# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE JOINT COMMITTEE



# Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Meeting

# Monday 23 September 2019 at 2.00 pm, Meeting Room 1, BMKFA, Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1BD

# AGENDA

| | Item | Page No. |
|---|---|---|
| | (ESMCP) Update | 50) |
| 10. | Forward Plan | (Page 51) |
| 11. | Date of Next Meeting:<br><br>Monday 9 December 2019, 2.00 pm at BMKFA, Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1BD | |

## 1. REMIT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

1.1. The Joint Committee is constituted to provide overall strategic direction and oversight for the TVFCS.

1.2. The Joint Committee shall have the following functions:

1.2.1. champion the TVFCS;

1.2.2. act as the link between the TVFCS and the Fire Authorities;

1.2.3. guide recommendations from the TVFCS, that may affect the operational functions of the Fire Authorities, through the governance processes of the Fire Authorities;

1.2.4. assist with the management of the relationships between the Fire Authorities;

1.2.5. monitor the steady state operational benefits and performance of the TVFCS, against the agreed measures and targets;

1.2.6. monitor steady state risks relevant to the TVFCS;

1.2.7. monitor the financial performance of the TVFCS against required and available budget, benefits and efficiencies, and to contribute to the financial processes of the Fire Authorities;

1.2.8 discuss, and contribute to, proposals on future developments for the TVFCS;

1.2.9. provide strategic direction on the future of the TVFCS;

1.2.10 consider and recommend to the Fire Authorities proposals in relation to Fire Authority Decisions including but not limited to:

(b) discuss and recommend proposals for additional full partners into the TVFCS;

(c) discuss and recommend proposals for the supply of TVFCS services to other fire and rescue services or other clients;

1.2.11. decide upon and determine all matters which are Joint Committee Decisions, any matters referred to the Joint Committee for decision pursuant to the TVFCS decision making process in clause 11 (Decision Making by TVFCS) and any matters reserved by law or otherwise to the Joint Committee.

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# Thames Valley Fire Control Service
## Joint Committee Meeting

**Monday 8 July 2019, 2.00 pm at Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BD**

# Minutes

**Present:**

Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE (BMKFA)
Councillor Steven Lambert (BMKFA)
Councillor David Cannon (RBFA)
Councillor Judith Heathcoat (OCC)
Councillor Mark Gray (OCC)

**In Attendance:**

Jason Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer BFRS)
Graham Britten (Director of Legal and Governance BFRS)
Dave Norris (Area Commander BFRS)
Katie Nellist (Democratic Service Officer BFRS)
Simon Furlong (Chief Fire Officer OFRS)
Rob McDougall (Deputy Chief Fire Officer OFRS)
Michael Adcock (Area Manager, OFRS)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS)
Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, RBFRS)
Simon Harris (Group Manager, TVFCS)
Connor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, RBFRS)

**Public:**

Graham Mitchell (OCC)

## 01. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

(Director of Legal and Governance BFRS presiding)

RESOLVED –

It being proposed and seconded it was resolved that Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE from BMKFA be appointed Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee for 2019/20.

## 02. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED –

It being proposed and seconded it was resolved that Councillor Judith Heathcoat from OCC be appointed Vice-Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee for 2019/20

## 03. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Angus Ross.

## 04. INTRODUCTIONS

All Members and Officers introduced themselves.

## 05. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cannon declared a personal interest in agenda item 12.

## 06. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED –

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

## 07. MATTER ARISING

From the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018, there was an action for all three Thames Valley fire services to send individual letters to encourage central government to fund fire and rescue services, this was an ongoing action.

## 08. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Group Manager TVFCS advised Members that this report provided a summary, for the last financial year, on the overall performance of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS), including some highlights for Members that were not in the standard performance report.

Councillor Heathcoat advised Members that what the report showed was TVFCS was in a good position, sound fiscal management was being shown and

the staffing turnover rates had reduced.

Councillor Heathcoat asked that the hard work undertaken by Group Manager TVFCS be recognised and a thank you from Members be placed on record.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

## 09. REVISED PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTRY SERVICE

The Area Manager OFRS advised Members that as stated in the Executive Summary, it had been agreed that CFO OFRS would lead a working group to review the overall performance framework for the TVFCS, with a view to providing more meaningful performance information for Members. This had now been completed and the report identified a number of measures that could be applied to the various strategic outcomes.

RESOLVED –

That the measures outlined in the report be adopted.

## 10. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (ESMCP)

DCFO RBFRS gave Members some background information on the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP). This was a national programme, led by the Home Office, its intent was to deliver the Emergency Services Network (ESN), which was a replacement provision for the current system 'Airwave'. Airwave was established in 2000 and went live in 2004, the infrastructure was aging and due for decommission in 2019. It had now been extended until the end of 2022, but sustaining Airwave post 2022 would require significant investment. The ESN would move to a public mobile data infrastructure that avoided the cost of replicating masts and network links and would allow future public network enhancements. It would have additional high bandwidth data capability and the opportunities for enhanced service capabilities.

DCFO RBFRS advised Members that the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services, Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight fire and rescue services made up the South Central (SC) Region. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight had now indicated an intent to move to the South West Region. Given the regional implementation model no longer existed, it would simplify the governance for the Thames Valley, with incremental adoption across the Thames Valley being aligned around TVFCS. There were financial implications for Hampshire and Isle-of-Wight changing regions, given the commitments jointly made as services for the use of regionally pooled funding to deliver work-streams and programme management

arrangements to benefit all the services in the region. Work was taking place to ensure all commitments were met so that the Thames Valley fire and rescue services were not financially disadvantaged.

DCFO RBFRS advised Members that programme management arrangements for the SC Board were delivered through Mott MacDonald using funding from the National Programme. This reduced individual project and programme resources in each service, allowing services to focus on delivery of work-streams.

DCFO RBFRS provided Members with some context on the following points summarising some of the concerns of the SC Board:

- .Accurate costings were not yet available;
- The Full Business Case was not yet signed off;
- Cost of devises were unknown and it was unclear if there was a need to maintain both mobile phones and ESN devises for staff;
- There was uncertainty over on-going grant funding;
- The reality of the Airwave planned "switch off date";
- How third party providers would meet demands of multiple organisations within current time lines;
- The ESN network was yet to be tested end-to-end;
- To fully exploit the potential functionality that ESN brings may require further investment;
- Early adoption of ESN products offers little material benefit or compelling business case when compared to existing commercially available solutions; particularly as some earlier service offerings provide no clear update/upgrade path to later, more fully featured products;
- Lack of clarity regarding transitional arrangement and interoperability (between Airwave and ESN) was a significant deterrent to committing early, particularly from a Control perspective, but also in terms of overall digital and device strategies.

These concerns were communicated to the National Programme and officers continued to work to address those matters within their control without adopting risks that belong to the National Programme.

Councillor Cannon asked if it was known when Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight would be leaving the SC region and was advised that an officer meeting was due to take place before the next South Central regional meeting to discuss any concerns and the financial position. A report would then be brought back to the three services of their given intent.

Councillor Heathcoat voiced concern of the vulnerability of the three services in the interim and the unknown financial burden and asked where the TVFCS would stand legally and was advised that the money had been provided by the national programme. Last year the spend to date had been reported back to the national programme and a quarterly report for each region was now provided to the national programme. All of the transitional funding received would be utilised

by the end of this year and no further work would be undertaken unless more funding was received. There was no legal commitment to the programme to take any particular product.

The Chairman requested that an update report be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the contents of this report on the ESMCP and delivery of the ESN be noted.
2. That officers' intent to draft a standard letter, for agreement through each Fire Authority's governance route, to be sent to the National Programme recording on-going concerns as to the ESMCP delivery be noted.

It being proposed and seconded -

3. That a letter, signed by all three Authorities' representatives on behalf of the TVFCS Joint Committee, be drafted recording on-going concerns as to the ESMCP delivery be sent to the Permanent Secretary Sir Philip Rutnam.

## 11.    TVFCS PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 2018/19

The Area Manager OFRS advised Members that now the new reporting measures had been adopted, this current report would be phased out and the agreed new measures introduced from April 2020.

The Group Manager TVFCS advised Members that a system upgrade had taken place to facilitate the introduction of the Emergency Services Network. The upgrade was successful but not without challenge, but what it did prove was that during that period, the TVFCS fall back arrangements were resilient and robust. The Secondary Control facility was utilised successfully.

A number of TVFCS staff had completed their Crew Manager 'Safe to Ride' qualification during the quarter. This would allow TVFCS to fill all outstanding Crew Manager vacancies during 2019/20 with internal vacancies, increasing the resilience of TVFCS crewing arrangements.

The TVFCS completed its part in the HMICFRS inspections for all three services and the reports received so far for RBFRS and OCC showed no areas that needed changing.

As mentioned earlier, the performance measures agreed today, will be phased in later in the year, the areas for improvement mostly focus around those performance areas, in particular, the time it takes for control staff to handle calls. There would be some more technological upgrades and more focus on using new technology for control staff.

The other area to note was sickness absence. There had been increased levels of sickness during the period, caused by a small number of long term sick absences and several outbreaks of seasonal illness. This had led to an increased requirement for overtime to maintain minimum crewing levels.

The Group Manager TVFCS advised Members that there was an overspend of 2.38%. This was due to the 2018/19 budget making provision for a pay award of 1% and the actual pay award being 2%; increased rates of sickness absence, leading to higher than anticipated levels of overtime being required; and the LGPS lump sum deficit payment was £7k higher than forecast, which also contributed to the overspend. The overall budget variance was significantly improved over previous years at 1.2%.

Councillor Lambert asked for some clarification regarding the long and short term sickness episodes and was advised that the figures were per month, and long term sickness was sickness absence of more than 28 days. The short term sickness absence were individual episodes, and may be one person who was absence on more than one occasion, or difference people.

Councillor Lambert asked how maternity and paternity leave was handled and how those positions would be filled and was advised that when notice was given, recruitment could take place in advance and a fixed term contract would be offered to cover the absence.

Following a question from Councillor Lambert, Members and Officers discussed the wearing of uniform by TVFCS staff.

The Chief Fire Officer BFRS advised that following the BFRS recent HMICFRS inspection, he had suggested that it would be helpful if the Thames Valley had one Service Liaison Lead across the three Thames Valley services that would reduce duplication work for any HMICFRS inspector going into TVFCS a number of times to look at the same service, provided to three different services.

The Chief Fire Officer RBFRS advised Members that this set of performance measures had served the Committee well in the early years as the TVFCS was set up, but it was now time to move to something slightly more mature and the measures proposed would give better information to really understand the benefits of TVFCS.

Lastly, the Group Manager TVFCS advised Members that since the report was written, Station Manager Ellen Warner had decided to take retirement at the end of June having completed 33 years' service, firstly with RBFRS and the last 4 years with TVFCS.

The Chairman asked that a letter be sent from the TVFCS Joint Committee expressing their thanks.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

## 12.   FORWARD PLAN

ESMCP update and a Refresh Programme report would be added to the Forward Plan for the September meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

## 13.   MEETING DATES

RESOLVED –

That the meeting dates for 2019/20 be agreed as follows:

Monday 23 September 2019 at 2pm
Monday 9 December 2019 at 2pm
Monday 23 March 2020 at 2pm

Before the meeting closed, the Chief Fire Officer BFRS, marked the retirement of the Chief Fire Officer OFRS with words of thanks on behalf of the TVFCS Joint Committee. The Chief Fire Officer OFRS responded.

## 14.   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 23 September 2019 at 2pm at BMKFA, Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1BD.

The Chairman tendered her apologies for the September meeting.

(The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.15 pm)

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# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE

| SUBJECT | TVFCS PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2019/20 |
|---|---|
| PRESENTED TO: | TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 23 SEPTEMBER 2019 |
| LEAD OFFICER | AM MIKE ADCOCK |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

## 1.    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1    To provide the Joint Committee with an update report on the performance of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

1.2    The Control Manager's performance report for 2019/20 Quarter 1 (Appendix A) provides a detailed narrative on TVFCS performance together with the agreed set of performance information to enable comparisons.

## 2.    RECOMMENDATION

2.1    That the Joint Committee note the report.

## 3.    REPORT

3.1    Demand has been consistent with what would normally be expected for this period, with no weather events or other unusual periods of high demand.

3.2    The Command & Control system remains in a stable condition and work to plan and implement a software upgrade during Q3 has begun.

3.3　Sickness absence has reduced from the levels experienced during the winter and early spring, but remain higher than for the equivalent period in 2018/19

3.4　TVFCS have now participated in the HMICFRS inspections of BFRS, OFRS and RBFRS. The reports published to date have not indicated any issues related to TVFCS.

## 4.　COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

4.1　This report complies with the Steady State Legal Agreement which defines the responsibilities for measuring and reporting on performance.

## 5.　FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1　There are no implications within this report.

## 6.　LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1　There are no implications within this report.

## 7.　EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1　There are no implications within this report.

## 8.　RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1　There are no implications within this report

## 10.　PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1　None for this report.

## 11.　BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1　Programme Sponsoring Group Benefits Paper – 11 April 2013.

## 12.　APPENDICES

12.1　Appendix A – TVFCS Control Manager's performance report for 2019/20 Quarter 1.

## 13.　CONTACT DETAILS

13.1   Simon Harris GM Thames Valley Fire Control Service

0118 938 4522 | 0774 863 1527

# Thames Valley Fire Control Service



# Joint Committee

# Performance Report

# (Quarter 1 2019/20)

# Contents

# Introduction

The Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) performance report presents information on the performance of the joint control room.  This is to provide structure and governance that enables TVFCS to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner, allowing us to respond and make informed decisions to ensure that our statutory and partnership obligations are successfully delivered.

The aim of this report is to share how TVFCS has performed over the previous three months, offer explanation, analysis and mitigation for target outcomes, and to suggest positive means of carrying effective performance into the future.

**Key to Icons and Colours**

| | |
|---|---|
| 🟦 | Target exceeded by more than 10% |
| 🟩 | Target met or exceeded by up to 10% |
| 🟧 | Target missed by up to 10% |
| 🟥 | Target missed by more than 10% |
| ⬜ | NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting |

# Key Highlights

## Context

During Quarter 1 2019/20 TVFCS handled 9358 emergency calls, leading to 5493 mobilisations. This represents an increase in emergency calls of 24.1% and an increase in mobilisations of 12.4% compared with Q4 2018/19. Mobilisations were 6.13% lower in Q1 2019/20 compared with the Q1 2018/19. It is not possible to calculate the percentage change for emergency calls due to a technical issue which affected call logging software in May 2018.

The Thames Valley area was not affected by any adverse weather which impacted on TVFCS during the period.

The numbers of days lost to sickness absence fell from 148 in Q4 2018/19 to 59 in Q1 2019/20, a reduction of 60.1%, but are still 51.2% higher than the same quarter in 2018/19 where only 39 days were lost.

All Crew Manager vacancies within TVFCS have now been filled.

TVFCS systems have remained stable throughout the period.

Station Manager Ellen Warner retired from TVFCS in June after 33 years' service. The vacancy resulting from SM Warner's retirement will be filled during Q2 2019/20.

## Successes

All Crew Manager vacancies within TVFCS were filled by internal candidates during Q1 2019/20. The TVFCS Management team has placed significant focus on developing staff to prepare them for Supervisory management roles over the preceding 18 months and it is pleasing to see this effort yielding positive results in promotion processes.

TVFCS were visited by HMICFRS as part of the BFRS inspection 'Discovery' week. The visit appeared to go well and a second visit was not deemed necessary by the inspection team. Inspection results for both OFRS and RBFRS were published in June. Neither report highlighted any issues with TVFCS that require action.

TVFCS continues to perform strongly against the measure for how long calls ring before being answered.

The previously agreed role for Data and Systems management was recruited during the quarter and will be in post by the end of July 2019. This will allow TVFCS to progress the work on reviewing data and optimising system configuration previously started by Station Manager Eduardo Cardoso.

## Areas for Improvement

Performance against the measure for time taken to mobilise saw some improvement during April and May but declined again in June. This decline correlates with the increased number of calls received to incidents in outdoor locations which are received during warm and dry spells of weather. These calls are more difficult to locate than incidents involving buildings and take longer to handle. A workshop focused on call handling took place in June and it is expected that we will see some improvement in the speed of call handling as a result.

TVFCS are working towards taking a software upgrade later in the year which will allow us to utilise the latest technology available to locate 999 callers. This technology is called 'Advance Mobile Location' and will, for callers with a smartphone, allow TVFCS to identify the location of callers to within 6 metres on the majority of occasions. This will assist greatly in locating callers who are not familiar with their location.

As TVFCS approaches its 5-year anniversary, the Joint Coordination Group has commenced work to evaluate how the control service can continue the excellent work it has achieved so far, and develop and extend this into the next period. The work will focus on staff wellbeing and welfare, including working arrangements and the operating environment, processes and systems and how this incorporates the ongoing collaboration and alignment work across the three fire and rescue services..

## Emerging Issues & Risks

The ongoing uncertainty over timescales for the 'roll out' of the Emergency Services Network remain a cause for concern. Although much of the technical work required to integrate the Emergency Services Network into TVFCS is being carried out prior to the 'roll out', there will be a considerable impact on the capacity of technical teams within each of the FRS when devices are deployed operationally. The same technical teams would be heavily involved in any Command & Control system replacement project and to have the two projects running concurrently would be very challenging.  TVFCS are represented on the relevant groups relating to the Emergency Services Network and maintain a regular dialogue with the ESN project team members within the FRS.

## Establishment

The authorised establishment and current staffing position are shown below. It details the number if people in their substantive posts and those in temporary positions.

| Role | Authorised Establishment | Staff in substantive Posts and FTE | Staff in temporary Posts and FTE | Vacancies |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group Manager | 1 | 1-1 FTE | 0 – 0 FTE | 0 |
| Control Manager | 1 | 1-1 FTE | 0 – 0 FTE | 0 |
| Control Training Manager | 1 | 1 – 1 FTE | 0 – 0 FTE | 0 |
| Watch Manager | 4 | 4 – 4 FTE | 0 – 0 FTE | 0 |
| Crew Manager | 12 | 12 – 11.5 FTE | 1 – 1 FTE | -0.5 |
| Fire Fighter | 20 | 20 - 18.82 FTE | 0 – 0 FTE | 1.18 |
| TOTAL | 39 | 39 – 37.32 FTE | 1 – 1 FTE | 0.68 |

## Competence Levels

| Role | Current staff | Number Competent in Role | Number in Development | % of Current Staff in Development |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group Manager | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| Control Manager | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| Control Training Manager | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| Watch Manager | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0% |
| Crew Manager | 12 | 4 | 8 | 66% |
| Fire Fighter | 22 | 17 | 5 | 23% |
| TOTAL | 41 | 28 | 13 | 32% |

Please note, the above figures relate to the actual numbers of staff employed, not the Full Time Equivalents used for establishment. Figures have been rounded up/down to the nearest full percentage point.

## Attendance/ Absence

| Measure | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Short-term Sickness Episodes | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Long-term Sickness Episodes* | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total Days lost to Sickness | 25 | 21 | 13 |
| Average days lost per FTE | 0.65 | 0.55 | 0.34 |

*long-term sickness is sickness absence of more than 28 days.

## Overtime Claims and Payment records

(Excluding Bank Holiday Pay and Handover Pay)

| Measure | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Staff Claiming OT | 12 | 13 | 15 |
| Hours Worked | 189 | 154 | 201 |
| Total Paid | £4011.36 | £2777.03 | £4321.66 |

## Performance Measures (Data accurate as of 01/04/2019)

| | Measure | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 | Reporting period average | Same period 2018/19 | Rolling 12 month average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Total Emergency calls answered | 3046 | 2983 | 3329 | 3119 | 3221 | 2952 |
| 2 | Number of Mobilisations | 1802 | 1799 | 1892 | 1831 | 1951 | 1805 |
| 3 | No. of times Emergency Fall-back instigated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Number of Co-responding incidents | 65 | 44 | 97 | 69 | 77 | 89 |
| 5 | Total Admin Calls answered | 7144 | 6656 | 7659 | 7153 | 6715 | 6627 |

| | Measure* | 2019/20 Target | April 2019 | May 2019 | June 2019 | Reporting period average | Same period 2018/19 | Rolling 12 month average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Emergency calls answered within 5 seconds | 92% | 96.35% | 95.27% | 95.28% | 95.63% | 88.00% | 94.49% |
| 7 | Emergency calls answered within 10 seconds | 97% | 98.27% | 97.88% | 97.45% | 97.86% | 90.88% | 97.34% |
| 8 | % occasions where time to mobilise is within 60 seconds | 60% | 47.17% | 47.11% | 44.24% | 46.17% | 47.61% | 44.16% |
| 9 | % occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds | 80% | 72.92% | 73.86% | 70.03% | 72.27% | 73.80% | 71.99% |
| 10 | % occasions where time to mobilise is within 120 seconds | 95% | 84.30% | 84.00% | 83.67% | 82.64% | 84.94% | 83.53% |
| 11 | Admin calls answered within 15 seconds | n/a | 82.76% | 83.46% | 81.84% | 82.69% | 85.42% | 82.42% |

*Definitions are available in appendix A

## Financial Position

*Data accurate as of 30/06/2019*

| | Total Annual Budget | Actual Expenditure To 30 June 2019 | Forecast Outturn at Year End | Variance = Forecast - Annual Budget | Variance % | Commentary |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TVFCS Budget Monitoring 3 Months to 30 June 2019** | | | | | | |
| **Staff** | | | | | | |
| Employment Costs | 1,673,370 | 409,360 | 1,650,952 | -22,418 | -1.34% | The underspend in this area is a result of staff leaving employment since the original budget was set. This creates a short period between the end of the notice period and the appointment of a |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | replacement during which no salary is paid.<br><br>Employment costs include a predicted increase of 2% in the cost of salaries from July 2019. Should national arrangements result in a higher or lower pay award, there will be an impact on this figure. |
| Mileage and Subsistence | 6,000 | 1,766 | 6876 | 876 | 14.60% | The original budget for 2019/20 was set before a full year's data relating to the new Management team was available. The expenditure relates primarily to travel costs and accommodation for attending NFCC meetings and other similar events, as well as day to day travel between |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | sites within the Thames Valley. |
| Uniform Allowances | 3,000 | 618 | 2,472 | -528 | -17.60% | This expenditure relates to a locally agreed allowance relating to work wear payable to eligible members of staff. Variance has been caused by TVFCS employing less eligible members of staff than when the budget was set. |
| Training | 1,000 | 179 | 1000 | 0 | 0 | |
| Recruitment | 300 | 0 | 300 | 0 | 0 | |
| **Sub Total** | **1,683,670** | **411,923** | **1,661,600** | **-22,070** | **-1.31%** | |
| **Corporate** | | | | | | |
| Facilities | 89,455 | 22,365 | 89,455 | 0 | 0 | Forecast outturn is expected to equal budget. Costs |
| Finance | 22,276 | 5,570 | 22,276 | 0 | 0 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HR | 71,636 | 17,910 | 71,636 | 0 | 0 | incurred to date are based on 1/4 of the annual budget. |
| ICT | 89,736 | 22,435 | 89,736 | 0 | 0 | |
| Liability and Equipment Insurance | 6,405 | 1,603 | 6,405 | 0 | 0 | |
| Management | 15,353 | 3,838 | 15,353 | 0 | 0 | |
| **Sub Total** | **294,861** | **73,721** | **294,861** | **0** | **0** | |
| **Other** | | | | | | |
| Professional Services and General Equipment Purchase | 6,000 | 3,076 | 8,090 | 2,090 | 34.83% | A requirement for professional services relating to a survey of the Control room environment has created the currently forecast overspend. |
| OFRS Costs (secondary control facility) | 42,215 | 0 | 42,215 | 0 | 0 | |
| TVFCS Alarm Receiving Centre income | -9,000 | 0 | -9,000 | 0 | 0 | |
| **Sub Total** | **39,215** | **3,076** | **41,305** | **2,090** | **5.33%** | |

| Technology | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Capita Mobs System (maint) | 68,386 | 0 | 67,197 | -1,189 | -1.74% | This contract is subject to an annual increase based on RPI. The rate of RPI when the budget was set was higher than the rate of RPI when the supplier applied the increase in cost leading to a forecast underspend. |
| DS3000 (for primary and secondary) ICCS | 85,737 | 40,822 | 81,643 | -4,094 | -4.78% | This contract is subject to an annual increase based on RPI. The rate of RPI when the budget was set was higher than the rate of RPI when the supplier applied the increase in cost leading to a forecast underspend. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Telephony and Network costs. | 52,188 | 4,707 | 52,188 | 0 | 0 | |
| EISEC Services (Primary and Secondary Control) | 9,000 | 2,250 | 9,000 | 0 | 0 | |
| Smart services to switch 999 lines to secondary control or elsewhere | 16,323 | 0 | 16,323 | 0 | 0 | |
| Airwave rental ( SAN I ,B ) ( Primary,seconda ry ) (7+8) | 14,058 | 0 | 14,058 | 0 | 0 | |
| **Sub Total** | **245,692** | **47,779** | **240,409** | **-5,283** | **-2.15%** | |
| | | | | | | |
| **Total Budgeted Expenditure** | **2,263,438** | **536,499** | **2,238,175** | **-25,263** | **-1.12%** | |

## Appendix A
### Performance Measure Definitions

| Measure | Description |
|---|---|
| **% of occasions where the time to answer admin calls is within 15 seconds** | This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an admin call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator |
| **% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 5 seconds** | This measure uses the time taken from when the Fire Control Room system receives an emergency incoming call alert to the moment they are answered by a TVFCS Operator |
| **% of occasions where the time to answer emergency calls is within 10 seconds** | |
| **% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 60 seconds** | This measure is calculated from when emergency calls are answered to when control room staff request stations to mobilise the appliance. |
| **% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds** | |
| **% of occasions where time to mobilise is within 120 seconds** | |

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# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE

| SUBJECT | *Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) update* |
|---|---|
| PRESENTED TO: | *Thames Valley Joint Committee* |
| DATE OF MEETING | *23 September 2019* |
| LEAD OFFICER | *DCFO Steve Foye* |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | *None* |
| ACTION | *For decision* |

## 1.    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1    This report follows the detailed update report provided to the Joint Committee on the 08 July 2019.

1.2    The report updates the status of the National Programme (NP) and ESMCP South Central Region input into this. It has been a relatively short period since the last update to the Joint Committee and there no significant areas to update the committee on.

1.3    At the meeting of the 08 July 2019, the Joint Committee agreed to write collectively to the Home Office Permanent Secretary, Sir Phillip Rutnam, setting out the Committees concerns in respect to the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and consequently, delivery of the Emergency Services Network (ESN). A draft letter is provided in Appendix 2.

## 2.    RECOMMENDATION

The Joint Committee are asked to:

2.1    **NOTE** the contents of this report on the ESMCP and delivery of the ESN.
2.2    **AGREE** the letter to the Permanent Secretary, Sir Phillip Rutnam, as detailed in Appendix 2.

**3.     REPORT**

3.1     On the 08 July 2019 a detailed update report and presentation was given to the Joint Committee, detailing the Governments Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) to deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) for all emergency services. ESN is intended to replace the current Airwave service used by all Emergency Services in Great Britain, including the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services and TVFCS.

3.2     The report outlined the current governance arrangements for delivering ESN in the Thames Valley FRSs and the concerns identified by officers with achieving this delivery.

3.3     At the Joint Committee meeting of the 08 July 2019 the committee resolved 'That a letter, signed by all three Authorities' representatives on behalf of the TVFCS Joint Committee, be drafted recording on-going concerns as to the ESMCP delivery be sent to the Permanent Secretary Sir Philip Rutnam'. This was to set out the concerns of the committee, as based on the report provided to the Joint Committee on the 08 July 2019.

3.4     Appendix 1 provides a copy of 08 July 2019 report to remind the Joint Committee of the concerns highlighted at the time.

3.5     Appendix 2 provides a draft letter summarising the concerns detailed in the 08 July report. It is presented for agreement and signature by members of the Joint Committee.

3.6     Whilst officers have continued to undertake work in respect to ESMCP, since the 08 July 2019 update to the TVFCS Joint Committee, there have been limited developments on which to update the Joint Committee but these are detailed in 3.7 to 3.14 below.

**National Programme**

3.7     The National Programme are now primarily working to bring the Full Business Case (FBC) for the ESN forward for consideration by the Minister. Whilst we do not expect the FBC to have been considered before the TVFCS Joint Committee meet in December we will provide a progress report and update for that meeting.

**Thames Valley ESN Adoption position**

3.8     The National Programme current plan is for the cessation of the existing Airwave network at the end of 2022. In line with other Fire and Rescue Services, and Police and Ambulance Services, outline deployment plans have been provided to the National Programme. These deployment plans provide an indicative view of when Services might start adopting ESN and how long they expect that to take. This is to inform understanding of when Airwave would no longer be required.

3.9     The National Programme are mapping all the deployment plans into one larger plan to establish the reality of when all services could migrate to ESN,

taking into account constraints such as availability of contractors. This work will inform the FBC but our view is that this will show that the current planned Airwave end date of Dec 2022 is unrealistic. We do not know how this might impact the FBC as sustaining Airwave brings additional cost.

3.10   TVFRS officers continue to have a preferred position that transition to full ESN is implemented no later than 12 months prior to the confirmed Airwave cessation date. This would allow for managing delivery in context of other commitments and create a prudent period of overlap between the old and new systems.

**Governance**

3.11   An ESMCP South Central (SC) Regional Programme Board continues to operate as one of a number of ESMCP FRS regions across the UK. The SC Board meets monthly and comprises senior responsible owners from the three Thames Valley FRSs alongside Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRSs.

3.12   As detailed in the update to the committee on the 08 July 2019, Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's have indicated an intent to move to the ESMCP South West Region. Officers are working to complete this change within this financial year.  This better fits with the Network Fire Services Partnership between Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's, Dorset and Wiltshire FRS and Devon and Somerset FRS. Given the regional implementation model no longer exists, it will simplify governance for the Thames Valley with incremental adoption across the Thames Valley being aligned around TVFCS.

**Control Room Work Stream Update**

3.13   There are no updates in respect to specific TVFCS control room changes since the last update to the Joint Committee.

3.14   There has been a long-standing query for Buckinghamshire FRS (BFRS) as to whether they require a dedicated DNSP connection for their service. If needed if would be to support necessary operational device configuration and management, as well as corporate requirements. BFRS believe they will be disadvantaged in their ability to manage their links and devices to the ESN without one. The issue, which may affect a number of fire and rescue services is not yet resolved. The National Fire Chiefs Council team, working within the National Programme, have now taken on responsibility to resolve whether the link is needed and, if so, if the National Programme would fund it centrally.

**4.   COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

4.1   This report and its contents are considered to offer no conflict to the Steady State Legal Agreement.

**5.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1    Regional funding is overseen through the South Central Programme Board and services draw down funding to cover costs of work-streams leads and ancillary costs, such as attendance at meetings, workshops etc.

5.2 Separate full funding from the National Programme was provided for control room upgrades and DNSP connections into TVFCS. This funding is based upon the original regional delivery plan and full payment has been made to the providers without direct impact on FRS budgets. With the change to the incremental delivery plan, we are seeking assurance that additional costs incurred will be met by the National Programme.

5.3 Quarterly reporting of ESMCP Transition Grant spend is made to the National Programme

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
6.1 None

## 7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS
7.1 None

## 8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Each Service will need to consider any Corporate Risk associated with the ECMCP Programme and record treatments to mitigate this risk. The SC Board provides a good mechanism to help manage the risk and align the approach of Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services with developments and progress being monitored by the TVFCS Joint Committee.

8.2 By example, two risks are recorded on the RBFRS Corporate Risk Register concerning ESMCP and these take account of implications on TVFCS.

## 9. CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS

9.1 This report complies with the "Principles of Collaboration"

## 10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION
10.1 None

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS
11.1 None

## 12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1: Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) update of 08 July 2019
Appendix 2: Draft letter to Sir Phillip Rutnam, Permanent Secretary, Home Office

## 13. CONTACT DETAILS

Steve Foye
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel: 07887 830208

# Appendix 1

# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE

| SUBJECT | *Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) update* |
|---|---|
| PRESENTED TO: | *Thames Valley Joint Committee* |
| DATE OF MEETING | *08 July 2019* |
| LEAD OFFICER | *DCFO Steve Foye* |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | *None* |
| ACTION | *For Information* |

## 1.    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1    This report provides an update and assessment of the progress of the national Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and the delivery of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that will replace the current Airwave provision that is used to mobilise operational resources.

1.2    Mobilisation of our firefighters is one of the most risk critical activities that we undertake, and we are committed to ensuring that our staff and the members of the public have an equal to or enhanced service as a result of the ESN

1.3    The report updates the status of the National Programme (NP) and ESMCP South Central Region input into this. In this context, the report highlights work taking place to enable the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (TVFRS') and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) to be able to adopt ESN whilst minimising operational and financial risk to service provision across the region.

1.4    The report details that any final decision for ESN adoption should be based on the NP approved Full Business Case (FBC). The report provodes underpinning reasons why adoption of ESN should not take place until the 'ESN Prime' product is fully in place.

1.5    The report indicates current TVFRS working assumptions, concerns and ESN adoption activity in context of the planned Airwave shutdown by December 2022.

1.6    An update is provided on governance including likely regional changes and current financial and funding arrangements and reporting for the SC Region.


2.    **RECOMMENDATION**

The Joint Committee are asked to:

2.1    **NOTE** the contents of this report on the ESMCP and delivery of the ESN.
2.2    **NOTE** officers intent to draft a standard letter, for agreement through each Fire Authority's governance route, to be sent to the National Programme recording on-going concerns as to the ESMCP delivery.


3.    **REPORT**

**National Programme Status and Timeline**

3.1 The Home Office is leading a cross cutting government department programme called the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) to deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) for all emergency services. This will replace the current Airwave service used by all Emergency Services in Great Britain.

3.2 The ESN design uses existing technology and infrastructure of mobile phone networks, called the Public Service Network PSN. ESN is designed to run in parallel on the same network but in a secure way specifically designed for all the emergency services.

3.3 The ESN national contract was awarded through 2 lots, with lot 1 (infrastructure /network) awarded to a provider called EE and lot 2 (software solution) awarded to Motorola.

3.4 In 2016, the National Programme (NP) plan was to deliver a phased implementation of ESN based on a region-by-region basis. The South-Central (SC) Region (Oxfordshire, Royal Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and the Isle of White) was formed by the NP as one of these regions.

3.5 The plan was based on a transition period of dual running of Airwave and ESN, so that interoperability could be maintained during a 2 years roll out across each region. Each Fire Authority was requested to give its commitment to the ESMCP programme against the NP planning assumptions and the expectation was that:

- South-Central Region would commence the adoption of ESN in spring 2019.
- The ESN would deliver value for money for the taxpayers.
- The ESN would be better than or equal to the existing service.

- Successful national transition would enable Airwave to be switched off.

3.6     An update report was last presented to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee on the 05 December 2018. The report advised that, on the 21 September 2018, the Home Office officially announced its revised 'incremental' approach to the delivery of the proposed Emergency Services Network (ESN). This was in place of the previously planned 'regional' implementation approach.

3.7     Adoption of an incremental delivery model by the NP is intended to enable some of the ESN capabilities to be accessed early by user organisation (UO's) as they come on-line during 2019 – 2020. The current plan indicates full ESN product, known as ESN Prime, will go live in quarter three of 2020.

3.8     The SC Region FRS' have concerns as to viability of the NP timescales for delivery of ESN prime. These concerns have been clearly articulated to the NP at the national Fire Customer Group, which is attended by NP leads. The NP has also been subject to criticism from the National Audit Office (NAO), in their report[1] on the programme published on the 10/05/2019. The NP also reported to the Public Accounts Committee on 22/05/2019, where concerns continue to be raised as to delays associated with the NP and the viability of current timelines.

3.9     The ESMCP South Central Board are of the view that it is timely for the Thames Valley Fire Authorities to write to the National Programme to put on record the on-going concerns of each Authority as to the progress of the ESMCP and delivery of the ESN. Officers will draft a standard letter to this affect to be taken for agreement through each Authority.

3.10    There is consensus across the SC Region services that there is limited value in committing to adoption of ESN ahead of Prime (this being the full product), given uncertainties in: the full offering of earlier products; how they will work; cost of early adoption and; whether early products can be easily adapted to the final full ESN prime. The current position of all three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (TVFRS') is to wait for the delivery of ESN Prime.

3.11    The only area of adoption forecast ahead of ESN Prime is the acceptance of two devices per service, which are placed in vehicles and continually test and record the signal of the ESN network. This is to assist user organisations in validating the network capability. Whilst it may lead to identification of areas of concern to be reported to the NP, the services are offering no assurance as to coverage and this remains a matter for the provider (EE) and the NP.

3.12    The primary concern for TVFCS and the TVFRS' is that there could be areas outside of the contracted area of coverage that the provider has to assure that, if not highlighted by UO's, could end up without ESN coverage. Validation work will focus on areas of concern, such as more remote buildings and areas such as parklands, colleges etc.

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[1] 'Progress delivering the Emergency Services Network' - https://www.nao.org.uk/report/progress-delivering-the-emergency-services-network/

3.13 With the development of the incremental delivery model the NP wants to better understand, from UO's, likely timescales and indicative plans for the process of adoption at a local level. In the update to the Joint Committee on the 05 December 2018, it was detailed that the services had provided an adoption profile to the NP in June 2018.

3.14 A request for a more refined plan with a higher degree of certainty on the adoption profile for each FRS was requested for September 2018. TVFRS', alongside South Central region partners, did not provide any updated information, as it had been made clear in the June submission that additional certainty in local planning would only be possible if further information was provided by the NP to address assumptions having to be made at a service level. This information, regarding costs, transition arrangements and hardened timescales, had not been forthcoming from the NP at the time of the second request.

3.15 It is recognised that the NP are seeking to build a more detailed profile of adoption across all UO's to assist in understanding pinch points or pressures in the delivery model and better define a critical path for the overall programme. Officers from across the all three TVFRS's are assessing detail and providing meaningful returns whilst being clear that, given the assumptions having to be made, the NP cannot consider these returns as any form of commitment to a timeline for delivery that services will be held to.


**Thames Valley ESN Adoption position**

3.16 It was outlined in the update to the TVFCS Committee on the 05 December 2018 that the NP were reviewing the Full Business Case (FBC) for the ESN. At that time, the review was anticipated to be completed in the first quarter of 2019, with the NP previously indicating it would be completed by the end of 2018. To date the FBC is yet to be signed off in its entirety. Elements have been agreed so that commitments could be made with primary suppliers (being EE and Motorola).

3.17 Visibility of the fully agreed and signed off FBC should be considered a pre-requisite for the Thames Valley FRS's, and the other partner organisations within the South Central region for:

- Establishing the cost impacts of migration to ESN.

- Establishing the specific timing of any adoption activities across the region and.

- Creating and managing a fully detailed plan to execute adoption activities in concert with other associated strategic projects.

3.18 Consequently, through the SC Board, work continues with all interested parties (including colleagues in Police and ambulance) to maintain the maximum possible planning flexibility and to keep as many options for execution open as possible.

3.19　The NP current plan is for the cessation of the existing Airwave network at the end of 2022. Given that ESN Prime is indicated to be delivered in quarter 3 of 2020 and all three TV FRS's have an intent to adopt ESN when Prime goes live, the window for implementation clearly sits between these two date.

3.20　TVFRS' preferred position is that transition to full ESN is implemented no later than 12 months prior to the confirmed Airwave cessation date. This would allow for managing delivery in context of other commitments and create a prudent period of overlap between the old and new systems.  This assumption would put TV FRS' and TVFCS provisional adoption date as the end of 2021. Current profiling for adoption indicates that we would struggle to meet this preferred position.

3.21　Work developing options for timing of migration to ESN is on-going by officers from the TVFRS' and TVFCS. Greater clarity from the NP along with a signed off FBC is required in order to bring forward a full option appraisal and recommendations through the appropriate governance routes of Fire Authority and TVFCS Joint Committee.

3.22　To provide the Joint Committee with some context the following points summarise some of the concerns of the SC Board:

- Accurate costings are not yet available. (Capital, revenue, or full life costs).
- The Full Business Case is not yet signed off.
- Cost of devices are unknown and it is unclear if we will need to maintain both mobile phones and ESN devices for staff.
- There is uncertainty over on-going grant funding – how much, for how long and on what basis.
- The reality of the Airwave planned "switch off date".
- How third party providers (such as capita) will meet demands of multiple organisations within current timelines.
- The ESN network is yet to be tested end-to-end
- To fully exploit the potential functionality that ESN brings may require further investment
- Early adoption of ESN products offers little material benefit or compelling business case when compared to existing commercially available solutions; particularly as some earlier service offerings provide no clear update/upgrade path to later, more fully featured products.
- Lack of clarity regarding transitional arrangement and interoperability (between Airwave and ESN) is a significant deterrent to committing early, particularly from a Control perspective, but also in terms of overall digital and device strategies.

3.23　These concerns are communicated to the NP and officers continue to work to address those matters within our control without adopting risks that belong to the NP.

**Governance**

3.24    An ESMCP South Central (SC) Regional Programme Board continues to operate as one of a number of ESMCP FRS regions across the UK. The SC Board meets monthly and comprises senior responsible owners from the three Thames Valley FRS's alongside Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's.

3.25    Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's have indicated an intent to move to the ESMCP South West Region. This better fits with the Network Fire Services Partnership between Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's, Dorset and Wiltshire FRS and Devon and Somerset FRS. Given the regional implementation model no longer exists, it will simplify governance for the Thames Valley with incremental adoption across the Thames Valley being aligned around TVFCS.

3.26    There are financial implications of Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight changing regions, given the commitments jointly made as services for the use of regionally pooled funding to deliver work-streams and programme management arrangements for benefit all of the services in the region. Work is taking place to ensure all commitments are met so that Thames Valley FRS's and TVFCS are not financially disadvantaged.

3.27    Whilst maintaining relationships with other fire, police and ambulance services, uncertainty from the programme is affecting joint working and potential collaboration, such as on procurement. Officers remain committed to joint working where possible.

3.28    Programme Management arrangements for the SC Board are delivered through Mott MacDonald using funding from the National Programme. This reduces individual project and programme resources in each service, allowing services to focus on delivery of work-streams.

3.29    A dedicated team (funded by the NP) works within the NP and reports to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This team acts on behalf of the fire and rescue service within the NP; assures on FRS progress; and coordinates FRS responses to requests from the NP. To achieve this the team maintain relationships with FRS Regional leads through a Fire Customer Group (attended on behalf of South Central Region by DCFO Foye). The NFCC team also support staff working within services in addressing questions and requirements of the NP.

**Control Room Work Stream Update**

3.30    A number of work-streams are in place across the South Central region. This report concerns itself with an update on Control Rooms.

3.31    The TVFCS control room upgrade that enables ESN adoption was completed early in 2019. This took significant work across the TVFCS team whilst Capita were on-site and including the planned use of the Fall-back facilities at Kidlington for one aspect of the upgrade.

3.32 The DNSP connections for TVFCS are in place and tested. Charges for install and rental are currently funded through the NP and we are making the case that ongoing cover of rental should be in place until ESN provision is achieved by the NP. It is our position that if funding is not forthcoming rental will be stopped until ESN Prime is adopted and then reinstated with the provider when actually needed.

3.33 It is positive that these hardware elements are in place though of course we have yet to see an end-to-end set of tested products that would assure an effective communications network.

3.34 Buckinghamshire FRS (BFRS) are currently in consultation with the NP regarding the necessity for provision of a dedicated DNSP connection for their service. This provision would be to support necessary operational device configuration and management, as well as corporate requirements. Though the NP have previously communicated that BFRS would not require a dedicated DNSP, BFRS have maintained that they will be disadvantaged in their ability to manage their links and devices to the ESN without one. The NP technical team are reviewing their position and BFRS await clarification as to whether the link is needed and, if so, if it would be funded centrally by the NP.

## 4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE TVFCS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

4.1 This report and its contents are considered to offer no conflict to the Steady State Legal Agreement.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Regional funding is overseen through the South Central Programme Board and services draw down funding to cover costs of work-streams leads and ancillary costs, such as attendance at meetings, workshops etc.

5.2 Separate full funding from the National Programme was provided for control room upgrades and DNSP connections into TVFCS. This funding is based upon the original regional delivery plan and full payment has been made to the providers without direct impact on FRS budgets. With the change to the incremental delivery plan, we are seeking assurance that any additional costs incurred will be met by the NP.

5.3 From 2019/20, the NP has instigated quarterly monitoring of expenditure of ESMCP Transition Grant Payments at a service and regional level. Buckinghamshire FRS retain the South Central Grant and oversee monitoring of spend on behalf of the South Central ESMCP Board.

5.4 Returns to NP will remind that the structures established and commitments made have, very much, been in response to the expectations of the NP and that we continue to deliver activity in respect of ESMCP in good faith whilst raising risks and registering concerns in respect of delivery plans, timelines and on-going assumptions having to be made.

**6.** **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1    None

**7.** **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1    None

**8.** **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1    Each Service will need to consider any Corporate Risk associated with the ECMCP Programme and record treatments to mitigate this risk. The SC Board provides a good mechanism to help manage the risk and align the approach of Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services with developments and progress being monitored by the TVFCS Joint Committee.

8.2    By example, two risks are recorded on the RBFRS Corporate Risk Register concerning ESMCP and these take account of implications on TVFCS.

**9.** **CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE AIMS**

9.1    This report complies with the "Principles of Collaboration"

**10.** **PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1   None

**11.** **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1   None

**12.** **APPENDICES**

12.1   None

**13.** **CONTACT DETAILS**

Steve Foye
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel: 07887 830208

# APPENDIX 2

# THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE

Sir Philip Rutnam
Permanent Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4JA

TVFCS Joint Committee
C/O Democratic Services
Buckinghamshire FRS HQ,
Stocklake
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire
HP20 1BD

23 September 2019

Dear Sir Philip

**Re: Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme**

We write on behalf of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee, about the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and the Emergency Services Network (ESN).

Comprised of lead members from the three constituent authorities that deliver fire and rescue service provision for Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire, the TVFCS Joint Committee provides the necessary oversight of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

TVFCS is delivered through collaboration to provide an effective, efficient and resilient capability, to respond to emergency incidents and other events across the Thames Valley, with a reliable and robust means of mobilising, managing and communicating with Fire and Rescue Services resources.

For TVFCS to fulfil its role and meet the needs of the public and operational staff, it must have trust in the communications system and network that enables this capability and as currently provided through the Airwave system.

We recognise the importance the Home Office place on the ESMCP and of course support the successful delivery of the ESN to replace Airwave. We trust you also recognise the on-going concerns amongst the user community about the deliverability of this programme in terms of timescales, budget and specification.

We acknowledge that significant work has taken place to review and more fully develop the Full Business Case (FBC) for ESN. We understand this has included work to better understand likely deployment plans across the three emergency services and that this will in turn give some indication as to the realistic timescales of when a full transition from Airwave to ESN might be achieved.

Officers from the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services have provided input into recent deployment planning work and they will continue to support other developments in the programme. We also understand from our officers that deployment plans are predicated on a number of assumptions which are subject to clarifications that can only be provided by the Home Office ESMCP. As such, officers have a lower degree of confidence in deployment plans provided.

As a Joint Committee we wish to record our concerns with you, given the ongoing uncertainties in the delivery of the ESN, as this may have a direct bearing on the effective operation of TVFCS and longer term planning decisions, such as timings of technology refresh.

We would specifically ask that the programme note the following points and concerns of the TVFCS Joint Committee.

**Timescales, Resources and Costs**

Timescales for provision and transition to the full ESN product, and consequently Airwave shutdown, currently seem unrealistic. Sufficient time must be provided to confirm the ESN meets operational requirements and that all services can fully transition before Airwave is shutdown.

On-going uncertainties in ESN planning impact service planning and decision making, such as when to adopt technology changes within the current control system or whether specialist resources should be directed to prioritise other work over ESMCP delivery. Improved certainty from the programme will mitigate this.

There are uncertainties concerning the ESN long-term costs in relation to products stemming from the programme. At a time of continued funding pressures, this uncertainty impacts budget planning and decision making on adoption of ESN.

Funding provided by the Home Office ESN National Programme has been committed in good faith to undertake IT Health Checks of TVFCS systems; upgrade the TVFCS control room to be ESN ready and; implement DNSP connections. Given the delay in ESN delivery, additional funding pressures are foreseeable, such as further IT Health Check requirements or maintaining a DNSP connection beyond the current contracted time. We consider such additional pressures should be acknowledged and funded by the ESMCP National Programme.

**Capability and Capacity**

It is our view that any Airwave replacement must be at least as good and reliable across all aspects of the systems requirement. It would be wrong to trade off achieving an optimised and acceptable ESN capability to meet a constrained timescales.

Whilst officers are supporting necessary work to prepare for any ESN adoption, it is our view that the ESMCP National Programme must demonstrate, in comprehensive tests and major operational trials, that ESN will work at scale before Airwave is shut-down.

Acceptance of ESN into service is subject to officers and Fire Authorities having the confidence and assurance that it will meet all operational needs and can operate under the most extreme of pressures. We could not fully transition to ESN until it is shown to be tested and proven.

Whilst ESN provides the potential for additional benefits, we expect no compromise to the current effective critical voice capability that our operational staff rely on.

Recognising that the ESN technology offers many potential benefits to make more effective use of technology that improves service capabilities, it is possible these benefits may not be fully realised, if costs to deliver these improvements and realise such benefits - above the core provision - are prohibitive to services.

**Coverage**

Whilst we understand that ESN coverage is not an exact swap out for Airwave, as a solution, it should match the Airwave experience. Original assurances were that we would see a 'like for like' experience between Airwave and ESN in terms of contractual match and overall effect, as part of the core programme delivery and funding. Whilst there is a role for user organisations and their officers to play in confirming coverage is as expected, responsibility and the burden of cost to deliver assured coverage rests with the provider (EE) and the National Programme.

In summary, it is our view that there remain substantial uncertainties and risk with the delivery of the ESN, in terms of timescales, costs and capabilities. The ESMCP programme continues to provide assurances that progress is being made on the delivery of products, the integration of deployment plans and development of the FBC for consideration. Nonetheless, we have low confidence that current plans and consequently funding are realistic.

The TVFCS Joint Committee must be assured that effective and efficient operational capability of current or future safety critical voice communications is maintained. Work of operational crews and fire control staff plainly rely heavily upon critical voice functionality and we currently have considerable reassurance of a dedicated trunked radio network, which consistently delivers service functionality above contracted minimums.

We would not support working around problems or compromising on standards through cost reduction by the National Programme, passing on of costs to services or forcing delivery of the ESN within artificial timeframes and without full testing. A decision around the Full Business Case is now pivotal in enabling effective planning within the Thames Valley.

We look forward to receiving your acknowledgment of the concerns of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee and trust they will be given due consideration.

Yours Sincerely


**Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE**
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
Chairman of the Joint Committee for Thames Valley Fire Control Service


**Councillor Judith Heathcoat**
Oxfordshire County Council
Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for Thames Valley Fire Control Service


**Councillor David Cannon**
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (Lead Member, Collaboration)
Member of the Joint Committee for Thames Valley Fire Control Service

| ITEM | NEXT REPORTING DATE | FEEDING FROM/TO | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | LEAD MEMBER | PART I / II |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme | 23-Sep-19 | N/A | note | Steve Foye | N/A | Part I |
| Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring | 23-Sep-19 | N/A | note | Mike Adcock/Simon Harris | N/A | Part I |
| Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme | 09-Dec-19 | N/A | note | Steve Foye | N/A | Part I |
| Proposed Budget 2020/21 | 09-Dec-19 | To BMKFA, OCC and RBFA | agree and recommend to OCC, BMKFA and RBFA | Conor Byrne | N/A | Part I |
| Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring | 09-Dec-19 | N/A | note | Mike Adcock/Simon Harris | N/A | Part I |
| Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme | 23-Mar-20 | N/A | note | Steve Foye | N/A | Part I |
| Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring | 23-Mar-20 | N/A | note | Mike Adcock/Simon Harris | N/A | Part I |

Agenda Item 10