

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING
DATE:	27TH SEPTEMBER , 2011
REPORT NO.	CFO/117/11
REPORTING OFFICER:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
CONTACT OFFICER:	KIERAN TIMMINS, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY
SUBJECT:	POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR A NW CONTROL ROOM

APPENDIX

TITLE

A	Full NW Business Case
B	Future of fire and rescue control services in England – Consultation Summary of responses”
C	LACC application to CLG for funding
D	Confirmation letter from CLG of funding
E	Equality Impact Assessment
F	Joint Working Agreement

MEMBERS SUPPLIED WITH APPENDICES IN CD FORMAT

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the Government’s announcements about the future of fire controls and to consider the merits of a joint NW working solution.

Recommendation

2. That Members consider the report and decide the best way forward for Merseyside.

Executive Summary

3. As it became clear that the national project was foundering the NW Fire and Rescue Authorities had to consider the options available for taking their individual services forward. Staff at the LACC spent some time considering the merits of continuing with a joint NW approach building upon the good working relationships in place. Consequently a more formal business case was developed –“Plan B”.
4. The Government has consulted on the future of control rooms following the failure of the national project and has published details of funding that might be available to support projects that increase efficiency and resilience in the future.
5. The LACC project team have submitted a successful bid for resources based upon the business case as set out in Appendices A and C around a shared control at Lingley Mere in Warrington. Any NW Procurement would only be based upon proven technology.
6. The Government have agreed £36.7m of subsidy across the life of the project to support a NW collaborative project.

Broadly this is made up of

- Support for a project team and project costs (**£2.3m**)
 - Provision of funding for a technical solution (**£2.5m**)
 - Provision of funding for re-structuring costs (**£5m**)
 - Building, Estate & Utility costs in full until Go Live followed by a 66% subsidy for the full duration of the lease (**£26.94m**)
 - Provision of legacy assets which includes, a data connection to the Airwave network, furniture and fittings (**approx £1m**)
7. The NW Business Case currently predicts a combined total £2.5m cashable savings in 2014/15 (first year of operation) and £2.2m savings in 2015/16 (steady state year) and a total of £19.4m over the 12 year Financial Plan in the Business Case. The majority of savings arise from staffing efficiencies.
 8. The predicted savings for Merseyside are £0.33m p.a in steady state. This is over and above savings arising from changes already approved within Merseyside MACC.
 9. The key benefits are identified as

- Efficiencies & Savings (staffing, system & estates)
- Future revenue and cost avoidance opportunities
- Operational Improvement
- Resilience (Building & increased shift capacity)
- Estates (a high quality building with stretch potential, ease estate pressures on FRAs)

10. The potential challenges are identified as:

- Technologically the Authority's own systems will offer similar functionality to the proposed NW solution by Early 2012.
- Compromise and change is essential
- The challenge of meeting IRMP localism versus single NW approach
- Need to rationalise approaches to call challenge. It is expected that the system supports, the operator decides
- Some costs remain with FRS e.g. interfaces, data
- Depending upon the procured solution the Authority might need to invest in interfacing back office systems and re-engineering working processes. Any such costs are not anticipated in the figures shown in this report
- The planned timetable would be for the control room to go live in Spring 2014
- 8 Workstreams have been set up by the project to provide detailed solutions

11. The Authority will be mindful of the fact that central government resources are stretched in the current spending review cycle and the offer represents a major potential investment in the NW Fire and Rescue Services.

Information

12. Following the collapse of the national project for Fire control, Members will be aware that, through the LACC (Local Authority Controlled Company), the five North West Fire Authorities have, on the basis of their successful work so far continued to examine whether there would be any merit in considering a joined up Northwest Control Room . As it became clear that the national project was floundering a more formal business case was developed –“Plan B” by staff in the project team at the LACC. This work commenced in 2010.

A. Government actions

Government Consultation paper

13. On the 13 January 2011 CLG issued a Consultation paper “The future of fire and rescue control services in England – Consultation”. This paper considered the lessons to be learned from the national project’s failings and sought views on how Fire Authority control rooms should operate and be organised in the future. In particular the consultation was about how to make best use of legacy assets that had been procured for the national project to ensure good value for money for the taxpayer in the future. The assets included:-
 - nine high quality control centre buildings, procured through a private developer scheme, with leases of 20 or 25 years
 - Firelink radio equipment available in seven control centre buildings, providing an interface with the Airwave digital radio network currently operational in the fire and rescue services
 - 1,700 on-board computers (known as mobile data terminals) fitted to fire appliances in England through the Firelink project, with software provided through FiReControl
 - new station end equipment installed in around 270 local fire stations in eight fire and rescue services. This is used to mobilise fire crews and communicate details of incidents
 - video displays, furniture and other hardware installed in some of the control centres.
14. Following the issue of the consultation paper, officers at the LACC supported by NW Chief Fire Officers and politicians within the LACC entered into extensive dialogue with CLG officials regarding their emerging thinking in light of the feedback from the consultation.
15. This allowed the LACC project team to modify the developing business case to take account of assumptions about the level of support that might be available from central government. The current full NW Business Case is presented at **Appendix A**

Results of Government Consultation

16. On the 5 July 2011 the Government published “Future of fire and rescue control services in England – Consultation **Summary of responses**”. A copy of this paper is attached as **Appendix B**

17. CLG indicated that a broad consensus emerged, from both the responses and discussions held, on a number of points although views diverged on how some continuing and future objectives should be achieved. These points were:
- The Government's approach of not imposing a solution and leaving the fire and rescue community to decide the best way forward for their Service and their communities was widely welcomed.
 - Improved resilience, enhanced technology and increased efficiency were considered at least as important now as when the FiReControl project started (by 54 of 55 responses expressing a view). Many felt efficiency was even more important with the current budgetary pressures.
 - The great majority (40 of the 42 responses expressing a view) agreed with the summary of lessons learned from the FiReControl project published in the consultation document.
 - The positive legacy most commonly identified was the increased level of collaboration and dialogue between Fire and Rescue Services. Those responding believed this had led to improved understanding, cross-border operations and shared practices. The Ways of Working strand of the FiReControl project was seen as providing a basis for future work on common procedural standards (15 of those responding were positive about this).
 - The approach described in the consultation document of increased collaboration – determined locally – with some government support was most popular (with 42 of the 50 expressing a view – 84 per cent) as the way ahead.
 - Nearly two-thirds of those selecting this collaborative approach wanted to see it combined with national technical standards, operating protocols and procedures. The majority believed these should be sector led and government supported although some suggested that government would need to play a stronger role to ensure adoption. Common standards were also advocated in relation to other aspects of the consultation, eg for interoperability so more resilient fallback and overload arrangements could be established.
 - Future plans, and the stage they had reached, varied widely among Fire and Rescue Authorities.
 - Most Fire and Rescue Authorities and Services, including their representative organisations and groups saw the completion of the Firelink network to deliver enhanced voice services and a data operating environment as the top priority for funding. The favoured technical option for Firelink (by 29 of the 35 expressing a view) was to implement a fully networked voice and data service in existing control rooms.

- Fire and Rescue Authorities emphasised that they needed rapid clarity from the Government on funding available, and how it would be allocated, so they could progress with their plans.

Government Proposals for Legacy assets

18. At the same time as the consultation took place, the government held discussions on the future use of the control centres and this resulted in the lease on the London building being assigned to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority following agreement on a suitable arrangement over costs.
19. The Government's preference is for the buildings to be used by Fire and Rescue Services, as originally intended, but where agreement cannot be reached, the Department will seek other suitable tenants for them. At present discussions continue with a number of Fire and Rescue Authorities, including the NW, on a number of the other buildings.
20. The Chief Fire Officers' Association has agreed to host on its website some of the legacy data assets from the FiReControl project. These include outputs from the harmonised Ways of Working strand. National datasets have been divided by Fire and Rescue Service area and circulated to the appropriate Service.

Next steps – Government proposals for funding for improvements

21. The Department intends to take forward a strategy of supporting enhancements to fire and rescue control and mobilisation arrangements in a way that delivers improvements to resilience, security and efficiency. This will build national resilience through enhanced local rather than national solutions. The Department will provide funding to support these improvements in a fair and transparent process developed with the fire and rescue sector.
22. The Department has said that it will make available total funding of up to £81m. It's guidelines say this will provide up to £1.8m for each Fire and Rescue Authority in England. Authorities may submit plans for more than £1.8m if exceptional resilience benefits would result.
23. All Authorities will be invited to send a summary of their plans and these will be reviewed by the Department to ensure that the funding they are providing offers value for taxpayers' money and resilience benefits.

24. An additional £1.8m (in total) will be available to fund initiatives from the sector that deliver cross-cutting resilience and efficiency benefits. This might include work on developing common technical and procedural standards, for example. Guidance on the scheme has been being circulated to Fire and Rescue Authorities and Services at the same time as publication of this document. The Department is asking for returns by 4 November 2011 but earlier returns can be made for resilience reasons.

B. The Regional Proposal

Background

25. The work on developing an alternative to the national project began in 2010 as the risks to the national project became clear. The initial work developed a Strategic Outline Case that considered various options for future provision of Control as a contingency and this was presented to the NW Members meetings in December 2010¹.
26. This work developed further into an Outline Business Case that assessed various options and recommended the establishment of a collaborative single site control centre based either at a new location or at the existing Lingley Mere site. Following the termination of the FiReControl project in December 2010, the Outline Business Case was considered by the LACC in early 2011² in order to gauge the 'appetite for change'. At this stage, it was agreed that there was sufficient potential benefit to invest resources in developing the work to a point that would allow FRAs to make an informed decision on whether to proceed. An essential part of this work was gaining confirmation from DCLG on the subsidy available to support the project as the Business case was predicated on a set of assumptions in regard to potential DCLG support. A well developed and detailed Outline Business Case has now been produced which demonstrates the potential benefits of undertaking a collaboration into a single site Fire Control facility. Finance Directors from all FRS have been involved in developing the Business Case.
27. The primary drivers for change are to deliver increased efficiency (and reductions in Fire Authority costs), resilience and operational improvements. However, other benefits are anticipated, such as the ability to deliver further efficiencies and improvements by driving further collaboration activity within the NW and

¹ Meeting 08 Dec 10 – FRA (Chairs, Vice Chairs) CFOs, Finance Directors & Project Board members

² Meeting 18 Jan 11 – FRA/Cumbria CC (Chairs, Vice Chairs, Leaders of Opposition), CFOs, Finance Directors & NW Project Board

beyond. Other commercial business development opportunities may also be delivered eg sub letting of office space and / or server room space. The application for funding submitted to the CLG is attached as Appendix C

Business Case

28. A summary of costs and predicted savings for the NW project is included within this paper. A detailed 12 year financial forecast (2011/12 – 2022/23) is included within the NW Business Case³ which shows the costs of current provision against the costs of a collaborative Fire Control (with DCLG funding support) and the subsequent predicted savings over the same period. *This demonstrates forecast £20.6m savings across the full lifecycle from Go Live (£19.4m net savings after set up costs deducted) to FRA's for the region.*
29. These savings are achievable via reduction in staffing costs, delivered by efficiency gained by merging five existing controls into one and also implementing new and more efficient rosters and shift patterns. Additional savings are achieved through reductions in estate costs and also in annual ICT infrastructure costs.
30. DCLG have agreed to provide a total investment of £36.7m over the duration of the lease (expires 2033). This includes an initial investment of £15.2m during the project phase which comprises £9.76m to support project costs and £5.44m to fund the building and estate costs in full. A further £21.5m is then payable by DCLG to cover an ongoing 66% subsidy for the lease from Go Live until lease expiry. The confirmation letter from the CLG is Appendix D.

Benefits

31. There are a range of benefits expected to be realised by pursuing this collaboration; these include:

Efficiency & Savings

- There is a financial case that offers efficiencies in staffing, systems & estate costs to Local Government and the Taxpayer.
- It is anticipated that the move to a single control will also create opportunities to deliver further efficiency and cost avoidance through FRS collaboration and shared activity.

³ NW FRS / NW FC Ltd Collaborative Approach to Provision of Fire Control Business Case V2.3 dated 06 Apr 11.

Resilience

- The project will deliver improved resilience in two key areas; the building infrastructure, which given its highly specified design in line with the requirements from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure mean it is very unlikely to suffer extensive business disruption. Notwithstanding this, the project is still planning to deliver a secondary back up site to move to, should the building suffer a catastrophic failure. There will also be a requirement to establish suitable partnership arrangements with another large Control Centre to cater for serious spate conditions (i.e: large scale flooding) and to cover any requirement to move to the secondary site.
- A move to a single control will increase the capacity available within the control room; by bringing greater numbers of staff into one centre. This will ensure that the number of staff available on shift is increased significantly. The business model for NW Fire Control Ltd envisages between 12 and 15 staff on duty at any one time with additional staff on call, which will provide inherent resilience should a large scale incident develop in one area.

Operational Improvement / Interoperability

- One of the key principles outlined in the NW Business Case is to use proven technology in order to reduce project risk. It is therefore expected that the system will provide advances to current NW systems as shown in Table 1 on page 4.
- The introduction of a single centre that provides mobilising for a group of FRS will allow visibility of all available resources including cross border. This will allow allocation of the nearest available resource for agreed incident types such as Persons Reported.
- The project will require FRS to adopt some level of convergence in operational procedures and activity which should improve interoperability. The NW CFOs have already directed their staff to commence work in this area, seeking to rationalise activity whilst maintaining flexibility to allow specific variations in line with individual IRMPs.

Corporate / Business Benefit

- It is known that there will be income generation opportunities by making full use of the resilient building and site.
- There is possible stretch potential to provide control services to other FRS in the future.

- The adoption of a single control function will also enable the five FRS to achieve real estate benefits, either by releasing locations for other use or relieve some pressure on already overstretched sites.

Concept of Operations

32. An initial Concept of Operations (CONOPS) has been produced that defines what is expected of the mobilising system and how it will support the requirements of individual FRA. The work has been led by ACFO Chris Kenny from Lancashire FRA, with input from all NW FRS and the NW Project Team. In addition to the key benefits outlined in the Business Case (as summarised in paragraph 7) the CONOPS describes the following expected technological benefits.

Table 1

	LANCASHIRE	MERSEYSIDE	CHESHIRE	GREATER MANCHESTER	CUMBRIA
STATUS	IN PLACE	**		IN PLACE	
MOBILE DATA TERMINAL (INTEGRATED TO AIRWAVE)	IN PLACE	**			
USE OF TALK GROUPS/ CCI PORTS	IN PLACE	**			
DYNAMIC MOBILISING		IN PLACE			
AUTOMATIC VEHICLE LOCATION		IN PLACE			
MOBILE PHONE CALLER IDENTIFICATION		IN PLACE	IN PLACE		IN PLACE
PREMISE- BASED MOBS GAZETTEER		IN PLACE	IN PLACE		
INTEGRATED GIS	IN PLACE	IN PLACE	IN PLACE		IN PLACE

KEY

IN PLACE

Technology currently available in FRS



Technology likely to be achieved

***Merseyside already has a modern 'state of the art' mobilising system in Fortek and the Authority has recently invested in upgrading and refreshing the technology in it . The Authority is already moving to exploit the use of the mobile data terminals and airwave technology and those three areas of functionality not currently offered are expected to be delivered on the current system in early 2012.*

Commercial Case (Technology / Procurement)

33. The technical requirement and system specification will be designed by a combined NW FRA group ensuring that all FRA needs and views are taken into account. The NW Procurement Group is also actively involved and will provide the expert advice to the Project Board during the procurement phase. The recommended procurement route for the main technical solution may be via either a National Framework (such as SPRINT 2) or a Restricted OJEU⁴ process or some other alternative. Damian Parkinson (Director of ICT GMFRS) and Sharon Matthews (Director of Procurement MFRS and LFRS) are leading the work in this area.
34. A key principle, outlined in the Business Case, is that any system must be based on proven technology that is evidenced in an existing Fire Service operating environment. As outlined in the CONOPs, there will be a need for compromise in order to converge and rationalise different activity and terminology such as Incident Types, Pre-Determined Attendance and SOPs. It is recognised that there is good practice that currently exists within individual NW FRSs which will form the minimum standard for the development of the Technical Specification.
35. Depending upon the solution procured there may be additional costs/workload associated with developing system interfaces between back office systems and the new control arrangements. Those costs are the responsibility of individual Fire Authorities.

Project Governance & Planning

36. The Project Governance structure has been developed and endorsed by CFOs. The CFOs will provide the strategic direction, oversight and scrutiny and they will receive regular reports from the Project Board. CFO Cheshire is appointed as the Project Director and he will lead the Project Board, comprising lead officers from each FRA and NW Fire Control Ltd plus additional advisors (Finance, HR, Legal, ICT, and Procurement). A dedicated project team, with representatives from each FRA and NW Fire Control Ltd and led by a NW Project Manager will conduct project activity and report to the Project Board via the NW Project Manager. Reports will be made to FRAs and NW Fire Control Ltd Directors as required.

⁴ OJEU – Official Journal of the European Union is the publication in which tenders from the public sector, above a certain financial threshold, must be published unless managed via a national agreed framework.

37. An initial High Level Project Plan was developed as part of the Business Case and this was presented at previous meetings. A more detailed High Level Activity Schedule (HLAS) has now been produced that provides greater detail and supports the expected delivery date for a Go Live in last quarter of FY 2013/14. This HLAS has undergone rigorous scrutiny with input from all NW FRS and has been recently reviewed at a two day workshop. It is expected that Merseyside would therefore move to the new control system some time in 2014. The HLAS is attached as part of Appendix A.
38. A Joint Working Agreement (JWA) is attached at Appendix F that will provide details on the Governance arrangements, liabilities and obligations for each FRA. The JWA is designed to complement formal FRA agreements⁵ to pursue the project and is a mechanism that will enable partnership working to be formalised. Once an FRS cuts over to the new control facility a separate contract will be agreed between NW Fire Control Ltd and each FRA for steady state.
39. It is anticipated that the following key stages will require the agreement of individual authorities
 - Sign off of the finalised joint working agreement
 - Agreeing any shortlist of tenderers as part of the procurement process
 - Approval of the final business case (costs confirmed after tender process)
 - Approval to award the contract
 - Agreement and Execution of the final contracts between Provider/LACC and Fire Authorities
 - Approval of additional expenditure for the project

People

40. The staffing model and rostering proposals (demand led, annualised hours) designed for NW Fire Control Ltd remain the basis for the costing in the Business Case. The concentration of effort into one site and therefore a larger number of control staff within the new control centre allows the adoption of more efficient rosters and shift systems such as demand led rostering and annualised hours. This leads to a reduction in staffing levels that will be more efficient than the existing control rooms and creates much greater efficiency in operational output as well as valuable cost reductions.
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41. A large amount of HR policy work has been completed and agreed by the Directors of NW Fire Control Ltd in preparation for Consultation. This includes areas such as organisational design and staffing levels, policies such as pay, leave, pension, re-location, and selection process. As NW Fire Control Ltd is remaining as the new employer, these policies will remain in place, although a brief review will take place to ascertain whether there is any requirement for amendment. The anticipated reduction in staff is approximately 100 posts compared to numbers across the region once local initiatives in individual authorities have already been introduced.

Financial Implications and Value for Money

42. The Financial Case is one of the prime drivers for change, as each FRS seeks to manage their budget reductions over the next two years and plan for uncertainty in the following years. Delivery of a collaborative control function, as recommended in the NW Business Case, provides opportunity to make cashable savings in the final year of this CSR as well as provide substantial cost reduction to the FRAs in the future as capital investment in new control room technology and infrastructure (refresh and replacement) will be shared across the collaborative group.
43. The NW Business Case is predicated on DCLG providing the agreed financial support as shown in the Business Case. There is no requirement for FRA funding provision in FY 2011/12 or 2012/13 and the first planned requirement for FRA funding is in 2014/15 as preparations are made for Go Live⁶. The expected costs to each Authority / County Council are detailed in the NW Business Case and a summary of costs and the predicted savings for the first three years of operation are included in Table 2 and Table 3 below. The costs for the new control have been apportioned based on a model created by the NW Finance Officers Group and the apportionment costs have been approved by CFOs.
44. The predicted costs of new control have been scrutinised by each FRS Director of Finance and also externally verified by Risktec Ltd. It should be noted that the costs of the new control include funding for system upgrade and infrastructure refresh. However, the existing current control room costs, provided by each FRS do not include future capital replacement costs and therefore the savings will be greater than outlined in this paper.
45. The costs of current controls take account of planned changes in Merseyside already.

⁶ Total FRA contribution to project set up is £1.24m, DCLG contribution is £9.76m plus accommodation and provision of legacy assets.

46. It is anticipated that in fact government support may be available toward any interim changes/restructures if they form part of a move towards this regional project

Table 2 – Costs of Current Control

Provision of <u>Current Control</u> - Annual Costs for FRA at 2011 rates						
2011/12 Costs	GM FRS	Merseyside FRS	Cumbria FRS	Cheshire FRS	Lancashire FRS	NW Total
Based upon updated data in 2011 (Note 1)	£2.40m	£1.29m	0.54m	£0.99m	£1.35m	£6.57m
Provision of <u>Current Control</u> - Annual Costs for FRA at 2014/15 rates						
2014/15 Costs	GM FRS	Merseyside FRS	Cumbria FRS	Cheshire FRS	Lancashire FRS	NW Total
Based upon updated data in 2011 indexed forward to 2014/15 (Note 1)	£2.54m	£1.37m	£0.57m	£1.0m	£1.43m	£6.96m
Provision of <u>New Control</u> - Annual Costs for FRA at 2014/15 rates						
2014/15 Costs	GM FRS	Merseyside FRS	Cumbria FRS	Cheshire FRS	Lancashire FRS	NW Total
Based upon predicted costs in 2011 indexed forward to 2014/15	£1.73m	£0.97m	£0.27m	£0.61m	£0.89m	£4.47m

Note 1: All figures reflect the planned expenditure for 2011, taking account of planned reductions in staffing e.g Merseyside planned in year savings in Control of £400k and the GMFRS plans to scale down their control from 63 to 40 are all accounted for in these costs.

Table 3 – Predicted Annual Savings for New Control (Year 1 & Year 2)

Provision of <u>New Control</u> - Annual Savings for FRA						
	GM FRS	Merseyside FRS	Cumbria FRS	Cheshire FRS	Lancashire FRS	NW Total
2014/15	£0.82m	£0.40m	£0.30m	£0.44m	£0.54m	£2.49m
2015/16	£0.70m	£0.33m	£0.29m	£0.40m	£0.48m	£2.20m

47. There are potential benefits to be gained by undertaking a collaborative approach and the Financial Case demonstrates that the project offers Value for Money. This has been recognised by DCLG who are willing to support the project with a high level of subsidy (£9.76m for project costs and a further £26.9m over the duration of the lease) due to the scale of savings that should be realised for the Taxpayer and also for the resilience and operational benefits that will be delivered.

Project Risks

48. The following table provides an outline of key risks for FRA consideration:

Risk	Comment & Mitigation
<p><u>TRANSITION</u></p> <p>Potential turbulence and conflict of interest between parties may lead to employee relations disputes and impact on the timelines for delivery</p>	<p>Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and liabilities throughout transition process is required. NW FC Ltd will be the new employer and will have the liability for dealing with redundancy. FRS role is to inform their staff and assist transferee and consult on the process.</p> <p>Clear process has been defined previously; need to ensure good communications with all parties and the need to have robust handling to achieve timescales</p>
<p><u>FINANCE</u></p> <p>Inadequate funding, either from DCLG or due to shortfall in provision due to increase in projected costs</p>	<p>The Business Case has undergone major scrutiny by FRA Finance Directors and external verification. The cost of staffing and estate costs provide the largest proportion of costs in steady state, so estimated figures for future costs (and savings) are based on high confidence. Project set up costs are a greater risk; however this risk is limited as the Building is being 100% funded by DCLG throughout the project phase and restructuring costs are also based on known costs and considered accurate. Technical costs are a greater risk but this area has been verified by external experts and there is also 20% contingency built into the technical component as well as a further 20% contingency available for other components.</p>
<p><u>REPUTATION</u></p> <p>Risk to FRS reputation if the project is unable to deliver</p>	<p>Current project planning has had detailed scrutiny from FRA experts and the HLAS is predicated on prudent planning assumptions. Simple and clear project lines of reporting with FRS CFOs supporting project board decisions will aid delivery. Appropriate resourcing to deliver project activity is required.</p>

	External independent scrutiny is recommended as high priority to provide additional confidence. CFOs are supporting the project and DCLG has provided funding to resource a full time project team (minimum of 10 pers) as well as additional funds available for specialist advice.
OPERATIONAL NWFRS unable to agree a level of convergence and common ways of working	CFOs have already stated their intent to rationalise and converge elements of work. Impact is low, as modern systems are able to allow differing PDAs and mobilising requirements to separate FRA even in a shared control.
FINANCE Interfaces to FRS systems is greater cost than expected	Potentially high impact as large cost could result in savings below acceptable threshold. Likelihood is Low /Med as this is achievable via various middleware solutions, some of which are provided as part of mobilising package by some suppliers and alternatives available. Consider including this aspect in the Tech Spec therefore reducing risk

Equality & Diversity Implications

49. NW FC Ltd will be the employer for the employees providing the Control function on behalf of the FRAs and is therefore bound by legal obligations to comply with Equality & Diversity. This report sets out the rationale and business case for this project which once approved will require a full Equality Impact Assessment to be conducted.

Health & Safety and Environmental Implications

50. The move to a new Fire Control facility based at Lingley Mere, Warrington will bring environmental improvements and meet the highest standards of Health & Safety. The building was specified, designed and built, to meet in full the 2006 Part L2 building regulations, which are much more stringent in respect of carbon emissions. The building successfully achieved a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating of “Excellent”. It also provides a state of the art, purpose built facility for staff that is ergonomically friendly and well designed. The building and site have successfully passed rigorous H&S and Disability Discrimination Act compliance audits. The site is also highly resilient and built to cater for the most demanding of business interruption issues. A move to a single site control centre should also reduce the environmental footprint for each FRA.

Contribution to Achieving Our Purpose

“To make Merseyside a Safer, Stronger Healthier Community”

51. To make communities safer by responding more efficiently and effectively to fire calls.