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Legacy Systems Cost Assurance (Firelink and FiReControl)

Issued by:

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Addressed to:

The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer

Please forward to:

FRA Treasurer

Summary

This circular is to notify Fire and Rescue Authorities about visits to FRA Treasurers in conjunction with the cost collection exercise in relation to current wide area radio systems and control room arrangements.

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Legacy Systems Cost Assurance (Firelink and FiReControl)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In discussion between the Department and the Fire and Rescue Service about future financing arrangements in relation to Firelink and FiReControl there has been mutual agreement that the estimates of existing costs need to be accurate. It has been further agreed that some form of independent assurance will assist this process. The purpose of this circular is to let you know about the arrangements for doing this and to request your co-operation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Initial work has been undertaken by the Firelink and FiReControl projects to ascertain the baseline costs for existing radio and control room arrangements. This is required in order to determine robust baselines for legacy system costs. They are required for two purposes the calculation of new burden funding and the development of a set of cost and performance indicators.

3.0 Firelink

- 3.1 In the recent circular setting out the financial principles to be applied to charging for the Firelink service (FRSC 53/2007) Communities and Local Government acknowledged that a net overall burden would be placed on FRAs in respect of service fee charges. The costs of legacy radio systems is one element which is required to inform the process of determining the net new burden.
- 3.2 Most FRAs have supplied cost information for their legacy radio systems and their co-operation with this exercise has been appreciated. We now need to progress this matter further.

4.0 FiReControl

- 4.1 FiReControl has been developing a set of cost and performance indicators as part of its benefit realisation process which support delivery, policy development and communication with stakeholders. You may be aware that the FiReControl and Firelink Finance Working Group has taken responsibility for moving this forward. In order to take this work forward there is a need to understand the cost of providing current control room arrangements.
- 4.2 There has been a delay in receiving returns from some regions. This is holding up consultation on cost apportionment and completion of the business case as well as the benefits realisation process.

5.0 Independent Assurance

- 5.1 As discussed and agreed at the FiReControl and Firelink Finance Working Group, the returns from both the FiReControl and Firelink cost collection exercises will be independently assured.
- 5.2 PKF (UK) LLP has been appointed to undertake the assurance work. PKF is currently examining the returns provided by Fire and Rescue Authorities and will shortly be in touch to arrange a visit to discuss with FRA Treasurers.
- 5.3 We anticipate that the initial phase of this work will be completed by the end of January 2008.

Regina Haba, Firelink policy adviser