



Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

Executive Committee Update

May 2018

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 November 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. Programme Re-set / timescale for delivery

On 21 February 2018, members of the Programme Team appeared at a further recall hearing of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). They provided an update of the review and reset of the Programme and the subsequent re-planning exercise. Questions regarding a number of elements were posed not least the provision of a detailed set of dates for delivery. The Programme will be subject to further appearances before the PAC in the future. Prior to this meeting, a letter was sent to Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the PAC by Sir Philip Rutnam which provided a written update on programme progress. A copy of this letter can be seen at *Appendix B*.

It was reported in the last update to Members that the Programme had hoped to release a revised plan in late 2017. Unfortunately this has not proved to be the case and it is now believed that the first version of the revised plan will not be available until September 2018. It is likely that this will require further revision and the reworked version is likely to be available in spring 2019.

b. Fire Sector Review

Since its inception in 2011 the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) has engaged with its emergency services stakeholders, with the initial FRS contact being through the Operations Communications Lead working initially under the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) umbrella, but now with a remit under the newly formed National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

The original timescales for delivery of the Programme were ambitious, and this has set the pace and tone for much of the structures and processes initiated to date. A nine month delay was announced in late 2016 with 'service ready' no earlier than April 2018 and two months of verification and operational trials to follow prior to transition formally commencing. A re-forecast of the overall plan is now being developed to provide a plan with high levels of confidence all round,

however the Programme is reporting that transition will now not commence before 2019.

The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) as a sector has worked with other emergency services senior users to review the new plan and its impact on preparations for transition. A high level plan has now been drafted by the Programme following input from users which proposes that implementation will continue beyond the current Airwave shut down date of December 2019.

As the National Audit Office (NAO) acknowledged in their report of September 2016, the Emergency Services Network (ESN) is inherently high risk and the timescale is ambitious.

A Police Gateway Review was undertaken in the first half of 2017 which identified a number of issues, some of which were considered to be common to the FRS sector and following discussion at the Fire Customer Group in August 2017, it was decided to undertake a review into FRS arrangements. The purpose of this review was to ensure the fire sector was correctly positioned and engaged during the Programme's mobilisation phase and in preparation for transition onto ESN.

The Review examined FRS positioning, engagement, governance and interfacing to prepare for the transition onto the Emergency Services Network and looked at these at individual organisation level, as well as across the sector as a whole and examination not just relationships with the Programme, but also with other relevant stakeholders.

The final report following this review has now been released and can be seen at *Appendix C*. It identifies positive aspects including that fire services seem to be reasonably prepared for the stage that ESMCP is currently at. They have personnel and teams in place and found that everyone interviewed from the fire services fully supported the philosophy of ESMCP / ESN as being the right way forward for future 3ES communications. The report makes 5 recommendations:-

- *Recommendation: 1*
Carefully test the selected option to ensure it meets all service criteria. [in the context of incremental capability, Airwave extension and dual running costs]
- *Recommendation: 2*
Review the new Communication and Engagement Strategy/Plan to ensure that it addresses the issues identified by the FRS.
- *Recommendation: 3*
Develop a FRS national integrated risk management process to allow the escalation/de-escalation of key risks to the FRS.
- *Recommendation: 4*
Carry out scenario planning of reset options to assess risks, associated cost and benefits.
- *Recommendation: 5*
Provide additional resources skilled in programme communications and risk management.

The report was presented at the Fire Customer Group on 20 March 2018, in particular to identify a way forward to consider and where appropriate progress the recommendations.

c. Approach to delivery (Plan B)

The current published Programme Plan and Full Business Case, commonly referred to as 'Plan A', outlines a 'big bang' approach of delivering all items and activities within the plan prior to using any aspect of the Emergency Services Network (ESN). It has now been confirmed by the Programme Director that Plan A is no longer considered to be a viable option and that an incremental approach is to be the likely solution adopted.

Work has commenced to develop this 'Plan B' approach which will deliver the Programme in incremental stages. Elements of the ESN will be delivered as they become available before the existing communications network, Airwave, is transitioned off.

These incremental approach options are currently being developed by a dedicated team under the heading of 'Project Pegasus'. There are NFCC representatives involved in this work so the fire sector is being represented. It is believed that the incremental approach will result in a number of options that the fire sector will need to consider ranging from the delivery of data only in the first stages followed by voice capability through to the full ESN functionality being available and the Airwave service being transitioned out.

In order that the views of User Organisations regarding this approach are captured, the NFCC have been facilitating workshops to explore alternative models for transition. This will be an evolving process and is expected to be refined throughout the year. A number of concerns have been raised via the Fire Customer Group to these workshops e.g. how will this approach benefit fire services? Will the alternative approach be cost prohibitive? How will the Airwave shutdown be managed and what additional costs will be incurred and what coverage assurance will there be?

The information from each workshop is now being collated into a report being collated by the NFCC leads and presented to the Fire Business Change Lead, Ian Taylor. It will be discussed at the next Fire Customer Group meeting to agree an approach for the Fire sector. Once the report has been considered the Regional Co-Ordination Managers (Fire) will be holding a series of further workshops (in regions) to determine local preferences for transition (as a service and as part of the SC region and TVFCS consortia). It is likely that these meetings will take place at very short notice and during May sometime. Information will be collated and fed into the proposals for the revised business case.

A copy of the February 2018 Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme update can be found at *Appendix D*.

d. Non-deliverable requirements

During a series of workshops in 2014 involving a vast cross section of User Organisations, a series of User Requirements was developed to define the required delivery of the Programme.

Motorola have since informed the programme that they may struggle to deliver some of these requirements in full and others within the timeframe specified. As a result the Programme facilitated a series of workshops to assess the User Organisations views on proposed workarounds. These workshops took place throughout February 2018 together with a series of informal discussions with ESN teams.

The outcomes from these discussions have been captured and form a paper that will be discussed by the Fire Customer Group on 20 March. The paper has been discussed at the South Central Programme Board level and the recommendations made were accepted.

e. Funding

The financial risk to the Programme is seen as high due to the delay to delivery and the ongoing uncertainty around the extension to the Airwave contract. The financial risk consists of three different aspects:

- **Delivery**

The NFCC team has been engaging with government departments regarding a range of funding options for the User Organisations in England. It has been stated, however, that detailed answers will not be available before the revised Full Business Case is signed off in autumn 2018. The delay to transition will inevitably accrue further costs to User Organisations and as some regions are beginning to declare that their transition funds had now been used, the budget re-set was now of great interest. It is proposed that the fire sector concerns will be considered by the Fire Funding Group. BFRS have now received a second instalment of funding which will be allocated for the delivery of technical ESN work and Control Room upgrades and some contingency. It is felt, however, that further funding will be essential to ensure effective transition to the new service.

- **Airwave costs**

The current radio provision for fire services is under the Firelink contract which is the Home Office contract which supplies, supports and charges for Airwave radios. The Authority receives grant funding that covers the bulk of the expenditure incurred, which is based on the maturity of our legacy radio network at time of transition to Airwave. BFRS has enjoyed a high percentage rebate, which will shortly be reduced to a level playing field across User Organisations for the introduction of the Emergency Services Network.

For some years the Authority has had a gap between the budget allocation and actual spend for Firelink. Previously, any overspend has been covered through underspends in other areas of the budget. As the Authority continues to make the budget accurate, there is becoming less room to cover the Firelink overspend as previous underspends are being identified as future savings. It has been necessary to make an adjustment to the 2018/19 base budget to ensure that the shortfall is covered.

As the implementation timescale for the delivery of ESN remains unclear, it is likely that there will be a requirement to make further adjustments in future years to cover the transition period from Airwave to ESN. It is understood that there are discussions at strategic level regarding the possible extension to the Airwave contract beyond the 3, 5 or 7 years currently under consideration. Funding of any extension is unclear at present and BFRS representatives are ensuring that this question is being raised at every opportunity.

- **Future costs**

Whilst there remains uncertainty regarding exactly what will be delivered as part of the ESMCP and when it will be delivered, it remains unclear what the in-life costs of the new system will be. Until there is sight of the new transition plan and clarity regarding the deliverables, it is impossible to make any predictions regarding the in-life use costs.

There is also a new unknown around how the transition will be approached. The Programme team are now suggesting there may be a phased approach by providing data services early and then a later transition to voice services. This is likely to have significant implications for services as it is likely to require twice the workload on vehicle fit out/strip out. There is also no indication as to what the charging arrangements will be whilst operating both ESN and Airwave.

f. Technical update

- **Technical Workstream**

A Technical workstream has been established at Programme level and a presentation outlining responsibilities was presented to the Fire Customer Group by the Technical Lead, Steve Allen. It has been agreed that some technical workshops will be arranged for User Organisations in the near future. It has also been agreed that the technical team would produce updates regarding their progress and other useful information to share in the future.

- **Devices – handheld**

Members will recall that the procurement process for handheld devices was underway at the time of the last update submission. The procurement has been completed and Samsung have been awarded a place on the Framework to provide Handheld ruggedised devices (including intrinsically safe) and accessories to User Organisations. The process has now moved into the Contract Implementation phase.

A small number of Samsung Handheld devices which represent the final form factor are in the UK. These are not for Programme use, and are being used for Samsung to provide devices to Motorola and EE for testing to get their ruggedised device ESN approved.

An initial order of 1500 devices has been placed as part of the procurement and these will be used for testing by various workstreams across the

Programme. Further devices may be ordered and this is currently being assessed.

- **Devices – vehicles**

The procurement process to secure the provision of vehicle devices is underway and the ITT was due to be issued by the end of January however it has now been confirmed that this phase has been moved to April/May 2018. This will also result in the evaluation period being delayed. Further details are expected to be issued by the central Programme Team soon.

- **DNSP**

There has been no further response from the Central Team to the queries raised by officers of this organisation. We have, however, learned that this issue has now been escalated within the Central Team. It will now be part of the agenda to be discussed with the central Technical Team and the User Organisation Technical Leads group.

With regard to the DNSP installation for the Thames Valley Fire Control Service, the Primary Control site work was completed on 15 February 2018 and the Secondary Control completed w/c 26 January 2018.

- **Motorola / Airwave**

In the light of the work to develop a 'Plan B' approach, it is recognised that there will be a need to extend the Firelink / Airwave contracts and this is being considered by the Programme commercial team. A working group, which will report into the Fire Customer Group, has been established to look at the Firelink sustainability for the fire sector and to establish what elements will need to be upgraded or replaced in order to continue to use the Airwave network. The financial and funding requirements for the extension of the Airwave contract are currently being considered by the programme and this remains a source of concern for this Authority.

- An infographic showing progress made so far on the Emergency Services Network can be found at *Appendix E*

e. NFCC letter of concern

In November 2017, the Chair of the NFCC Roy Wilsher wrote to the Permanent Secretary Sir Philip Rutnam to outline the concerns of the fire sector regarding the progress of the ESMCP and the resulting financial concerns and the impacts on User Organisations. An offer for a meeting to take place between the two was made and this will take place in May. This meeting will also include a member of the Fire Customer Group.

f. Programme Director

It has been announced that the Programme Director, Gordon Shipley, has moved on from his post after 5 years with the Programme. A replacement for Gordon is has been appointed – he is Bryan Clark who joins the ESMCP from his former role as Director Digital and Change, National Offender Management Service.

[Report ends]