

# YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

HUMBERSIDE

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

## FIRE AUTHORITIES'

## REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

NORTH YORKSHIRE

WEST YORKSHIRE

## BOARD

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### NEWS RELEASE

## REGIONAL FIRE BOARD ACKNOWLEDGES ANGER OVER NEW CONTROL CENTRE

Fire board chiefs have acknowledged growing concerns over the regional fire control project.

It was announced back in the summer that plans to open a new fire control room to cover the whole of Yorkshire and Humberside would slip, yet again, to late 2012.

The Government is seeking to establish a linked national network of nine regional fire control centres across England. This will replace the current 46 stand-alone control rooms operated by each fire and rescue authority. The new Yorkshire and Humberside complex has already been built at Paragon Business Park in Wakefield.

Now, MPs, including several from West Yorkshire, have signed an Early Day Motion calling on ministers to shelve the scheme and upgrade existing controls.

"I can fully understand, and share, the anger and frustration of MPs like John Battle as they see the project soar over budget and suffer delay after delay through problems with IT systems," said Councillor Mick Coulson, who chairs

the Yorkshire and Humberside Fire Authorities' Regional Management Board (RMB).

“However, when I have previously tried to lobby MPs from across the region on this matter I was greeted with a wall of silence. Only two even bothered to acknowledge my last letter.

“If they had taken a keener interest before we might never have got into this situation.

“The board has been a dogged critic over the way the scheme has been handled within the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and is now openly fearful that unless the latest timescales are honoured existing control room technologies will come to the end of their life before switchover.”

Councillor Coulson said he was also concerned that cross-party political hostility was growing at a time when a General Election loomed – adding further uncertainty.

“If this ill-fated project is ever going to get off the ground the political will has to hold strong -- and we have to put an end to the catalogue of management errors which have bedevilled the scheme nationally from the start.”

- *CLG is committed to the new network because it believes it will lead to more effective management of incidents and improved firefighter safety.*

ENDS

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