



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 9 February 2022

Report title: TVFCS ICCS Contract and Inter Authority Agreement

Lead Member: Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE

Report sponsor: Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mick Osborne

Author and contact: Area Commander Steve Wells, swells@bucksfire.gov.uk,

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That extending the TVFCS DS3000 Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) contract for one year, from April 2022 to March 2023 be agreed.
 2. That Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) remains a member and party to the inter authority agreement (IAA) relating to the steady state operation of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) be agreed.
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Executive summary:

The purpose this report is to enable:

- a) the recommendation to be received from the TVFCS Joint Committee made on the 16 December 2021, pursuant to the IAA, to agree a contract extension of the ICCS contract of one year from April 2022 – March 2023; and
- b) the Executive Committee to formally record if the Authority wishes to continue its participation in the TVFCS.

ICCS

When TVFCS 'went live' in April 2015 there were two ICCS contracts with Capita Secure Information Solutions Limited, which had been entered into by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) respectively.

Following a recommendation from the TVFCS steady state transition plan in 2016, these contracts were brought into a single ICCS contract which ran from April 2017 until January 2021.

This necessitated a further extension to this contract to cover the period from January 2021 until March 2022, thereby aligning the ICCS contract end date to the break in the 'Vision 4' mobilising system contract. However, due to complicating factors at the time, predominately arising from resource and capacity issues resulting

from the response to the coronavirus pandemic. This decision was not brought before this Authority or others, as set out in clause 17.3 of the IAA.

However, the award was made from a compliant framework agreement and budget provision was reported through the existing maintenance and support line budget papers for 2021\22. Members are asked to note this retrospectively.

The ICCS contract is currently being novated to Capita (SSS) Limited in accordance with the approval of the Executive Committee given on the 17 November 2021.

The ICCS contract requires review and an additional contract term put in place to further align this provision to the Vision contract until April 2023. A previous decision was taken at the Executive Committee meeting held on the 15 September 2021 to extend the 'Vision 4' Mobilising system contract for one year, from April 2022 to March 2023.

Continued participation in TVFCS beyond its fifth anniversary

The IAA contains a review clause which was designed to provide OCC, RBFA and the Authority the opportunity after the fifth anniversary of the IAA and as part of the review of the TVFCS mobilising system for each to formally consider whether to exercise its right to withdraw from the IAA.

In light of the date when TVFCS 'went live' this report allows the Executive Committee the opportunity to exercise its right to withdraw from the IAA or confirm that it wishes to continue with the IAA, as the case may be.

Financial implications:

In accordance with Schedule 7 (Financial Arrangements for the TVFCS) of the IAA, one of the receipts made into the TVFCS Revenue Account under this agreement comprises:

- payments of Annual TVFCS Contribution

The Annual TVFCS Contribution payable by each Authority shall be the total Annual Net TVFCS Revenue Budget apportioned in accordance with the Cost Apportionment Model.

Any changes in cost are incorporated into the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) budget, which will be presented at the Authority meeting in February 2022.

If the decision were taken to withdraw from the TVFCS in accordance with the IAA, the Authority would either need to seek an alternative collaborative partner to provide an effective control room capability or undertake the function itself.

There is every likelihood the costs associated with either option, will be significantly greater than the current annual TVFCS contribution. It is perhaps important to remember that the combined cost to the tax payer in 2015 for each of the Thames

Valley Fire and Rescue Services to operate their own control rooms, was in the region of £3.613m per annum. The proposed TVFCS Revenue Budget for 2022/23 is £2,513m per annum.

Risk management:

The agreement to previously extend the contract of the 'Vision 4' mobilising system by one year and potentially the ICCS contract from April 2022 – March 2023 will ensure the necessary technical support arrangements are in place. Thereby enabling TVFCS to provide an efficient, effective and resilient service which is integral toward delivering our statutory fire and rescue functions.

Following the sale of Capita SSS Limited to NEC Software Solutions UK Limited on the 3 January 2022, officers will be bringing forward recommendations to the TVFCS Joint Committee in July 2022, setting out whether to further extend the contract in line with the agreement or seek to commence a full replacement.

Should the decision be taken to withdraw from the TVFCS, officers' experience, supported by sector wide learning, indicates a full replacement tender or new collaborative partnership, would need to be appropriately resourced and take at least 2 years to conclude, especially as any change of provider would require significant testing and implementation work.

Withdrawing from the TVFCS would undermine many of the aims and benefits associated the TVFCS programme.

Legal implications:

RBFA and OCC are parties to the ICCS contract. The legal implications of terminating or extending the contract are set out in the contract and procurement teams from each Service have been engaged to ensure services comply with the relevant legislation and have indicated that Authorities can proceed as per the terms defined in the contract.

The ICCS Contract is defined in the agreement requiring the unanimous consent of the three fire and rescue authorities for its extension or renewal (per clauses 17.3, 17.5 and Schedule 6; and Schedule 5, para 1.2.15).

The Authority has the right, at the formal review of the mobilising system or at any time after that, to withdraw from the IAA (per clauses 25.1 and 25.1.1) by giving not less than 2 years' written notice to OCC and RBFA.

Privacy and security implications:

No privacy or security implications arise from the recommendations.

Duty to collaborate:

TVFCS is a collaborative shared service between BFRS, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) defined in the

IAA. Officers will review collaborative opportunities with the Police and Ambulance Services through the collaboration governance boards.

Health and safety implications:

There are no Health, Safety or Wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Environmental implications:

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

There are no equality and diversity implications identified at this time.

Consultation and communication:

Detailed within the IAA, the three fire and rescue authorities created a joint committee (the “Joint Committee”) under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

The IAA sets out the basis on which the Joint Committee is established and the agreed arrangements for its operation.

The interests of the Authority are represented on the Joint Committee for 2021/22 by Councillors Lesley Clarke OBE (the Joint Committee’s current vice-chairman) and Steven Lambert.

Background papers:

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority meeting held on the 22 October 2014 (item 8, pages 21 to 39)

https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/fire_authority_agenda_221014.pdf/

Agenda for the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee – 16 December 2021 (item 8, pages 33 to 37, para 3.12)

<https://decisionmaking.rbfrs.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=159&MId=1748&Ver=4>

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Executive Committee – 15 September 2021 (Item 7)

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/09/item-7-tvfcs-mobilising-agreement-ex-150921.pdf/>

Agreement relating to the steady state operation of the TVFCS (with consolidated amendments as approved by resolution of the TVFCS Joint Committee 25 July 2016)]

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/09/legal-agreement-relating-to-the-steady-state-operation-of-the-thames-valley-fire-control-service.pdf/>