



# **Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme**

Executive Committee Update

July 2017

## 1. Purpose

This report provides an update regarding the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). The last update regarding the programme was provided to Members in February 2017.

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.

The procurement of the new system the ESN will be provided by two commercial companies (Motorola and EE) and will utilise the Public Services Network via mobile network operators using 4G LTE (Long Term Evolution) for the transmission of voice and data traffic between emergency service resources.

## 2. 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. The NAO report raised concern 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 Public Accounts Committee (PAC) publicly examined the project following publication of the NAO report. Representatives 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. This report concluded that the Home Office Department needed to reassess the programme timescales and to ensure that any delays were sufficiently budgeted for and contingency plans to manage delays were established.

The PAC reconvened in February 2017 and recalled the Department to provide further evidence. A summary of its findings and subsequent recommendations follows:

1. The "little slippage" in delivering the ESN programme that the Department told us about in November has now become a delay of nine months.

**Recommendation:** *The Department should ensure it is in a position to know which regions require an extension of Airwave by the end of 2018. Motorola must confirm that receiving notice at the end of 2018 will give it enough notice to carry out the work required to extend Airwave from December 2019.*

2. With ESN delayed until September 2020, it is not clear how emergency services communications will be provided from March 2020, given that it might not be possible to extend Airwave beyond that date.  
**Recommendation:** *The Department must urgently engage in conversations with Motorola and Vodafone to explore the full range of options for resolving this issue and provide us with regular updates on progress and estimates of any additional costs.*
  
3. It is extremely disappointing that the Department's risk management and assurance arrangements did not pick up earlier the risk that emergency services communications could be unsupported from April to September 2020.  
**Recommendation:** *Given the warning to the Department that it was underestimating the risks, it must review all the current risks to the programme and be realistic and open about these. The Department cannot afford to be caught off-guard again. The suppliers must accept their share of responsibility and ensure they are upfront about problems in delivering the network.*
  
4. Providing emergency services communications underground is a significant and imminent risk to this programme but the Department has not yet finalised how ESN will work underground.  
**Recommendation:** *TfL and the Department must, as a matter of urgency, work together to ensure that there will be coverage that enables the emergency services to contact each other underground. It needs to ensure that there are no delays to reaching an agreement with suppliers as this may have knock-on effects on the programme. We expect regular updates on progress in resolving this issue. The Department should work with regions to review the existing transition roll-out plan so that those regions that are best prepared move first.*

The programme has responded to the PAC report to state 'The programme will not take any risks with public safety and there will be no gap in the emergency services communications provision'.

The full report can be found:

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/997/997.pdf>

## **b. Project Delivery Timeline**

In the last report to Members, we informed you that a new transition plan was currently being reviewed by emergency services Senior Users. The re-planning exercise with Motorola and EE has now been completed and contract amendments have been finalised and signed. An Integrated ESN Implementation Plan has been produced and this does not impact the aspiration of the programme to have the ESN 'service ready' by April 2018. It has been recognised, however, that further detail is required from the programme and then from user organisations before the Plan can be accepted as the new baseline version and shared more widely. It is felt by the BFRS Project Delivery

Team, that we are unlikely to have sight of the revised plan until late July at the earliest.

## **c. Technical**

### **i. Control Rooms**

As outlined in the last report to Members, 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 Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service are partners within the TVFCS, a joint submission has been made with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire FRS. One issue that remains outstanding regarding this work is that of 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 FRS connections as is the case within the Thames Valley.

BFRS had been informed that a separate DNSP link would not be necessary, therefore there would be no need for us to submit an order for this work but would be connected via the TVFCS link. It has since become apparent however, that this may not be the case. There is a possibility that, in order to access the Service Management Portal post transition for 'business as usual' activities, that a direct link may be required. We have raised this issue with the Central Team on a number of occasions and have yet to receive a response. We have also asked whether, if the link is required, how retrospective funding may be accessed to complete this work. A request has been submitted to the Central Team for a meeting to take place between the Thames Valley fire services and technical experts who are working on this aspect of the Programme. This will allow us to explain the TVFCS network in detail and ask relevant questions of them directly.

A letter from the programme has been released to all Chief Officers of user organisations asking for DNSP orders to be submitted as soon as possible. We are currently drawing up a response to this letter reiterating our position and requesting further clarification and answers to the questions we have already submitted. Members will be further updated regarding this matter in the next update paper.

## **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 Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service ITHC was completed in early July 2016 and a full report was subsequently received.

Our remediation work against the ITHC continues with good progress being made. Some ongoing projects i.e. telephony replacement are key to completing the work, in addition two new projects (two factor authentication and Gartner update) will be required. We had requested funding from the Home Office to allow us to complete this work and a grant has now been made available.

There is now, however, some doubt regarding the level of network connection security that may be required. Originally we were informed that this would be at a higher level than expected, this situation has now changed and levels are being reconsidered. At a recent meeting at the Home Office, user organisations were advised not to progress the major pieces of work until confirmation of security levels have been determined. For BFRS, this will involve the two factor authentication work, so this has been put back. We have been advised that if the work is no longer required, the grant money will not have to be refunded – it can be used for other ESMCP work.

## **iii. Devices**

There continues to be 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 order to address this issue and to ensure that the timelines of the programme are not negatively impacted, the Home Office launched a procurement process for the first generation of devices, with a plan to replace them in the future once the market has developed. This procurement process was launched on 31 March 2017. User organisations have been requested not to engage with any suppliers of devices until this process has been completed.

BFRS continues to be concerned regarding the provision of ESN compliant vehicle devices. A specification has yet to be made available and no sample devices have been available to view. That said, the latest news from the Fire Customer Group states that the Central Team are still aiming to launch a further procurement exercise in May 2017. It is believed that this may be for a smartphone type device which would host the public safety communications application. It is considered by the BFRS Delivery Team that this would not be an acceptable alternative for an in vehicle fixed device for a number of security and health and safety reasons. The Team will continue to monitor this closely and challenge where appropriate.

#### **iv. Enrolment**

It is a requirement of the programme that all user organisations are registered onto the ESN through an enrolment process. A suite of documents has been made available from the central team which we have been asked to consider and sign in order to register. Several of the documents require information that organisations are not in a position to provide at this stage, but we have been requested to sign anyway as the Centre has stated that signature does not indicate a presumption that user organisations will transition to ESN, nor do they indicate a financial commitment. The suite of documents also contains an Enrolment Record which asks user organisations to indicate the numbers of devices that may be required and some further technical information. The information provided within these documents will assist the programme in working with Motorola to estimate the size of the back office function that will be required.

After careful consideration, BFRS have decided to comply with the enrolment request in that we will submit the enrolment record containing the essential information for the programme to continue its work with Motorola. This was submitted on 30 May 2017. The remainder of the documents have also been signed by our legal representatives and they have all been uploaded into the central document repository, 'Huddle' on 30 May 2017.

#### **v. Workshops**

BFRS continues to send delegates to national workshops in order to ensure we have the most current information available to us.

The latest attended was the pilots and trials workshop which provided information regarding the pilots and trials to be developed in order to test ESN once the building of the network is complete.

Two delegates have attended the 'Interworking and Control Rooms' workshop in Bristol to obtain further information regarding the 'interworking' phase of transition (when Control Rooms will be on the new ESN and vehicles will begin to transition from the existing Airwave system onto ESN).

### **3. South Central Regional update**

#### **a. Governance**

In the last report to Members, the national and regional governance models were explained. At the South Central regional level, work that can be continued without sight of the plan continues to progress well.

The Head of Service Development has been appointed Vice Chair of the South Central ESMCP Strategic Board and he will also be representing Fire on the equivalent regional board for the Police.

A monthly reporting cycle has been established. This consists of the BFRS Project Manager completing monthly user organisation report templates which are then submitted to the Group Transition Manager (GTM) responsible for the South Central region. In turn, the individual user organisation reports are collated and submitted to the Central Team at the Home Office. Once all submissions have been considered, the Central Team issues a response to issues raised.

The BFRS lead officers then meet regularly with the GTM to discuss the submissions and responses and to generally discuss the programme further.

## **b. 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. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will act as treasurer for the collaborative aspects of the project delivery.

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

The Home Office recently allocated £38,000 to the Authority to cover the two-factor authentication work identified within the ITHC (see Section ii). At the same time, a further £100,000 was allocated to the South Central region to cover unspecified additional costs.

The Authority is still awaiting further information on the funding available to cover a number of other programme areas, especially DNSP (see Section i) and devices (see Section iii). It is also not clear the extent to which additional funding would be available to cover any programme slippage that is beyond the Authority's control.

## **c. Training**

The South Central Training Group continues to meet to discuss what work can be started now and what needs to wait until the revised Plan is made available.

A meeting was held with the Home Office Training Implementation Manager, Patrick O'Neill where the South Central approach to training preparation and delivery was discussed. A number of questions were raised with Mr O'Neill to take back to the Home Office from this region. It has been stated that, in comparison to other regions, the South Central team are considered to be working proactively to be in a good position to commence work once the Plan has been released.

Work continues to develop a South Central Training Needs Analysis and regular meetings with the training leads within each Service are planned.

#### **d. Fleet**

The first meeting of the fleet managers' work-stream has now taken place. It is recognised that a great deal of work cannot be started until it is known what devices will be available to us and the time that it will take to carry out vehicle fits. Nevertheless, work can begin to plan the number of cars and appliances that will require fits and to build approximate schedules. In BFRS, it is intended to reuse the work completed as part of the Firelink project to assist with this planning.

Report ends