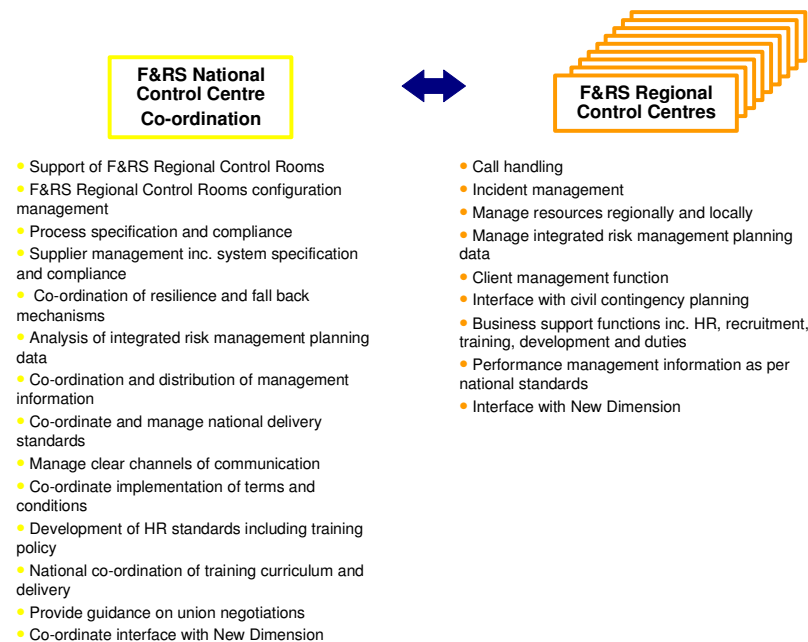


Figure 2.: Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres – National and regional service definition

1.4. What are the key principles to be adopted in developing the Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres?

The vision for the Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres can be expressed as a set of principles which will underpin the development and successful operation of the different aspects of the service. These principles are set out below.

It will:

- provide regional control centres which deliver a cost-effective service operating to nationally determined standards, but which is responsive to local needs
- fully support the wider modernisation agenda for the Fire & Rescue Service (for example the introduction of IRMP)
- be designed and developed to ensure the highest appropriate levels of security, resilience and integrity for the service
- work closely with the other emergency services to plan and manage the response to major incidents
- enhance the safety of the Fire & Rescue Service and of the public by improved risk management and better provision of information
- provide common, state-of-the-art control room technology which delivers the right information at the right time to support effective decision making
- encourage retention and development of staff, by providing high quality, satisfying jobs to those who work within the service, with enhanced opportunities for career progression in the command and control environment compared with now
- encourage diversity in the workforce
- provide a pleasant, effective working environment which is designed to meet best practice against current ergonomic and environmental guidelines.

Annex A – Scope definition

Stakeholder		Mission Critical Y/N	Interface	Scope & Definition	Performance Goals	Issues
External	Public	Y	999 Emergency phone	F&RS Regional Control Centres will handle all emergency calls through 9 control centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 98% of calls answered in 5s (nat. target) ~ Public provided with info to maximise survival ~ Information provided to reassure them of response ~ Non Fire business declined ~ Info gathered to allow effective risk assessment ~ Smoke alarm requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Call handling performance is OK ~ National resource availability and attributes held ~ Requirement to put in place National Standard Operating Procedures
	Emergency Services – Incident management (Police, Ambulance & Maritime & Coastguard Agency)	Y	Incident report (phone)	F&RS Regional Control Centres will handle all emergency calls through 9 control centres Referral from other services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 98% of calls answered in 5s ~ Information provided to reassure them of response ~ Info gathered to allow effective risk assessment ~ Electronic incident transfer ~ Support Fire call transfer 	TBD
	Emergency Services – Incident management (Police, Ambulance & MCA)	Y	Joint incident management (Occurs at FireGround)	Joint incident management will take place between the relevant control centres	Performance goals TBD	Work with Police to set up and deliver Gold Control that is located within counties. Co-ordinate tri-service special operations
External	Transportation / Public Safety Auths. (HA, Airports & Rail etc.)	Y	Incident report	F&RS Regional Control Centres will handle all emergency calls through 9 control centres Referral from other authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ 90% of calls answered in 10s ~ Information provided to reassure them of response ~ Info gathered to allow effective risk assessment 	TBD

Stakeholder		Mission Critical Y/N	Interface	Scope & Definition	Performance Goals	Issues
	Transportation / Public Safety Auths. (HA, Airports & Rail etc.)	Y	Joint incident management	Joint incident management will take place between the relevant control centres	~ Joint incident management protocol initiated	TBD
	CCTV	Y	Local Auth. CCTV feed inc. control and telemetry	F&RS Regional Control Centres may wish to use LA CCTV schemes to provide local information When responding to incidents	TBD	TBD
	Water Companies	N	Exchange of information Re. Water supply	F&RS Regional Control Centres will share info re water usage and pressure	TBD	TBD
	Social Services	N	Incident report	F&RS Regional Control Centres will handle all emergency calls through 9 control centres	~ 90% of calls answered in 10s ~ Services provided with info to maximise survival ~ Information provided to reassure them of response ~ Info gathered to allow effective risk assessment	TBD
External	Alarm Monitoring Centres (Commercial / Residential)	Y	Incident report	F&RS Regional Control Centres will handle all emergency calls arising from activation of monitored fire alarms through 9 control centres Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres will manage the relationship with AMCs	~ 90% of calls answered in 10s ~ Information provided to reassure them of response ~ Info gathered to allow effective risk assessment ~ Agreed protocol for level of response	What is the response protocol? E.g warned banned etc
	Public (inc. Media & Admin etc)	Y	General enquiries	F&RS Regional Control Centres will handle all general enquiries, within defined categories	~ Enquiries handled within set criteria ~ Non Fire & Rescue Service Regional Control Centres enquiries referred	Scope TBD

Stakeholder		Mission Critical Y/N	Interface	Scope & Definition	Performance Goals	Issues
	Central Government. (inc. ODPM & PMDU)	N	Management information Statistical data	F&RS Regional Control Centres will provide management information and statistical data	~ Management information produced ~ Management information collated ~ Management information provided to supervisory bodies ~ Agreed regular reporting cycle ~ Agreed SLAs for ad hoc requests	Management reporting?
	New Dimension	Y	Security and resilience	Interface with New Dimension planning	To support New Dimension type incident	Develop appropriate New Dimension processes and IT system requirements
Internal	Central sponsor for information Assurance	Y	Security accreditation	Accreditation of control centres & maintenance	Achieve accreditation	TBD
	Fire & Rescue Service (Running Calls & Operations)	Y	Despatch & monitor of resources	F&RS Regional Control Centres will despatch appropriate resources F&RS Regional Control Centres will monitor incident progress	~ Resources despatched to incidents (performance TBD) ~ Incidents continually monitored ~ Incidents actioned appropriately ~ Incident closed on completion	~ Escalation routes ~ How do brigades know the availability and status of resources ~ Performance management
	Fire & Rescue Service (Administrative functions)	Y	Administrative functions, HR, Finance	TBD	TBD	?
	Fire & Rescue Service (Duty plans)	N	Provide duty plans	TBD	TBD	Standardisation
	HM Fire Services Inspectorate	Y	Management information	F&RS Regional Control Centres will provide management information	~ Generate management information ~ Distribute management information	TBD

Stakeholder		Mission Critical Y/N	Interface	Scope & Definition	Performance Goals	Issues
Internal / External	Training Providers	N	Deliver training	F&RS Regional Control Centres will source and provide training	~ F&RS Regional Control Centres will contribute to the delivery of training ~ F&RS Regional Control Centres staff will receive relevant training ~ F&RS Regional Control Centres will contribute to the development of appropriate training material and content	TBD