

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	24 MARCH 2016	REPORT NO:	CFO/014/16
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM JOHN MCNEILL	REPORT AUTHOR:	JOHN MCNEILL
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	ED FRANKLIN (HEAD OF TECHNOLOGY) IAN CUMMINS (TREASURER)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: APPENDIX B:	ESMCP RISK AND IMPLICATIONS ESMCP DCLG INDICATIVE COST SAVINGS	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on the progress of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) which is being introduced through the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Platform (ESMCP) project.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That members note the contents of the report and the wider implications of the ESMCP as detailed in the appendices to the report.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP), hosted by the U.K. Home Office is a cross-government programme to replace the existing mobile communications service for the three emergency services (Firelink for the FRS) with a new commercial system based on 4G.
- 3.2 The Firelink communication service delivered by Airwave Solutions Ltd (ASL) uses the Airwave TETRA service. The TETRA system offers narrow-band data and mission-critical voice services. Although it offers high availability for voice it is expensive and does not offer a suitable data solution.
- 3.3 The Airwave contract between Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Airwave was signed in 2006 for a period of 10 years. This contract is due for renewal at the end of 2016. The last Airwave / Police contracts end in 2020.

- 3.4 The ESMCP will provide the next generation communication system for the 3 emergency services (police, fire and rescue and ambulance) and other public safety users. This solution provided will be called the Emergency Services Network (ESN). ESN will provide the next generation integrated critical voice and broadband data services for the 3 emergency services.
- 3.5 ESN will be a mobile communications network with extensive coverage, high resilience, appropriate security and public safety functionality. This allows users to communicate even under the most challenging circumstances.
- 3.6 ESN will enable integrated critical voice and broadband data services that are:
- enhanced: to provide integrated broadband data services
 - flexible: to better match and be responsive to user needs
 - affordable: to address financial pressures on central and user budgets
- 3.7 There are three strategic drivers that are influencing the scope and timing of ESMCP's development. These are:
- Current contracts for the three services (provided by Airwave) expire between 2016 and 2020 and cannot readily be extended. As such there will be no Airwave Firelink service from 2020 meaning that now is a good time to procure an alternative system.
 - The current Airwave Firelink service is already significantly more expensive than similar public safety systems in Europe and price trends for publically available mobile telephony.
 - In addition to voice capability there is a need to be able to use an Emergency Service Networks for mission critical data services. Note: Within MFRS there is a shift towards the internal development of applications to support operational transformation. This cannot be enabled by current Airwave technologies, however the ESN will facilitate such innovation.
- 3.8 EE and Motorola Solutions successfully bid for Lot 2 and Lot 3 of the ESMCP.
- 3.9 Motorola Solutions will be responsible for the delivery of the user services contract (Lot 2), providing systems integration and public safety functionality.
- 3.10 EE, winner of the mobile services contract (Lot 3), will be required to provide an enhanced radio access service with nationwide coverage.

- 3.11 They join Kellogg, Brown & Root who were awarded the delivery partner services contract (Lot 1) in July 2015 and immediately started their work helping to oversee the new ESN.
- 3.12 In December 2015 DCLG contacted all FRS's in England and stated that it recognises that Fire communications systems continue to be the responsibility of each individual FRA. However Government has a strong interest in ensuring that the country is fully prepared to deal with civil contingency issues. As such the Government believes that it is important to have in place a communications system that enables inter-working across boundaries and between the three emergency services. Furthermore the Government believes it is important to ensure that emergency services communications are robust and resilient, using the latest technology to aid the delivery of a more effective service.
- 3.13 Consequently whilst not mandating the take up of ESMCP DCLG recommended that FRAs sign up to the system, both from a financial perspective (the fire and rescue service as a whole stands to make significant savings of approximately £80m) but also from an operational perspective.
- 3.14 Following consultation with the Strategic Management Group (SMG), the CFO; under delegated authority has formally notified DCLG of Merseyside FRA's intention to transition on to the new Emergency Services Network via the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.
- 3.15 An Internal transition project has been initiated with the AM Strategic Change & Resources being the Project Sponsor, and the board membership being internal stakeholders.
- 3.16 A sub group of the CFOA regional operations group has been set up and a regional coordinator has been appointed. This is a centrally funded role with the individual being seconded from Cheshire FRS.
- 3.17 All communication and guidance documentation so far received by the Service make reference to the commitment from DCLG. The Service has requested that the regional coordinator gain assurance that, following the transfer of national FRS policy to the Home Office (HO) it is the HO intention that all implementation and funding arrangements for FRA' will remain the same.
- 3.18 The North West including MFRA is due to be the first region to transition to the ESN with the mobilisation phase commencing this year and cutover scheduled for summer 2017. Nationwide the transition will be complete by January 2020 by which time all FRSs will be in a steady state. The steady state will last until the end of the financial year 2032 by which point a retendering of the contracts will have taken place. (Please see Appendix A – Risk and Implications).

4. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 At this stage of the implementation no E&D implications have been recognised.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that all ESN infrastructure and hardware when procured will be subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

5. Staff Implications

- 5.1 Currently all workload is being achieved from within existing department capacity. As the project moves into the mobilisation phase it is anticipated that staff will be dedicated to the project.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that additional staff costs will be met through the transition funding made available via DCLG/HO (para 7.1).

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 At this stage in the implementation programme the legal implications around allocation of contract and compliance with procurement regulations is being managed by the central project team.
- 6.2 No local legal implications have been identified at this stage, however a member of the legal team is a permanent member of the transition board, ensuring that potential issues will be recognised at an early stage should they arise.

7. Financial Implications & Value for Money

- 7.1 DCLG has committed to provide all reasonable transition funding for FRAs moving on to ESN. This process is due to begin with the mobilisation phase in spring 2016. As such, before significant funding is provided to FRAs, DCLG requires Chief Fire Officers (or appropriate individuals) to provide them with a signed commitment that they would like to take up the new service (para 3.14)
- 7.2 DCLG have provided indicative cost savings (Appendix B) based upon comparative figures following assumptions made should MFRA continue with the current arrangements under the Airwave contract. The financial information is based upon figures included in the ESMCP Full Business Case and whilst it remains indicative the signature of the main ESN contracts has provided some assurance around aspects such as network costs. It is also important to recognise that aspects such as the number of devices included in the calculations are taken from early figures provided

by services and as such, given the recent FRS financial settlements, it would seem unlikely that device numbers are likely to rise in the future.

8. Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are a number of implications arising from the project which will have to be formally managed as risks. (Appendix A), the transition team will maintain a risk log throughout the life of the project.
- 8.2 Project implementation plans include the requirement to ensure full Risk Assessment of network and hardware is carried out.

9. Contribution to Our Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters Mission:

- 9.1 It is anticipated that the introduction of the ESN will provide a level of voice communication comparable with that currently experienced through Airwave, however the significant increase in data functionality will act as an enabler in reaching technological solutions for Service Delivery and Firefighter Safety

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) Fire and Rescue Authorities Financial Information and Sign Off Pack

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
ESMCP	Emergency Services Mobile Communications Platform
ESN	Emergency Service Network
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
HO	Home Office