



# Fire Brigades Union

## Southern Region

Buckinghamshire - Berkshire - Oxfordshire  
Hampshire - Isle of Wight



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### **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

#### **Local Firefighters and Control Staff Warn of Increased Threat to Life**

The Government announcement today of a single fire service emergency control room to cover the whole of south and south east England was branded as ludicrous by Dean Mills the Executive Council member for the Fire Brigades Union.

The Government have finally announced that a single control room will be sited at Kites Croft in Fareham Hampshire.

Mr Mills a firefighter for 23 years said that the public would be put at greater risk and then forced to pay for a lower standard of service due to Government dogma. He said today "No-one wants or needs a single control room. It will not enhance the service the public receive, indeed they will be put at greater risk due to delays in call handling and technology failure"

The Government have previously stated that replacing the present 9 control rooms and their individual back ups with a single control room will provide a better service. Control Room Staff and firefighters are astounded at the logic.

The FBU have been trying to ensure the public are fully aware of the proposals and have been holding public meetings locally. Asked about the area and number of calls expected Mr Mills said "The Government propose a single control to cover 9 million resident and those passing through the network of a dozen motorways, 71 ports and eurotunnel and with a coast line of 348 miles. It's ludicrous to expect a single control to manage an ever increasing number of calls. We should be looking at extending the number of control rooms to provide increased public protection not reducing the number to place the local tax payer at greater risk."

Asked about job losses and finance Sharon Eames the Control Staff Representative said "This Government are trying to have the public to believe that fewer staff handling an increasing number of emergency calls is a good thing. Its complete madness. The cost of setting up the 9 new controls for the whole of the UK is put, according to the Government, at £2 Billion. They also state that by having single controls in each region they MAY save up to £20 million a year. It will take around 100 years to recoup the set up costs. That hardly seems a good use of the taxpayers money. No wonder council taxes are constantly increasing"

Asked if this would lead to Industrial action Dean Mills said "No one wants to take industrial action but what is of grave concern to firefighters both inside control rooms and on fire stations is that we cant simply stand back and watch the public we serve and save put in danger by an idiotic unsafe scheme which will cost £2Billion pounds of public money"

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#### **Notes for editors:**

- The area covered is 9 Counties with an area of 7, 411 square miles and coastline of 348 miles.
- It contains 71 ports and Eurotunnel

- The region has 978,440 children under 10 years of age and 1,694,625 people aged 60 or over.
- It runs from Dover to Dorset and the Isle of White to Northamptonshire
- Staff have not been informed until today of the location and there will be an unknown number of job losses locally.
- The Government state that the control room site will make it a lesser terrorist target.
- Government costs were initially set at £754 million then £1 Billion then £2 Billion. The average overspend on final Government figures is currently running at 43%