



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Policy and Strategy Committee

# REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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**Agenda Item No:**

**Date:** 04 February 2011

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on the current status regarding the Regional Control Centre project.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The concept of a Regional Control Centre (RCC) was first enshrined when the formation of Regional Management Boards (RMB) arose out of the inaugural Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2003/2004. Project boards were established and with central government funding, the project to deliver nine regional centres to replace the existing 46 was commenced.
- 1.2 It is a matter for public record that the RCC project has been beset with problems with regard to the technological solution, although within the East Midlands region, areas which could be progressed were done in the spirit of co-operation by all of the Services from within the region.
- 1.3 A Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) had been formed with a view to managing the RCC and much progress had been achieved through the Joint Partnership Forum of representative bodies on the relocation of staff.
- 1.4 Despite this progress, the central issue of the technical solution and the main contractor could not be resolved. As a consequence on, 20 December 2010 the Fire Minister, Bob Neill, announced the cancellation of Fire Control following agreement between DCLG and the main IT contractor, EADS.
- 1.5 As a consequence, a number of legacy issues require resolution and this paper serves to update the Policy and Strategy Committee on those issues, and actions required as a consequence of the project cancellation.

## 2. REPORT

### The Regional Control Centre Project

- 2.1 The RCC project was managed by Leicestershire on behalf of the East Midlands region. This was agreed through the RMB as part of its original formation.
- 2.2 The project itself was managed through a project board, which was constituted of representatives of all the Fire and Rescue Services of the East Midlands region, as well as contracted professionals and representatives of the LACC. This body was the primary deliverer of the project and administered the finances received by the region under the provisions of Section 31 grant.
- 2.3 As a consequence of the announcement by the Minister, the project board has now begun its dissolution, and costs such as redundancies are being addressed.

### The Regional Control Centre Company (LACC)

- 2.4 The RCC Company was established following approval of the Articles of Association in 2006. Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority gave its approval at a meeting on 13 September 2006.
- 2.5 The LACC set out as a wholly owned public sector company, whose owners are the Fire and Rescue Authorities of the East Midlands. The purpose was to run the RCC.
- 2.6 Each Fire Authority appointed two directors to the Company, and as a consequence of the recent announcement by the Minister, all have now formally stood down.
- 2.7 The LACC does have liabilities, including the RCC building at Castle Donington and redundancy costs of employees of the RCC Company. These are being addressed by the remaining directors and a full report on this and the full implications will be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 25 February 2011.

### Regional Management Board

- 2.8 Although not specifically part of the RCC project, the RMB was the body accountable for administering the RCC project board and offered scrutiny and support to the project.
- 2.9 Following the Minister's announcement that the government will not enforce the provision of RMBs, the board has subsequently begun its dissolution.
- 2.10 The RMB met on 20 January 2011 and agreed that it should report back to the individual Fire Authorities on its decision. There are some minor complexities to address as the individual Fire and Rescue Authorities, including Nottinghamshire, delegated specific powers to the RMB in March 2004. Before the board can formally be dissolved, each Fire Authority must agree to take back these delegations. A full report is to be presented to the full Fire Authority at its meeting of 25 February 2011.

### The Future of Fire and Rescue Control Services in England

- 2.11 As a consequence of the announcement made by the Minister, CLG are now consulting on the priorities for Control services in the future and the allocation of any funding which may be available from central government. This paper was published on 14 January 2011 and a response is requested by 17:00hrs on 8 April 2011.
- 2.12 A full response will be drafted on behalf of the Fire Authority and will be presented for approval to the Authority at its meeting of 25 February 2011.
- 2.13 CLG has said that it will not impose any solutions on individual Authorities, but will hold discussions on the future use of the Control Centre buildings.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The financial implication of this report are both varied and significant.
- 3.2 In terms of the decisions made, the Service must now address the implications of up to 11 redundancies within the Control Centre, a potential investment of up to £750k in the Control Centre after the next 18 months, and the cessation of a number of Section 31 grants for which the funding was linked to the RCC project.
- 3.3 These are all being considered by the Chief Fire Officer and his senior management team and have been incorporated into future budget planning.
- 3.4 Through the closure of the RCC project board, Service representatives are seeking CLG guarantees that funding will remain until the project is fully closed.
- 3.5 Further reports will be presented to both the Fire Authority and the Finance and Resources Committee should the Service incur any additional liabilities.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are specific and significant human resources implications arising from the closure of the RCC project. As part of the project delivery, Nottinghamshire, along with its regional colleagues, increased the establishment within the Control Centre by 11 full-time posts. The purpose of this was to ensure a smooth transition to the new RCC facility.
- 4.2 All posts were fully funded under the provision of the Section 31 grant, therefore to date there have been no costs to the Fire Authority.
- 4.3 Although the posts were recruited on fixed term and temporary contracts, the delays within the original timeframes of the project have resulted in these employees obtaining full employment rights.
- 4.4 Therefore the Service must now go through a process of selecting 11 people for redundancy. Engagement with the representative bodies has already commenced and it is intended that this process will be complete by 31 March 2011. This is unfortunate, but is related to the funding from CLG.

### **5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The equality and diversity implications specifically relate to decisions that may have to be made regarding any redundancies. All necessary requirements will be complied with to mitigate any risks to the Authority.

## **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The legal implications arising from this report relate primarily to the provisions of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and employment law.
- 7.2 Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (Part 2, Section 7, 2c) a Fire Authority must make provision for the purpose of making “arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel.”
- 7.3 The changes to the RCC project will mean that the Service will need to review its current provision and develop a long term strategy for being able to meet its statutory obligations.
- 7.4 In terms of the issues arising from the cessation of the project, the Service must ensure that it fully complies with all of the provisions contained within employment law, including consultation, engagement and appropriate remittance.
- 7.5 The Service does have policies and procedures in place to meet these obligations, but legal challenge cannot be ruled out.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The risk management implications are primarily addressed within the report and relate to the Authority’s statutory duty, its financial commitments and its employees. All necessary measures are being taken to ensure that these risks are addressed and that the closure of the RCC project will not adversely affect Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 9.1 Accept the update report on the current status of the Regional Control Centre project.
- 9.2 Agree that the full Fire Authority should receive further reports on:
  - The closure of the LACC and its implications (25 February 2011);
  - The closure of the RMB and its implications (25 February 2011);
  - A response from the Fire Authority to the consultation on the future of Fire and Rescue control services in England (25 February 2011).

- 9.3 Task the Chief Fire Officer with working up a strategy and recommendations for the future Control service within Nottinghamshire, which should be presented to the Fire Authority at the earliest opportunity.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**