



**THE CHIEF  
FIRE OFFICERS  
ASSOCIATION**

The professional voice of the  
UK fire and rescue service

Chief Fire Officers' Association  
9-11 Pebble Close  
Amington  
Tamworth  
Staffordshire  
B77 4RD

Telephone +44 (0) 1827 302300  
Fax +44 (0) 1827 302399  
[www.cfoa.org.uk](http://www.cfoa.org.uk)

The Rt Hon John Denham MP  
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
LONDON  
SW1E 5DU

29<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010 on FiReControl. As you acknowledge I think it is important to recognise that the project has proved more challenging and complex to deliver than CLG had anticipated. Sustaining the confidence of both professional officers and FRAs, as you point out, has itself proved difficult. Indeed numerous submissions to the Select Committee are testament to that.

Notwithstanding our previous criticism of the project's management and supplier shortcomings we have remained consistent in our support of the principle behind FiReControl and importantly our view that it amounts to a substantial investment in the Fire and Rescue Service. An investment that now needs to be seen through to a satisfactory conclusion.

As you rightly state both the Association and our members have, and continue to, commit significant time and expertise to the project in order to ensure that what is delivered provides a quality of service that is needed, and demanded, by the public and professional users alike. This extensive support will continue, mindful that the project needs to be driven by both quality and functionality rather than merely to a timeline. Indeed, unrealistic project timescales only seek to undermine confidence in the endeavour.

We have been recommending an independent review of the project for some time and were supportive of the exercise undertaken by Gartner. Given what is at stake, a clear and unequivocal assessment of the project's deliverability was essential. It was also one of the reasons why we called for a credible and worked through contingency plan. As professional officers we regard these as essential elements in managing the substantial risks in this project. Clearly we are reassured by Gartner's assessment and your determination to drive improvement.

The Chief Fire Officers' Association

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9-11 Pebble Close, Amington, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 4RD. Telephone +44 (0)1827 302300 Fax +44 (0)1827 302399

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We also note and agree that, although challenging, delivering the FiReControl project remains the best option. To give up on FiReControl now, and abandon the time, effort and resources already invested, would be a step backwards.

We recognise that concerted and committed partnership by all parties is a key factor in future success. As a professional association we reaffirm our willingness to work, not just as a stakeholder, but as an equal partner and we will actively encourage our members' involvement. In sharing a desire to making a success of the project we welcome your commitment to ensure that the professional voice is heard, listened to and acted upon. This we believe is the formula not just for successful partnership, but successful delivery of this incredibly important project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Bonney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'B'.

John Bonney, QFSM  
CFOA President