



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 06 July 2018

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the progress of the Emergency Services Network programme by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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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 (March 2016) 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 initially presented to the November 2016 Policy and Strategy Committee meeting and highlighted that further reports would be provided at subsequent meetings to ensure that the Fire Authority is 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 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) is the lead officer on behalf of East Midlands FRS. An Area Manager is seconded from Lincolnshire as the Regional Fire Programme Manager (RPM), 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 The ACFO attends regular Fire Customer Group (FCG) meetings; this forum is the sounding board for the fire sector strategic leads to feed into the national programme team within the Home Office. The ACFO has recently taken chair of the Regional Programme Manager Forum (RPMF), which brings together all national fire programme managers with meetings currently being hosted in Nottinghamshire.

- 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. This will also provide confidence in NFRS as a trusted partner, as it seeks to look for future collaborative opportunities, an additional report has been received by the Finance and Resources committee recommending a review of resources and structure within the ICT function.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Members will be aware from previous reports of the significant delay in delivery of ESN and this report focuses on those key implications, relating to the full business case (FBC), reset of the national plan and current value for money (VfM) exercise. This will be completed and returned by the end of July 2018 and will inform future grant funding that NFRS will receive, taking in to account underspends and how these have delivered benefit when focussing on ESN activities.
- 2.2 Given the delay a review of the FBC is under way that not only delivers next generation communications for the emergency services, but also provides a more proportionate distribution of cost between government and user organisations (UO). A new Programme Director, Bryan Clark, was appointed in March 2018 bringing an extensive background in delivering change and digital programmes for Government and in the private sector. Consequently, under new leadership ESMCP is moving to a more product based and customer focussed philosophy.
- 2.3 The Home Office has confirmed that the ESN code of connection is now awaiting final sign off, once confirmed all UOs will have a much clearer understanding on what their remediation work needs to focus on following the IT Health Checks (ITHC).
- 2.4 The preferred option to deliver ESN is now incremental, which for the fire and rescue sector would mean the opportunity to take up data elements early before any full transition, including critical voice communications. Despite the potential for an incremental delivery, the likely dates for adoption of ESN will be much later than previously anticipated.
- 2.5 Following payment in 2017/18 of the Local Transition Resource and Control Rooms Transition Section 31 Grants, the Home Office is required to assess how value for money is being, and will be, achieved for the ESMCP grant funding paid to date, from April 2015 to March 2018, namely:

- Local transition funding;
- Control Room upgrades;
- IT health check and remedial action plan funding;
- Direct network service provider funding

The Home Office is particularly interested in the outcomes – ie: what has been achieved in terms of:

- Output/deliverables;
- Benefits;
- Efficiencies (financial and non-financial) that are being realised;
- Savings;
- How value for money is being achieved;
- How the work and spend is being monitored locally.

- 2.6 Collaboration opportunities continue to be pursued in the delivery of ESN across the East Midlands, including coverage assurance, device management, training and equipment installation, procurement was previously an area with the Police that is now paused. This is a key expectation of the government programme team to ensure that commercial benefits are delivered both nationally and locally.
- 2.7 As fire lead for the East Midlands, the ACFO has regular meetings with the East Midlands Police lead and they are currently considering recommendations for collaboration prior to a future report being presented to the Authority, however, the delays to programme are also likely to delay any benefits from collaboration.
- 2.8 On behalf of East Midlands FRSSs, the ACFO previously asked that any outcome of the business case review be shared with fire authorities as a matter of urgency. The business case forms the basis under which the Authority signed up to the principle of transition to ESN in March 2016.
- 2.9 Members will still need to consider that significant delays may have implications on the replacement of communications equipment before the delivery of ESN and the impact this may have upon the Authority's financial planning. This aspect was specifically mentioned in a previous Public Accounts Committee, in that, these are considered a matter for UOs standard delivery of services, however, uncertainty from ESN clearly has a direct impact upon the governance of the Service, for example, should it make longer-term procurement decisions that later require additional funding due to ESN delays.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 An earmarked reserve of £200k was originally established for the supporting work required to prepare for PSN compliance, significant spend against it has been used in conjunction with government transition funding to address remediation plans. This has focused upon assuring the infrastructure of NFRS

is ESN ready, increased timescales will clearly protract the financial implications for the Authority.

- 3.2 The ESN programme has always set a clear expectation that government 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. At present only one handheld device has satisfied the national procurement process, therefore reducing choice for UOs.
- 3.3 The Authority will continue to receive transition funding from government for preparation and implementation. However, the 2017/18 payment was only received at the end of November 2017 following ministerial sign off. This aspect is of concern as the Authority works towards reducing budgets and continues to place a degree of uncertainty for the Authority to best manage resources. This is also added to by the review of the full business case nationally.
- 3.4 As previously reported, the programme of work has increased demands upon the Service, these will only be partially funded from government and this continues to be closely monitored, indeed the current Home Office VfM process will feed into any future funding received. This theme of technological demand continues to increase pressure on the Service and forms part of a report to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 3.5 On behalf of the East Midlands FRSs, the ACFO was asked to initiate a full review of the regional programme structures and approach, to ensure they are fit for purpose to assure transition to the ESN and provide value for money. This work is now complete and the report is being considered following on from the national fire gateway review being led by the NFCC central team.

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 formed part of the March 2018 workshop and the outcomes have now been collated and being discussed with police and ambulance services to consider.
- 4.2 ESN continues to place increasing demands upon most support departments, this has resulted in many 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 in the build up to transition to ESN and members will need to consider longer term implications as further delays are anticipated.
- 4.3 Consideration of the longer-term implications of both PSN and ESN are already beginning to highlight additional skill requirements, for example,

information security, which is currently being delivered with a fixed term appointment and was further included in the ICT update report to the Finance and Resources Committee 19 January 2018 and further updated at the June 2018 committee.

- 4.4 An East Midlands lead for training has now been identified from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, who will be liaising with NFRS in the coming months to ensure a consistent approach is taken and the learning and development team will need to consider ESN support as part of its business plan and delivery of the proposed national training strategy for ESN.
- 4.5 Continued delays to transition timelines have increasing potential to impact upon the retention of employees and in some organisations, has seen a delay in appointment to posts that will support transition to ESN. This is under review in NFRS and is dependent upon future funding decisions that the Authority may need to consider, balanced against the need to deliver ESN.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as 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 an escalating high-risk potential for the Authority solely dependent on external factors beyond its day-to-day control, the main issue being slippage at a national level following announcement that a re-plan is underway, timelines are being considered in relation to the sustainability of Airwave.
- 8.2 Tri-Service Control implementation issues have a direct implication for NFRS and its Tri-Service partners to be able to connect to ESN, this will continue to place a protracted demand upon the organisation, with a separate report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 19 January 2018 highlighting the risk from ESN and likely resource requirements to better manage this specific risk. This will now need consideration following the requirement to provide options for a joint Fire Control function with Derbyshire.

- 8.3 The Service is engaged with ESN regionally and has previously reviewed the East Midlands ESN risk register, it is further included within the Corporate Risk Register, which has been reviewed and informed Service department leads to ensure risks are communicated and work is planned to manage and or mitigate risk. Within the East Midlands a programme review exercise has now been completed to whether it is fit for purpose and offers value for money.
- 8.4 Regular project meetings are led by the Area Manager Corporate and these monitor changes in any areas of risk and update both the Service project and inform the regional lead to monitor progress made by Nottinghamshire. A previous report highlighted a new item of potential risk as 'Incremental transition' and this now appears to be a likely preferred option, clarity on what implications this may have will be provided in future reports.
- 8.5 Members should be aware that the ESN places a demand upon the organisation and 'programme governance' is a key risk highlighted within the latest update to the Corporate Risk Register and officers are obliged to monitor the capacity of the Service to ensure they deliver upon its commitments. As the project delays continue and financial pressures impact upon the Service this risk will require scrutiny.
- 8.6 With the now significant delay in transition timelines and funding, it is recommended that the risk of ESN to NFRS is maintained at an increased level and the ACFO will look to ensure that this is reflected in the Services governance arrangements. The Chief Fire Officer will also receive information directly through the NFCC and these will inform the Service's position in future.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Following discussion and workshops with East Midlands Police and Fire strategic leads, five areas had been developed over the last year, including: training, procurement, devices, installation and coverage assurance, business cases are progressing in all areas with the exception of procurement at this time.
- 9.2 Following discussions with the East Midlands strategic police lead, agreement was reached to introduce a joint strategic board with terms of reference now finalised.
- 9.3 Future collaboration between Fire and Police will prove complex, not least given this spans ten separate organisations, however, Members will be aware of the statutory duty to collaborate following introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017. This collaboration will not hold any one of the organisations to mandatory inclusion and any future commitments will be reported to Members for consideration and decisions as appropriate.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report and agree to receive further updates as the project develops.

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

None.

John Buckley
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