



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK (ESN) UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 03 February 2017

Purpose of Report:

This report provides an update on the progress of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) programme by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Craig Parkin
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel : (0115) 967 0880

Email : craig.parkin@notts-fire.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries
Contact :** Therese Easom
(0115) 967 0880 therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is intended to provide the next generation communication system for the three emergency services and other public safety users as the contract for Airwave expires by 2020. This system will be called the Emergency Services Network (ESN) and provides integrated critical voice and broadband data services for the emergency services.
- 1.2 The programme has three key objectives it aims to achieve:
 - Better – integrated service, functionality and coverage;
 - Smarter – more flexible and pay only for what is used;
 - Cheaper – address budget pressures and leverage market forces.
- 1.3 The Fire Authority previously received a financial information and sign off pack which provided information about participation in the ESMCP and that the lead government department was committed to provide all reasonable transition funding, this agreement was signed and returned to Department of Communities and Local Government prior to the 25 March 2016 deadline, committing the Fire Authority to ESMCP.
- 1.4 An update report was presented to the November 2016 Policy and Strategy Committee and highlighted that further reports would be provided at subsequent meetings to ensure that the Fire Authority are fully briefed on the ESN work as a critical national project.
- 1.5 East Midlands Fire Services have an established regional programme board with representatives from all Services and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Parkin as the lead officer on behalf of the East Midlands Fire Services. An Area Manager is seconded from Lincolnshire as the Regional Fire Programme Manager, with a major day-to-day role on behalf of the East Midlands and works closely with the ACFO.
- 1.6 The Area Manager Corporate leads on behalf of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) project structure, co-ordinating key roles across the organisation and works closely with East Midlands colleagues to seek opportunities for mutual support to deliver the ESN.
- 1.7 ACFO Parkin attends regular Fire Customer Group (FCG) meetings; this forum is the sounding board for the fire sector to feed into the national programme team within the Home Office.
- 1.8 Alongside the ESN work, NFRS has already commenced work as part of the previous Authority agreed ICT Strategy to demonstrate compliance with the Public Services Network (PSN) as this will better prepare the Service to deliver ESN and a team have been recruited to discharge the highlighted actions for PSN compliance.

- 1.9 PSN compliance will ensure that the Service has a robust ICT infrastructure, with greater levels of security; this will require additions to policies and procedures, but more crucially, a change to working practices for all members of staff to maintain compliance.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 An Information Technology Health Check (ITHC) has already been completed by an external supplier on the Tri-Service Control partner networks; this forms the basis for the remediation work each Service needs to complete prior to connecting to the ESN.
- 2.2 Since November's report to Policy and Strategy Committee, NFRS has been in discussion with the ESN central programme team to consider the ITHC, the remedial works required and what level of Section 31 grant will be allocated to NFRS. Provisional agreement over the funding has been reached and it is envisaged that the next update report will detail the funding formally.
- 2.3 Monthly reporting is now in place nationally to the central programme team and this itemises the progress each user organisation is making to deliver ESN locally and offers a good benchmark to NFRS to ensure they remain on track for transition.
- 2.4 Home Office recently confirmed that the ESN code of connection would be applied and this would seek to be at a level that the current Airwave system applies. Formal confirmation has yet to be received as to what the scope will be and given this position NFRS continue to address this area with its PSN work stream.
- 2.5 Short notice periods for Services to reply to the Home Office programme continues to place pressure on the organisation and Members will appreciate these are as a result of it being a major nationally led project. Members should be reassured that the Service continues to meet targets and will be increasing capacity to address demand, particularly in the build up to transition.
- 2.6 The Service project team continues to deliver ESN locally, co-ordinated by the Area Manager Corporate and supported by teams across the organisation. The central government funding allocated to NFRS will be used to assist the project in delivering ESN.
- 2.7 Any consequences for not meeting timescales are unclear for local Services, but these potentially have major financial implications nationally for the Home Office programme and could mean these are shared with ESN partners throughout the life of the contract.

- 2.8 It has been reiterated by the central programme team that Services are not expected to transition from the current Airwave system to ESN unless they have the confidence and assurance that the ESN will provide the necessary resilience for emergency services to communicate effectively and secure the safety of its staff.
- 2.9 Clear collaboration opportunities exist in the delivery of ESN across the East Midlands, including procurement, equipment installation and long-term systems management. This is a key expectation of the government programme to ensure that commercial benefits are delivered both nationally and locally.
- 2.10 An East Midlands Police/Fire ESN workshop is now booked for February to identify specific collaboration work streams both for the transition to and the long term management of the ESN contract. As fire lead for the East Midlands, the ACFO has regular meetings with the East Midlands Police lead and are in the process of instigating a research exercise to consider long term opportunities, beyond transition.
- 2.11 Following national planning events, the national timescales have been amended so that transition has moved from Autumn 2017 to mid-2018, however, a number of key milestones will still need to be met, specifically the availability of hand held and vehicle mounted devices.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 An earmarked reserve of £200k has already been established for the work required to prepare for PSN compliance, this will be reviewed as the Service receives confirmation over the future Section 31 grant to cover remedial works for connection to the ESN.
- 3.2 The ESN programme will only fund the like for like replacement of the current Airwave infrastructure, eg: radios, although Services are able to fund any additional elements of functionality themselves. Clarity is still required as to what replacement devices will be available and what services can be accessed through these devices, however, the recently announced delay in transition and programme timelines will go some way to mitigate financial and procurement pressures.
- 3.3 The Authority will continue to receive transition funding from government for preparation and implementation, for FY2016/17 £52k was received and will go some way to fund the personnel required to deal with the work demands. As the programme moves forward the level of resources in the Service will need to be committed for which these will only be partially funded from the government and this will need to be closely monitored.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The ESN programme has requirements for staff training and these will be addressed as part of the implementation phase across the East Midlands and offers potential opportunities for wider collaboration, this area will form part of the February workshop.
- 4.2 ESN is now placing additional demands upon support departments, this has resulted in a number of fixed term arrangements being put in place, specifically across the Procurement, Corporate and ICT functions. These have all been delivered within the Service's existing policy framework, but it is anticipated that capacity will need to increase further.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report does not amend existing policy or service provision.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The ESN programme presents a high-risk potential for the Authority dependent on external factors beyond its day-to-day control, the main issue being slippage at a national level, eg:Autumn 20017 to mid-2018.
- 8.2 On-going Tri-Service Control implementation issues have a direct implication for NFRS and its Tri-Service partners to be able to connect to ESN and impact of national slippage upon NFRS are being dealt with and additional resources are being committed to existing governance and project management arrangements.
- 8.3 The Service Risk Manager is engaged with ESN and has already reviewed the East Midlands ESN risk register, it is further included within the Corporate risk register, which is also under review at this time.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER