

# THE HIGHLAND AND ISLANDS FIRE BOARD

24 April 2009

## INCIDENT RECORDING SYSTEM

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item	
Report No	

### Summary

In 2008, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Scottish Government (SG) instructed all Fire and Rescue Services in the UK to implement an electronic Incident Recording System (IRS) by the 1st April 2009.

The Service, after assessing the impact of implementation, decided to defer the development of IRS for a year due mainly to the ongoing requirements of the Firelink project. This was regularly communicated to DCLG and SG throughout 2008 and early 2009.

### Background

The Incident Recording System (IRS) will enable data on all incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) to be collected electronically and verified at source, improving on the timeliness and accuracy of the current largely manual collection. This system replaces the existing fire and rescue incident data collection system by radically changing methods of data collection to meet new business needs, replacing manual data input of paper records with a fully automated electronic data capture system. This will provide better data for the FRS Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) and also supply the future data requirements of the Fire Service Emergency Cover project (FSEC).

In January 2008, the Service was advised of the Scottish Government's intention for FRSs in Scotland to implement the introduction of IRS by 1st April 2009.

### Service Actions

In February 2008, the Service undertook a Business Impact Assessment with regard to the implementation of IRS in HIFRS, and concluded that it could not meet these timescales. The assessment took cognisance of current workloads, such as Firelink, and the estimated costs for implementation (about £50 – 80k). The main barrier to implementation of the IRS was that a large number of personnel who would be required to implement the system were (and still are) otherwise engaged in the delivery of the Firelink system. This includes Retained, Control, Operations Support and IT staff.

Throughout 2008, the Service maintained regular contact with the Scottish Government and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), who had initiated the project. We advised both parties of our concerns with regards to the timescales, but failed to receive direction as to how we could continue to provide incident data in the interim. During this period, we did participate in all national training and update events run by the Scottish Government and DCLG.

In early 2009, the Scottish Government contacted the Service to determine the Service's position on IRS. The Service has responded, saying that we will continue to capture data by the current paper-based method, with a view to full implementation of the IRS in the financial year 2009 / 2010.

The Service has made arrangements in this year's Service Plan to implement the IRS by the 1st April 2010 and has formed a working group to carry this action forward. Communication with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit is being maintained, with a further meeting planned for 20th April, 2009.

Recommendation

Members note the contents of this report

**BRIAN A MURRAY**  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**09 April 2009**