

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 8

MEETING: 14th DECEMBER 2015

**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS
PROGRAMME (ESMCP) - UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE
FINANCE OFFICER**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current progress of the national Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members have received a previous report explaining how the ESMCP will replace the existing communication service delivered by Airwave Services Limited (ASL) with a new national mobile communication service for the emergency services and the other organisations that currently use Airwave (Minute no. 15/2014 refers).
- 2.2 This new system will be called the Emergency Services Network (ESN). The ESN will take advantage of the latest mobile technologies to provide national critical voice and broadband data services. It is a cross-government programme hosted by the Home Office.
- 2.3 The ESMCP strategic outline business case was approved by government in April 2014. Following approval a full Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) Procurement process commenced. The Invitation To Tender (ITT) was issued during the summer of 2014 with Contract Award programmed for Spring 2015. The procurement process consisted of four main 'Lots'.
- Lot 1: Delivery Partner - transition, integration and user services;
 - Lot 2: User Services - functionality, security and user accounts;
 - Lot 3: Mobile Services - resilient mobile commercial network;
 - Lot 4: Extension Services - coverage beyond the commercial network.

3 ESMCP UPDATE

- 3.1 The initial timescales for the programme anticipated that contracts would be awarded in April 2015, with the first Services going live with the ESN in early 2017. However, there have been some significant changes to the procurement

process and the timescales for contract award; these changes are detailed in sections below.

- 3.2 With regard to Lot 1: Delivery Partner, four organisations have submitted bids and two organisations submitted bids for Lot 2: User Services.
- 3.3 As there was only one organisation bidding for Lot 4 and the coverage provided by the commercial network providers bidding for Lot 3 was greater than anticipated, it was decided that Lot 4 would be removed from the process. There will be areas of the country that are not covered by the commercial network that ESN will operate on; therefore, the government, through its Mobile Infrastructure Programme (MIP), will develop sites that will increase the coverage in these areas, which in theory negates the need for Lot 4.
- 3.4 The changes to the procurement Lots, the additional clarification the bidders requested before submitting their final bids, and the general election in May 2015, has resulted in the contract award date now being delayed until late November 2015. There would then be a period of time for specific contract agreement and signing, which is hoped will happen towards the end of 2015.
- 3.5 **Transition to ESN** - Due to the scale and the complexity of the project the transition from the Airwave network to the ESN will take a number of years. Draft transition timelines have been produced; however, due to the delays in the project and the resultant extension of different Airwave contracts, the timeline has changed a number of times over the last 12-18 months. The current transition schedule for the North East region (fire and rescue services, police and ambulance services within a region are expected to go through transition simultaneously) is shown in figure 1 below, however there is a possibility that this plan may change again.

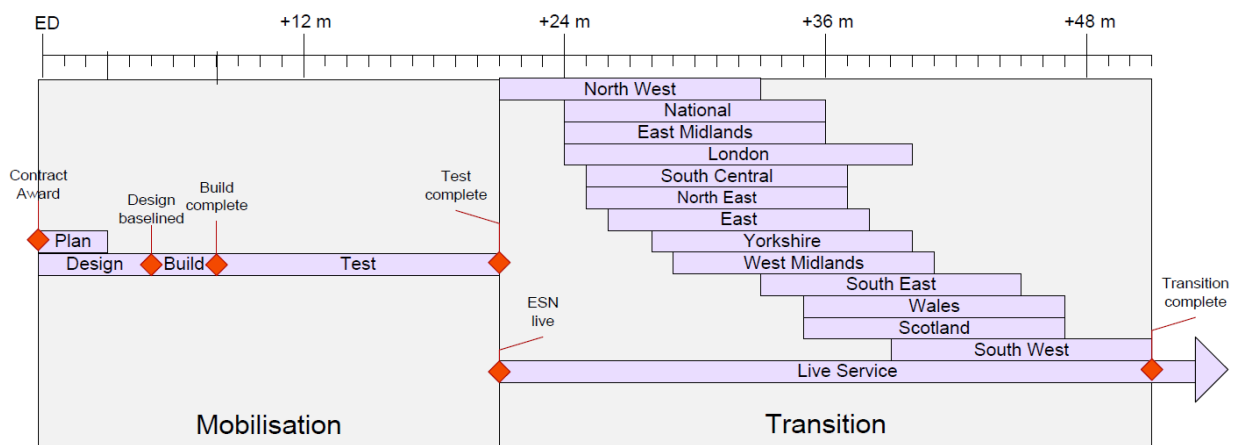


Figure 1.

- 3.6 The original Airwave contract was due to terminate for all FRSs at 23:59hrs on 31/12/16. Following negotiations with Airwave, DCLG, on behalf of Scotland, Wales and England fire authorities, has enacted the 3 year contractual extension to the Firelink contract. This will extend the GB wide service received from Airwave from 31st December 2016 to 31st December 2019 in line with the

planned transition timetable for the ESMCP and thereby provide fire and rescue services with the continuity of service during the transition window to ESN.

- 3.7 ESN service commencement is expected mid 2017 with Tyne and Wear along with the other emergency services in the North East Region being in the 3rd rollout group, with an anticipated transition date of late 2017 / early 2018.
- 3.8 It is expected that Mobilising Control rooms will connect to the ESN via a Public Service Network (PSN) connection, therefore user organisations are required to prepare for this. Work is ongoing to appropriately prepare the Service for PSN and confirmation if any new burden funding is to be made available to comply with PSN requirements is being sought.
- 3.9 Resource implications are being considered by the CFO to enable the necessary preparation prior to transition, during the transition itself and also the post transition work to be undertaken. Work is also ongoing within the region to develop a regional governance model to ensure a collaborative approach is adopted with all the emergency services where appropriate.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 A small, cross department team from TWFRS is currently monitoring the programme with relevant risks being highlighted to ACO Community Safety as they arise.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Funding for the core elements of the project i.e. the network and the management of it, the communication devices (hand held and vehicle mounted), control upgrades, vehicle fit out etc will be met centrally by the Home Office (HO), the Department of Health (DoH) and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for their respective services.
- 5.2 Services and regions will also receive a grant to cover anticipated internal project costs and a funding model for this has been consulted on. Feedback has been provided from the Service along with the other Fire and Rescue Services in the Region on this funding model which has been considered by DCLG and the outcome has formed part of the overall costs of the Programme included within the Full Business Case (FBC) that has now been presented for Ministerial approval.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

8 RECOMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are requested to:

8.1.1 Note the content of this report

8.1.2 Receive further reports as necessary

BACKGROUND PAPERS

**EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME (ESMCP)
July 2014**