



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

TRI-SERVICE CONTROL UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 10 November 2017

Purpose of Report:

To appraise Members of the progress with the Tri-Service Control programme.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name :	John Buckley Chief Fire Officer
Tel :	0115 967 0880
Email :	john.buckley@notts-fire.gov.uk
Media Enquiries Contact :	Therese Easom 0115 967 0880 therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Fire Authority meeting on 14 December 2012, Members considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer confirming that the collaborative partnership bid from Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Authorities had secured £5.4 million grant from Government to progress the procurement of a replacement command and control system.
- 1.2 This successful bid led to the creation of the Tri-Service Control Project and subsequent tender for a supplier to replace the three legacy systems within the tri-service area. A further £247k was committed from each authority to bring the total project value to £6.1 million.
- 1.3 A report was presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee on 28th April 2017 providing an update on progress with the implementation of the new system and this report continues that information stream and considers progress and the next phase of the project.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The overarching concept of the Tri-Service Control programme is that a single common mobilising system would be used in all three control facilities and interlinked by means of a network. The philosophy of this being that any of the control rooms can take calls and mobilise appliances and resources for each other, providing significant resilience and negating the need to operate secondary or fall-back control facilities, thereby generating an immediate efficiency.
- 2.2 As previously reported the project has faced slippage, however the main mobilising system has been in operation across the three Services since September 2015. Since going live there have been a number of issues with the system where it has failed to operate as required. As with any new and complex system, these types of events were anticipated, and planned contingency measures were put in place.
- 2.3 In order to achieve this, several key objectives have been agreed by the Strategic Board before further enhancements would be permitted to take place. These are:
 - All changes to the system are to be scrutinised to ensure that they have been tested, within the limits of the current test capability, and assessed for their risk to the FRS and system;
 - A period of sustained good service must be demonstrated;
 - The existing training systems will be reconfigured and enhanced to create a testing area where any new, fixed or enhanced functionality can be examined in detail for their impact, before moving them to the 'Live' service;

- An end to end view of the operational service will be documented as the basis for further developments, to be prioritised based on benefits to the Tri-Service.
- 2.4 The introduction of a new project management methodology in January 2017 has supported the programme in generating momentum in supporting the Strategic Board's objectives (highlighted above). The introduction of a new governance structure has been completed and the addition of a Change Advisory Board (CAB) has successfully overseen the implementation of over 90 changes to the project and system over the last 6 months. The internal project structure for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) will remain the same with a lead officer responsible for the Tri-Service project on behalf of NFRS.
- 2.5 Since the previous update, the stabilisation and performance issues have reached a point where the Tri-Service team can start to agree a development process and schedule with Systel. A prioritised list of needs has been assembled to act as the starting point for discussion in France.
- 2.6 Engagement with Systel has improved significantly since the last report, and a concerted effort to review the fault logs / requests, has reduced the number of outstanding reports. However, due to Systel UK taking a more proactive approach to issues, we expect to see an increase in fault reports over the coming months, due mainly to positive action in resolving legacy problems with the system.
- 2.7 The core mobilising system remains stable, with performance improving with the addition of a new server in September 2017 to perform address searches. Along with the introduction of new road mapping software which has enhanced the accuracy of the data used to select the nearest and quickest appliance for an incident. The new road speeds have been tested and those areas where mobilising anomalies have previously been reported (and found to be an issue) have now been resolved by this update. This means the 'routing' part of a resource proposal will be far more accurate because it is based on a robust large dataset evidenced from tens of thousands of actual road journeys made by different vehicle types.
- 2.8 We continue to work with Systel to fix the remaining issues with the system gazetteer which will enable NFRS to manage mapping and address changes more effectively. This continues to be the highest priority within the current development requests for the system as part of development sprint 1.
- 2.9 Staff confidence in the system remains fragile but the introduction of the Control Involvement Group (CIG) continues to show positive engagement from Control Staff with a desire to have a direct impact on the workings of Tri-Service Control. A number of suggestions have already been provided to the Control Management Team to review. The desire for these suggestions, is that once implemented they will improve working arrangements, efficiency and effectiveness across the Tri-Service Control.

- 2.10 Currently the primary cause of system interruptions lies with the various networks involved in the system and are provided by Tri-Service or individual FRS. Work has been undertaken to assess these and improvement proposals are being examined. A review of the network design will be presented by the end of October for consideration by the ICT leads. Recent network failures are still under investigation but sit outside of the control or remit of Systel and the local Support Services.
- 2.11 Discussions have taken place regarding the remaining improvements and developments to be rescheduled once the full operational design has been created. This means that the project will continue into the 2017/18 financial year, and that the programme is currently not in a position to be formally closed. Possible areas for future development include:
- Dynamic Cover Tool;
 - Development of Test System;
 - Service Level Agreements (SLA) with Systel including development work payment schedules;
 - Progress network resilience provision with Virgin Media
 - Ability to make adjustments to individual operator positions for equality reasons.
- 2.12 When the Systel mobilising System went live across the Tri-Service in August 2015, the strategic aim was to mobilise the nearest / quickest resources for both priority 1 (life risk) and priority 2 incident types. However, this was not the case for priority 3 mobilisations, which were the responsibility of the local FRS to resource. To reduce complexity, improve efficiency and effectiveness, during a 3-month period (April – July 2017) Tri-Service Control commenced a trial relating to the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) proposals for a priority 3 (P3) mobilisation. Instead of sending a local FRS appliance, Fire control would send the nearest / quickest appliance, in line with P1 & P2 incidents. Following the successful completion of the trial and subsequent review of the data collected, the Tri-Service Response Board supported the recommendation of sending the nearest and quickest appliances to a P3 incident, irrespective of FRS and this was introduced in October 2017. As part of the trial, it was identified a small number of stations had been impacted by the changes. Service Delivery are working closely with these crews to identify and mediate the impact of this mobilisation change. In addition, this has motivated the Heads of Response for the Tri-Service to commence a review of PDAs across the region to identify efficiencies
- 2.13 As previously reported, on 15 January 2016 the Finance and Resources Committee approved the redesignation of the fire control collaboration earmarked reserve of £220k to support further development of the system to support dedicated control, support and ICT staff who are core to the delivery of the programme. A separate report at the same meeting identified that ‘mobilising’ is currently the highest risk facing the Service due to both the Tri-Service and ESN projects.
- 2.14 To facilitate the joint practices, common ways of working, configuration and training that are required to make a solution such as this function efficiently, the jointly funded central Tri-Services Control team continues to make good progress.

- 2.15 Within the overriding principles of the Tri-Service Control Programmes that the solution should be more cost effective than the aggregate of the previous provisions for all three Services. This has been achieved and an estimated long term annual saving of £1.1 million has been reported to Central Government.
- 2.16 To provide surety a Tri-Service agreement was signed by the three Chief Fire Officers in January 2013 that detailed roles, responsibilities and commitments of each Service to the project. This also detailed a governance and Officer meeting structure during both implementation and steady states. Throughout the programme a Strategic Board consisting of Principal Officers from all the three participating Services has met monthly to provide scrutiny and oversight and will continue to operate during the remainder of the contract.
- 2.17 The previous Programme Board has now been formally closed and replaced by a Response Board consisting of an Area Manager from each Service plus the Head of Tri-Service Control. This will oversee much of the more regularised in-life management of the programme, with internal project structures continuing until completion.
- 2.18 A joint meeting is held bi-weekly with Head of Control, ICT Project Manager, Heads of ICT and Systel to review progress and approve any proposed major changes to the system (CAB).
- 2.19 Throughout the programme, the Service has benefitted from support and guidance from control and mobilising specialists seconded to the Chief Fire Officers Association National Resilience and funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, whose advice has proved highly useful. This has now ceased and monitoring of progress is now undertaken by the Home Office.
- 2.20 Across the three Services, concern from staff remains high, and in recognition of the sensitivities, briefings and discussions with staff and managers continue to take place along with regular dialogue with representative bodies.
- 2.21 As part of the future development of the system, Systel France have started to demonstrate what the next version of the system software and MDT hardware could look like. Interesting changes include a web based user interface rather than the traditional PC and an Android based MDT.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The main financial implications are identified within the body of the report, however between the three participating Services it is estimated that annual savings of £1.1 million will be generated once steady state has truly been achieved.
- 3.2 A £220k earmarked reserve is in place to sustain resources to fully deliver and implement the remaining improvements and developments to the system.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

There are likely to be some new developments that requiring training before they can be implemented. Those for Control will be met largely in-house, but any for operational staff will require training input which is catered for within the earmarked reserve

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications arising from this report as it is only intended to provide an update to Members on the progress of a project.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states that “it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area”. This report does not contain any implications which would affect that duty.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority has a statutory duty to receive calls for assistance and mobilise a Fire Service. These duties are contained in Section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- 7.2 Part 3, Section 21, of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a Framework and it is this Framework that places a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities Fire to collaborate with other Fire and Rescue Authorities, other emergency services, wider Category 1 and 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums to ensure interoperability. In this context it includes, but is not limited to, compatible communications systems, control rooms and equipment.
- 7.3 The concept and implementation of Tri-Service Control is conducive with those legal duties and does not place the Authority at any risk of breaking them.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

With the improvements to the new mobilising system, improved stability and delivery of further developments, the high levels of corporate risk associated with mobilising should diminish into the future.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The three organisations are working together well, and notwithstanding that there are issues with the system, significant savings and improved operational resilience have already been realised.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the content of the report and the progress made with the Tri-Service Control Programme.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER