

# FiReControl – one year on



*In support of the RCCs the FireLink project is delivering Airwave.*

*The FiReControl conference at the recent BAPCO show attracted much attention from members of the English FRSS, which is not exactly strange when considering the sheer scale of this project. Ann-Marie Knegt provides an extract of Ian Griffiths' (EADS) presentation.*

**P**resented by Ian Griffiths, EADS FiReControl Project Director for EADS Defence and Security Systems, the FiReControl presentation was extremely well attended by members of English fire services.

Ian briefly touched on what the project is aiming to achieve. "The current 46 control centres in England will be turned into nine Regional Control Centres by using "off-the shelf" software solutions in order to meet the requirements of the Department of Communities and Local Government and the fire service," he explained.

FiReControl is part of the plan to improve the Critical National Infrastructure and all nine RCC's are to be fully operational before the Olympics in 2012, providing a resilient network

According to Ian, FiReControl will deliver several benefits to England's FRSS. "This solution is networked, and therefore resilient secure and scalable. It will offer enhanced capabilities including caller locations, mobile data terminals and satellite navigation and it will deliver economies of scale with more efficient running costs and shared savings."

EADS, as the lead contractor will design, supply, install and manage the servers, desktops, communications,

data warehousing, AV, furniture, WAN, applications and service. The software and hardware provided aims to ensure that callers as well as responders will have the best level of protection necessary.

Ian explained which sub-contractors are involved and what their role is in the process. Frequentis will provide the Integrated communications Control System (ICCS) as part of the RCCs capabilities, and an interface for the PSTN (Public Switch Telephone Network) enabling the RCC to handle calls from any network. BT and Cable & Wireless are providing an enhanced information service which tags callers and identify their location. Cable and Wireless will also provide the telephony, while Easynet will provide the data communications.

The Ericsson Mobilising and Resource Management System (MRMS) will give a complete overview of all available national resources to control centre operators and managers.

IMASS will be providing the GIS and gazetteer solution. They will also provide the software to be used on MDTs. MDTs will be provided and installed by Firelink on some 3,500 fire and rescue appliances. The project is planning to make available an early release of MDT software to

*"This solution is networked, and therefore resilient secure and scalable. It will offer enhanced capabilities including caller locations, mobile data terminals and satellite navigation and it will deliver economies of scale with more efficient running costs and shared savings."*

FRSs who do not currently use MDTs from early in 2009. This will enable firefighters to get used to using the MDTs and give more time for each service to develop its data update processes.

"The MDTs are of great importance in the FiReControl programme. Apart from providing up-to-date route information and traffic conditions, giving access to hazardous materials databases, hydrant maps and car technology databases for use in RTCs, they are also going to be WIFI enabled. All this should strongly aid the operational fire crews in making well informed time critical decisions," said Ian.

The Risk Management Toolkit (RMT) used in FiReControl is being developed by Innogistic based on the current fire service emergency cover (FSEC) toolkit. Its scenario based analysis will help the crew determine which level of fire cover is necessary. This part of the system requires a certain amount of preparatory activity, ensuring that deployments are based on the nearest appropriate appliance.

Multitone is supplying the station-end equipment whilst Telent will provide installation and support. Ian called it "the man in a van service" which will provide technical support when faults in the system occur.

According to Ian, the receiving, handling of calls and the subsequent mobilisation under FiReControl should happen within 60 seconds during which all relevant data should be dispatched to the fire vehicles, stations and all other networked RCCs

"FiReControl is a resilient network that will meet the challenges put upon the fire service by major incidents and is going to add enhanced capabilities. The location of resources – fire and rescue appliances, other equipment and officers – will be known allowing the delivery of the most appropriate response."

During the coming year EADS will be progressively completing the design and integrating all the individual components. The built system will be subject to rigorous testing during 2009. The first three RCCs, in Taunton, Castle Donnington and Durham, are scheduled to go live in Oct in 2009.

The project requires a major data migration and transformation exercise across all 46 individual fire and rescue services. "At the moment there is a whole host of information stored by each of the individual FRSs which needs to be migrated from the current system onto

FiReControl. Therefore we are building a toolkit that enables the data to be transferred in a uniform way, so that it meets the FiReControl data model. The full data capture & migration toolkit is to be available by the end of 2008," he said.

There is also a major training development programme. This will not be just for staff working in the control room but also for firefighters using the MDTs, staff in FRS HQ who will be providing data to the new control services and back office staff in the RCC. It is currently expected that control staff will receive an eight week intensive training programme in using the new system, covering the technology, processes and new ways of working in the RCCs. EADS will develop training based on operational processes, meaning that training will be based on realistic scenarios and create context to the learning.

A robust testing strategy is in place. Once the system has been built it will be subject to user assurance testing. Each FRS will conduct an operational assurance testing (OAT) as part of the work they're undertaking to ensure that they are operationally ready.

Ian concluded: "EADS will complete all the development the work that it is contracted to do by August 2009."

*"FiReControl is a resilient network that will meet the challenges put upon the fire service by major incidents and is going to add enhanced capabilities."*

*SunGard Public Sector has won the Queen's Award for Enterprise: Innovation 2008.*



## Aligned Assets

- Accurate location information saves lives
- The NLPG is that information
- Aligned Assets' Symphony Suite accesses that information

Aligned Assets' Symphony Suite...

...provides the best software for searching and integrating the NLPG

...allows ongoing use and searching of your other gazetteer data



Call today...0870 750 8750

## Number One For Gazetteers

#1

