



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

TRI-SERVICE CONTROL UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 02 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

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

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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 six 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 has again been an issue, as the system has been adversely affected by Tri-Service networking issues. This has presented itself as multiple interrupting events rather than single significant periods of system loss. Recent network failures are still under investigation but sit outside of the control or remit of Systel and the local Support Services. Work has been undertaken to assess these and improvement proposals are being examined.
- 2.6 Engagement with Systel has continued to be positive 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, an increase in fault reports over the coming months is expected, 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. However, work is on-going in updating the Gazetteer and mapping systems in an effort to bring the data up to date. This remedial work will form a primary action for development sprint 1.
- 2.8 The Service continues to work with Systel to fix the most serious remaining issues with the system including standby functionality, improved primary alerting methods, and emerging issues with the Polux search engine.
- 2.9 Staff frustrations continue over the impacts of the network disruptions but these are now directed towards the network provider and not Systel. However, the continuing success 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. These suggestions have begun to be implemented and have improved working arrangements, efficiency and effectiveness across the Tri-Service Control. The group are currently working on aligning radio procedures across the Tri-Service to improve ways of working with Response crews.

- 2.10 A business continuity (BCM) exercise conducted in early December has identified some gaps in our resilience. A BCM plan has been developed to address these issues and is currently being tested to ensure any omissions in the resilience arrangements have been addressed. Completion of these tests will confirm the ability to implement the BCM arrangements as developed by the Control Management Team.
- 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 2018/19 financial year, and that the programme is currently not able to be formally closed. Members of the project team are travelling to France to meet with Systel to discuss how the project continues to move forward and agree the next steps. 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 As mentioned in the previous report, following the changes implemented by Tri-Service for responding to P3 incidents, a Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) review has commenced and should be completed by April 2018. The review team have identified initial proposals for standardisation and the AFA policies have been subjected to a similar review identifying a suggested way forward, to be reviewed by Tri-Service Response Board.
- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 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.

- 2.17 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).
- 2.18 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 with support from the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers Unit.
- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 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 contents of the report and the progress made with the Tri-Service Control Programme.

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

None.

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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER