

Response

SUMMER 2010



FIRE BRIGADES UNION



FBU condemns broken government pledge on regional control centres

Sharon Riley, EC member for control

The Fire Brigades Union has condemned the government's decision to continue with the FiReControl project, after fire minister Bob Neill made the announcement at the fire and rescue conference in Harrogate on 29 June.

The minister failed to deliver his party's promise to scrap the ill fated project. It seems to have come as a surprise to the Conservative – Lib Dem coalition that there are 'contractual' issues to be negotiated.

The minister was very keen to stress that the project must deliver on cost, time and quality. Since it is extremely unlikely, and blatantly obvious to all those who have had any interest in the project thus far, that it cannot be delivered on time and it will not deliver the quality it originally promised, I would have to say its days are numbered.

The last minute move by EADS to sub-contract to Intergraph is a reflection of the desperate measures they will go to, to try and deliver at least something. Intergraph is an off the shelf system used by the RAC which is now being cobbled together to deliver at least some of the spec originally tendered for. You could say they are trying to make the fire service fit the IT solution!

This is where the most important factor for those working within the fire service comes into play: quality. The system promised to be groundbreaking technology – the envy of other European countries. This has now been diluted to something 'as least as good as what we have now'. I strongly suspect that

Continued on P2



PICTURE REPORT DIGITAL

In this issue

● EC Members address

● FiReControl Project news

● National Officer – Dave Green

● Control Seminar

● Annual Conference

● Who's Who



should any system ever reach User Acceptance Tests, it will not even perform as good as the current systems in use.

Bob Neill stated in his speech that the FiReControl project will, along with other departmental spending, be under review and he wants this review to be carried out as swiftly as possible, prior to the Comprehensive Spending Review in October this year.

The FBU will be pushing hard to ensure that the secrecy and lack of communication which surrounds the project is ended, that the project is indeed held to account, strict performance assessment criteria are identified to measure progress against the three key factors listed above. To put it simply we are not going away, we are not going to see our service run into the ground and we will fight on to defend it and to see an end to this shameful project.

We also hope that we can develop a working relationship with the new fire minister and that he will take every opportunity to listen to the professionals at the heart of fire control, to ensure we can move forward and invest in existing controls for the benefit of the public, and of course firefighters alike.

Our advice to the minister is very clear – **SCRAP THIS WASTEFUL PROJECT.**

EC Member's Address



Sharon Riley,
EC member for control

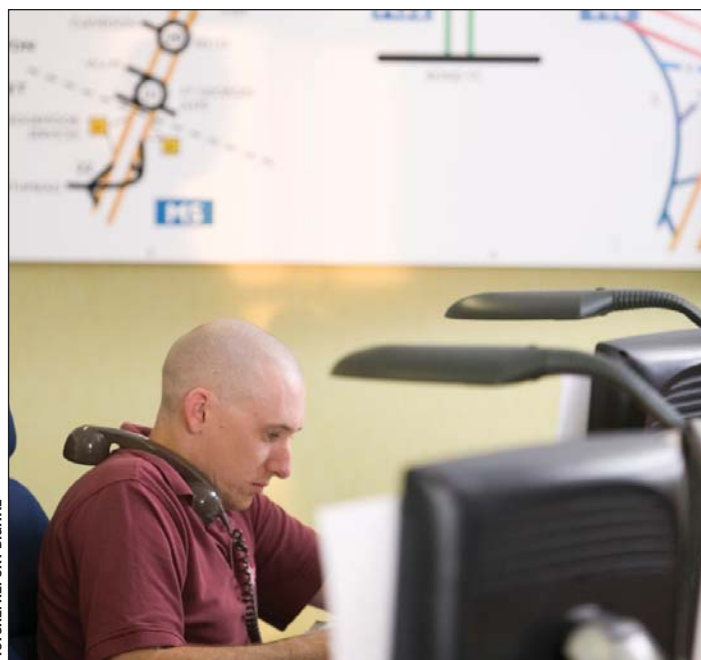
Welcome to new readers. I am conscious it has been some time since the last Response issue and there may be several members reading this for the first time.

It has indeed been a very busy period for me and the rest of the CSNC. In between attending all the usual meetings within their regions at branch, brigade and regional committee levels your CSNC reps have also had to deal with increasing demands on their time in dealing with FiReControl project teams and LACCs. We are also supporting consultations under TUPE and assisting regional officials and coordinators.

As a union, the FBU has been trying to ensure that CSNC reps receive the necessary training and education in order to carry out their ever-increasing role. I am pleased to say that the FBU's education policy and course design has recognised this and that education is available. A word of caution, though. It's becoming increasingly difficult for our reps to secure time off to attend such courses and this is something we aim to challenge and address. Should any of you have any specific control education related questions then you can contact the CSNC's education rep Jean Westwood, region 3.

The first ever control seminar was held on 14 and 15 April at Wortley Hall in Sheffield. The uptake was good with all spaces being filled. Post-course evaluation forms have proved that this was a much needed and informative seminar with a general consensus that this should be an annual event. The date of next year's seminar will hopefully be announced in the near future!

Finally, you should all have received the head office circular regarding the local government pension scheme (LGPS) together with information sheets on why it is so important to protect and defend the scheme. The current economic climate and new coalition government mean that we must be ready to defend our pensions and public services.



PICTURE: REPORT DIGITAL



Report on the control seminar, 14-15 April

Sue Offland, CSNC secretary

There was a fantastic turnout for the control seminar, with so many firefighter (control) from almost all regions. For some it was a first time visit to Wortley Hall. For education, the majority of staff have similar interests whether it be LGPS, media or TUPE. I appreciate that although some of our members are from Scotland and Wales there are slight differences in pensions and government issues, which gave a true impression at this seminar.

We had the privilege to hear the past experiences of OOT members during the evening and of course as part of the seminar. I hope in the future we are able to publish a short note the CSNC received from former EC member Lynne Harding. Lynne of course as many know has just retired after a 44 year service. As part of a 'thank you' we asked Lynne to attend. Also, former chair and still heavily involved in politics is Ann Jones, Welsh Assembly member (AM). Ann's knowledge is vast, from her experiences of many years ago to today as AM. Ann works hard through the Welsh Assembly and is still pushing on with the installation of sprinklers in new build.



We know now that the members who attended this seminar are looking forward to another seminar next year – let's face it all sections have to start somewhere! Although we have been around for quite some years, as Lynne reminded us.



PICTURE: REPORT DIGITAL

National Officer – Dave Green

I am Dave Green and have recently been elected as a national officer for the FBU. One of my remits is to assist with the organisation of the CSNC. Andy Dark, our assistant general secretary (AGS), is still coordinating the RCC project campaign from head office, but clearly there will be some overlap in our roles.

Previously, as the executive council (EC) member for region 6 for some 10 years, I had many dealings with control members and their officials. In the early stages of my tenure as EC member we fought ongoing battles (successfully) in Northamptonshire to prevent control amalgamation. Since then the RCC project has taken centre stage and in the East Midlands we have been at the forefront of this. As one of the first regions due to cutover we have managed an effective campaign of opposition to the government's plans, but also at the same time fully representing control members when negotiating with the LACC. I know the two positions do not sit comfortably sometimes but having listened to control members and explained to them our approach. I believe we have managed to balance effectively the two strands.

My role will be more organisational than the AGS's, but I do believe I can help make a difference to how we organise as a control section of the FBU. Your officials work tirelessly on your behalf and it is imperative that they have the support of head office. If there is anything else you think we can do to assist or improve how we operate then please let me know. Being elected into Head Office does not mean we will always get it right and it is important that we fully represent your wishes whilst at the same time being honest about what we can achieve on your behalf.





Annual Conference

I am pleased to say that both of the CSNC resolutions to this year's annual conference were carried unanimously: Resolution 5 Equal Pay – Role Reduction, and Resolution 40 CCTV. We will be working closely with head office to ensure that these resolutions are now progressed and the issues raised at the appropriate levels.

Resolution 5 – EQUAL PAY – ROLE REDUCTION

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to investigate the imbalance and downgrading of Emergency Fire Control managerial posts resulting from the substantive move from rank to role. It is apparent that the role given to control managers in these areas do not reflect the correct level of responsibilities and professionalism shown by the realities of the job done.

As Emergency Fire Controls are staffed by a majority of women, we call on the Executive Council to conduct an Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value study, using an appropriate expert and model into the cross roles from different parts of the Fire Service, with a view of putting Emergency Fire Control managers onto higher rates of pay and into the correct roles.

A report of this investigation to be produced as soon as possible or by Annual Conference 2011.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 40 – CCTV

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to raise the issue with Fire & Rescue Service Employers the use of CCTV monitors in Emergency Fire Control Rooms. Such Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitors have already been installed into Lothian and Borders Fire Control. The monitors have been installed under the guise of providing firefighter safety in terms of violence against crews. They have been opposed locally, however the CSNC believe there are national implications.

These proposals are outside of the national rolemaps, do not assist in firefighter safety and are a dangerous move towards changing the function and role of Emergency Fire Controls to include surveillance.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council, Brigade and local officials to oppose the implementation and use of this type of equipment and do all in their power to prevent its introduction and remove it where it has been installed.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE

Who's Who

Control Staff National Committee

EC Member	Sharon Riley 07889 088423
Secretary	Sue Offland 07736 818106
Chair	Kath Smith 07801 638754
Vice Chair	Lynda Rowan-O'Neil 07764 186268
Region 1	Stephen Reid 07801 047611
Region 2	Lynda Rowan-O'Neil 07764 186268
Region 3	Jean Westwood (Education) 07827 300077
Region 4	Bill Sunderland 07970 148698
Region 5	Tim Gerrard 07834 656102
Region 6	Thom Stitt 07771 774787
Region 7	Sasha Farley 07770 790002
Region 8	Norman Rees 07852 776912
Region 9	Sharon Thorndyke 07824 438859
Region 11	Vacant
Region 12	Paul Watts 07917 065869
Region 13	Simon Jones 07792 181666



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