



Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

Executive Committee Update

8 February 2017

1. Purpose

This report provides an update regarding the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). The last update was provided to Members in July 2016.

This programme will upgrade the radio system used by emergency services with an Emergency Services Network (ESN), a system that has not yet been implemented anywhere else in the world and as such carries significant risk. The current system in use (Airwave), whilst very reliable, has limited data capability and is an expensive system.

This paper seeks to update Members regarding the progress of ESMCP which has now moved wholly under the control of the Home Office and Department for Health now that responsibility for Fire has moved to the Home Office.

Members will recall from the last briefing paper that the programme had recently finalised the procurement of the new system, the Emergency Services Network (ESN) which will be provided by two commercial companies (Motorola and EE) and will utilise the Public Services Network (PSN) via mobile network operators using 4G LTE (Long Term Evolution) for the transmission of voice and data traffic between emergency service resources.

Individual fire and rescue services were asked to sign up formally to engage with the programme in February 2016 – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) completed this following the Executive Committee meeting in February 2016.

2. Executive Summary

Since last reporting the main developments are as follows:

- The Central Programme Board has recently announced a series of delays to the project, initially slipping by three months, now extending to six months;
- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recently reviewed the Programme following the publication of the National Audit Office (NAO) report;
- After completion of a tender process, Mott Macdonald have been appointed by the South Central Region to provide Programme Management for the five fire services involved.

The continuing concern of officers is the lack of detailed information being released from the Central Programme and the compression of the timeframe allowed for the testing and assurance process.

3. Programme update

a. National Audit Report

The National Audit Office (NAO) published a report into the progress of the ESMCP in September 2016. This report examined the significant challenges to the programme, the risks involved and the controls in place to manage these

risks. As the programme is still in delivery, it was deemed too early to consider whether it was achieving value for money at this stage.

The ESN is expected to save money by using parts of the existing EE network but there are a number of challenges that the programme will need to overcome which are detailed later within this paper. The NAO report raised concerns over the management of the risks involved in delivering this programme and considers that the Home Office has underrated the importance of those risks.

The overall opinion of the NAO is that ESN is the correct solution to replace the current Airwave system and that the ESN benefits will be substantial. However, the delivery timescale is challenging for all parties with key milestones being:

- **2017** – testing and pilots
- **September 2017** – transition due to start in the North West region. All services will need to have procurements planned and resources allocated well in advance of transition
- **December 2019** – Airwave due to be shut down
- **December 2023** – date beyond which ESN contracts cannot be extended.

A summary of the National Audit Office report can be found at Appendix B.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) publicly examined the project following publication of the NAO report. Representatives of the emergency services, Home Office officials and project officials were extensively questioned. The PAC findings were broadly in line with those of the NAO and represented a number of concerns already identified by user organisations.

b. Project Delivery Timeline

Following the receipt of a request for a change to some of the delivery milestones from Motorola, lengthy negotiations have taken place with both Motorola and EE which have resulted in at least a three month delay to the plan.

The latest official release from the National Programme Director was released in December 2016 and can be seen at Appendix C. In summary, a further milestone has been introduced to be known as 'Service Ready' with a delivery date of April 2018 (delayed from September 2017). Once all functions and features of the ESN are available and this new milestone has been achieved, then the emergency services will be able to commence with what has been described by the Central Programme Team as 'Major Operational Trials'.

An assessment of the transition timeline has taken place within the first region due to transition across to the ESN; the North West. They raised concerns that they would not be able to meet current timescales. A workshop was held involving representatives from all user organisations to discuss the issues highlighted and the outputs from this have been fed into an existing review of the programme. As a result of these reviews it is now apparent that there are some areas that are causing significant concern, such as the provision of ESN devices. Further engagement with user organisations is required to assess these and to feed into the review of the new plan.

The new plan is now being reviewed by emergency services senior users and a report from the Central Team, on the impact of this on services ability to transition, is expected in the near future.

The Central Team update also acknowledges the findings of the NAO report that this programme is high risk and ground breaking in its delivery with an ambitious timescale. The programme has undertaken a commitment not to risk the critical communications of the emergency services and public safety. They continue to emphasise this.

c. Governance

The establishment of the governance model at national and regional levels has continued with the roles of national and regional delivery being filled in late 2016. A number of Deputy Director changes have been made at national level and the Fire Regional Implementation Managers (RIM) have now been appointed. These posts will work closely with the delivery partner Group Transition Managers (GTM) to assist user organisations with their transition work. A schematic showing the establishment of the national governance model can be seen at Appendix D.

A new team to provide Field Transition Assurance has been established and will be reporting directly to the Home Office.

d. Technical

i. Control Rooms

There is a requirement for all existing control rooms to be connected to the ESN prior to any service commencing transition. It will also allow for legacy systems to continue to work during the transition phase. Depending on the existing call handling equipment arrangements in each control room, the connection may require an upgrade to the existing Integrated Command and Control Systems. It will also be necessary to provide an interface between mobilising systems and the ESN. This connection must be security compliant. This work will be known as the Direct Network Service (DNS) and a single supplier has been procured centrally to become the DNS Provider (DNSP) – this will be Vodafone.

Each region has been requested to submit their requirements regarding the Direct Network Service – as BFRS are partners within the TVFCS, a joint submission has been made with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services. One issue that remains outstanding regarding this work is funding. Funding will be provided for the cost of installing the DNSP link into control rooms. Funding will also be provided to cover the costs of dual running when in transition. However, it is not clear how this funding will cover a joint control room

with a number of fire and rescue services connections as is the case within the Thames Valley.

ii. Information Technology Health Checks (ITHC)

Each user organisation has been required to carry out an ITHC to assess their readiness to transition across to the ESN. The BFRS ITHC was completed in early July 2016 and a full report was subsequently received. Each organisation has been requested to assess their ITHC reports and develop an action plan to resolve any issues identified. In consultation and under advisement with the Central Programme Team, as to what constituted legitimate claims and what would be considered as a new burden, a submission has been made regarding the actions to be taken and a breakdown of associated costs. There is an expectation that these costs will be covered by central funding but no assurance has been received thus far to confirm this. The return to the Home Office will inform the decision to make grants to services.

Remediation work against the ITHC has begun and one third of the identified risks have been resolved and work continues on the remainder. Some ongoing projects i.e. telephony replacement are key to completing the work, in addition a new project of installing two factor authentication on our systems will be required. We have requested funding from the Home Office to allow us to do this later project.

The ITHC Remediation Plan Costings Summary can be found at Appendix E.

iii. Devices

There has been some frustration on the part of user organisations regarding the information being provided regarding the devices that will be available that will be ESN compliant.

In 2014, a series of workshops were held involving all user organisations to ascertain user requirements and this information was to be used when developing devices for procurement by organisations before transition. It was originally intended that there would be a range of devices that organisations would be able to choose from to meet their requirements.

It has since become apparent that this may not be the case leading up to transition and that the 'range of devices' are yet to be developed. This delay has been attributed to the fact that this programme is world leading and the market for compatible devices is still developing. Device suppliers have highlighted issues which have challenged them in bringing ESN approved devices to the market.

In order to address this issue and to ensure that the timelines of the programme are not negatively impacted, the Home Office is proposing

to run a procurement exercise for the first generation of devices, with a plan to replace them in the future once the market has developed. Early models of these devices are currently in the developmental phase. A recent workshop has taken place where there was representation from the five South Central region fire and rescue services. It would appear that these early devices have requirement for further development before they meet the requirements of user organisations and match the standards and functionality of currently used devices.

We await further information regarding the technical development and availability of these devices and will continue to provide feedback as necessary.

iv. Coverage

As Members will already be aware, the ESN will be based on the foundation of the network already established by commercial provider EE. EE already has the biggest 4G footprint nationally and with the largest capacity.

EE are currently undertaking an enhancement of their network which involves upgrading around 5000 sites to 4G, building 500 new sites and improving reach and enhancing indoor coverage.

It is intended this enhanced service will be rolled out in a phased process and user trials will take place to ensure full functionality and assurance.

A trial involving vehicles of the London Ambulance Service in the London area has demonstrated good ESN coverage. It is proposed that this trial is extended to involve other user organisations.

The build of 500 new aerial sites is intended to provide extended area services to those remote and rural areas that are currently outside the contractual coverage of EE. There is a timescale risk to this work as there will be a requirement to obtain planning permissions before commencing build work. It should be noted that there are no extended coverage sites within the South Central region.

BFRS received a hard copy of the coverage map for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes shortly before Christmas. Generally local coverage looks promising, but we are awaiting access to the electronic versions of the maps so that we can drill down into some detail to decide which areas (if any) will require user assurance testing. It is hoped that access to these electronic maps will be gained in the next few weeks.

e. South Central Transition Group

i. Governance

There has been further progress regarding the governance model for the South Central Region Transition group. As previously reported, a proposal for engaging the services of an external programme manager was being discussed.

An interim Regional Programme Co-ordinator was appointed to assist services during the latter part of the autumn. The person appointed was formerly a Business Change Manager for the ESMCP and therefore has provided a wealth of knowledge and experience to the South Central region.

In the meantime, a procurement exercise took place to secure the Programme Management function from an external supplier. The successful bid came from Mott MacDonald and they will provide the service from December 2016. Mott MacDonald will also provide Programme Office support.

The appointed manager is currently undertaking meetings with project teams around the South Central region and with the RIM and GTM and will advise on any governance changes that he wishes to make.

ii. Finance

The Home Office have committed to provide funding through Section 31 Grants to cover local transition support, upgrading control rooms, vehicle installations and devices. BFRS will act as treasurer for the collaborative aspects of the project delivery.

The Home Office will directly fund 10 RIMs to coordinate and monitor the transition in fire and rescue services.

Government Digital Services have made a decision that all connecting Services should be fully Public Safety Network (PSN) compliant across their whole service. This decision was not expected and has implications for the project nationally and locally. It is our understanding that as this is a new burden the costs will be met by government. The government have written a number of letters requesting information on required quotes for security checks and the financial implications of each services action plans. They have yet to confirm any intention to reimburse services in writing though.

In light of the recently announced delay to the programme delivery, there will be questions regarding the resulting impact on financial arrangements for the delivery of the programme and whether the Firelink funding will still continue up to the point of transition completion. This is currently being considered at a national level and we expect an update from the Business Change Lead (Fire), in his next update to senior users.

iii. Programme Delivery

The Five FRS involved in the collaboration in the South Central Region are:

- BFRS;
- Royal Berkshire FRS;
- Oxfordshire FRS;
- Hampshire FRS;
- Isle of Wight FRS.

As well as the FRSs the collaboration also actively involves Thames Valley Police, Hampshire Police and South Central Ambulance Service

The previously known South Central Transition Group which had senior manager representation from the five fire and rescue services in the region received approval from each service to form the Steering Group for the programme with the additional attendance of the Programme Manager and our assigned RIM and GTM.

The South Central Delivery Team has now been established and is to be chaired by the Programme Manager. The group consists of FRS Project Managers who are the single point of contact into fire and rescue services together with lead officers for each designated workstream. Workstream leads have been shared amongst the services and are as follows:

ICT Lead	Buckinghamshire FRS
Test and Assurance Lead	Oxfordshire FRS
TVFCS Control Lead	Royal Berkshire FRS
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Control Lead	Hampshire FRS
Training Lead	Oxfordshire FRS
Ops Policy Lead	Buckinghamshire FRS
Procurement and Finance Lead	Buckinghamshire FRS
Fleet and Vehicles Lead	Hampshire FRS

Terms of Reference for each workstream have been agreed and meetings are now beginning to take place. It should be noted however, that due to the lack of availability of information in some areas, some workstreams are more advanced than others at this stage.

Discussions are now taking place with the regional GTM regarding the reporting tool and requirements that each user organisation will be expected to follow.

Report ends