

Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper provides a summary of the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP); a cross-governmental programme that has been created to oversee the future critical communication provision for the emergency services following the end of the current Airwave contract. CFO Dave Webb will be attending the Commission to give Members an overview of the programme and its work.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the content of the report and to consider nominations to sit on the ESMCP customer group.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme

Background

1. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is a cross-government, multi-agency programme led by the Home Office. The Programme has representation from the 3 emergency services at both operational and departmental levels, the Cabinet Office, Welsh and Scottish Governments. ESMCP hopes to:
 - 1.1 Replace the three Emergency Services (3ES) mobile communications using the next generation commercial network (4G LTE) with Public Safety features and on-demand data services.
 - 1.2 Achieve interoperability throughout the 4-year transition by integrating Airwave and the new network, supported by contingency processes (as happened when Airwave was introduced). It is vital that there is no degradation of operational capability in the transfer from one service to the next or during a technology migration. Therefore, ESMCP will endeavour to ensure a smooth operating and commercial transition between current and future systems.
2. Following on from approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case in September 2012, the ESMCP programme board has now approved their high level plans to deliver the Outline Business Case by early 2014. The Programme is becoming increasingly confident that a new system can be put in place from 2016 onwards.
3. The ESMCP team, working closely with the Department of Communities and Local Government and Chief Fire Officers Association, are already actively engaging the fire sector to develop their options. A key part of this engagement is the ESMCP Fire Customer Group, with broad membership to represent the views of the Fire sector. The first meeting of the Group was held on 24 April, Dave Webb (CFOA) jointly chairs with Jane Cockerill (DCLG). The next meeting on 14 June plans to address the prioritisation of the high level requirements, to consider the latest analysis of the cost of existing Fire communications (the 'As-Is') following data returns from FRSs and a discussion of the transition options being developed by the programme.

Governance Structures

4. Below the ESMCP Ministerial Group is a steering group, which includes CFOA representation; we are working with CLG to ensure that the LGA is also represented on this body.
5. A Customer Group (which will meet monthly and reports to a programme board which in turn reports to the steering group above), has been set up to provide a considered Sector view, act as a sounding board for papers, ideas and requests arising from ESMCP, and be a conduit for consultation with Fire stakeholders (FRS, FRAs, etc.). The LGA has been asked to nominate a member to sit on this customer group. The full proposed membership is as follows:

- 5.1 DCLG and CFOA joint chairs
- 5.2 London Fire Brigade representative
- 5.3 Representatives from a range of other FRSs (rural/urban, metropolitan/county/combined)
- 5.4 An elected Member on the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee or Fire Services Commission
- 5.5 Fire Finance Network representative
- 5.6 Fire Lawyers Network representative
- 5.7 ESMCP Programme Business Change and Assurance Manager (Fire).

Conclusions and next steps

6. The LGA representative on the ESMCP customer group will provide updates on the work programme to the FSMC and Fire Services Commission as appropriate.