

Section 10: Communications

10.1 Response to Calls

Section 10(2)(c) of the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003 requires the Fire Authority to make adequate provision for the reception of and response to calls for the assistance of the fire brigade. In order to fulfil this function Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service, similar to other Fire Authorities in Leinster, has entered into agreement with Dublin City Council under Section 85 of the Local Government Act, 2001 for the provision of a mobilisation facility for fire services in County Kilkenny (Appendix L). This facility is known as the Eastern Regional Communications Centre (ERCC) and is located at Tara Street Fire Station, Dublin City.

The Eastern Regional Communications Centre presently mobilises 81 no Retained Stations and 14 no full time stations serving the east region comprising of Leinster, Cavan and Monaghan. The system is financed by the participating local authorities through a process known as the average of averages formula where the level of contribution is determined by the total average of the population, number of fire calls and rateable evaluation for each authority. This finance model may change by agreement with all the stakeholders. The service is provided on an agency basis by Dublin City Council.

All requests for the attendance of the Fire Brigade are directed via the 999/112 Emergency Call Answering System (ECAS) to the Regional Communications Centre ('Control'). 'Control' uses a computerised system (*involving an address database, a log of all available appliances and a pre-determined attendance for each address*) to determine the appropriate response and agreed weight of initial response. The appropriate fire service crews are then alerted by 'Control'. Retained fire service personnel are notified of call-outs by means of personal alerters (pagers). A printed message with the call details is sent to the station.

It is important to note that while 'Control' offers a mobilisation service, it has no command function. Command is always exercised by the 'Officer in Charge' (OiC) as defined by the Fire Services Acts 1981 and 2003.

Section 85 Agreement (Appendix L) in relation to receipt of calls to ERCC will need to be reviewed and updated.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will remain a Fire Authority within the Eastern Regional Communications Centre (ERCC) and will continue to utilise the communications technology, in particular TETRA. The upgrading of the Computer Aided Mobilisation System, together with introduction of TETRA radio systems has resulted in an increased

financial contribution from Kilkenny County Council to the Eastern Regional Communications Centre on an annual basis. In terms of supports for on-the-ground fire-fighting operations, the migration of fire services to the National Digital Radio Service (or TETRA platform) is recognised as considerably enhancing Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Services communications capabilities. As well as this, the project is developing dynamic access for fire-fighting personnel to fire services activity information in real time, using web portals, business intelligence and interactive smartphone applications.

The introduction of Incident Control Module App supplied by IncidentControlRoom.com (ICR) to Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service operations has vastly improved the accessibility of vital information on the fire ground. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue will continue to invest in such communications.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service have instigated the use of social media platforms for communication with relevant stations and personnel within Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service. This new use of social media platforms has proven very beneficial and will continue to be utilised as a form of communications throughout Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service.

In recent times Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service have instigated the use of various social media platforms, this is limited due to available resources. It is planned to increase staff numbers in the administrative and technical of brigade operations to further enhance our ability to communicate with the public on public safety issues.

A major technical review of the provision of Computer Aided Mobilisation is currently underway by the Ctri project team under NDFEM. This project is addressing issues such as major software updates including a common operating command and control software package in all three Fire Service Regional Communications Centres in Ireland, changeover to Tetra mobilisation and radio systems, inter-operability between the three communications Centre and a link to the EIRCODE post coding database. This will allow for enhanced resilience and additional technical capabilities in each of the Regional Communications Centres. The upgrading of the Computer Aided Mobilisation System and national policy on the funding model for the three control centres, is likely to result in an increased financial contribution from Kilkenny County Council to the Eastern Regional Communications Centre on an annual basis.

Objectives for the Period of this Plan:

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service will remain a Fire Authority within the Eastern Regional Communications Centre Shared Services Group (this may change due to national policy) and will implement new communications technology.

Section 85 Agreement (Appendix L) in relation to receipt of calls to ERCC will need to be reviewed and updated.

The upgrading of the Computer Aided Mobilisation System and national policy on the funding model for the three control centres, is likely to result in an increased financial contribution from Kilkenny County Council to the Eastern Regional Communications Centre (ERCC) on an annual basis.

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