

FSMC update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Committee not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members to note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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FSMC update paper

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

1. JESIP have now published their Joint Doctrine. The doctrine focuses on the early stages of response to a major or complex emergency, creating a framework for Police, Fire and Rescue Services and Ambulance services to respond effectively together.
2. The Doctrine sets out the key principles for joint working as co-location, communication, co-ordination, joint understanding of risk and finally shared situational awareness. The Doctrine also sets out should train and operate based around, not only common principles but also terminology and ways of working, showing what responders should do in a multi-agency working environment.
3. However, the principles described are also applicable to the wider range of Category 1 and 2 response organisations and can be applied to smaller scale incidents, wide-area emergencies, and pre-planned operations.

Fire Control

4. CLG has published an update on the improvement plans being undertaken by fire and rescue authorities on control room services. This updates the document last published six months ago and gives a summary of improvements being delivered by each project. The update is available here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/245242/Future_Control_Room_Services_Scheme.pdf

National Operational Guidance Programme

5. The National Operational Guidance Programme has consulted on its first two pieces of operational guidance. These are “Environmental Protection” and “Water Rescue and Flooding”. These are the programme’s first pieces of draft guidance and to help FRAs with the consultation process a document outlining the format and objectives of operational guidance has also been released.
6. In addition, the programme is also managing the consultation for the handbook produced by CLG and the Environment Agency, titled ‘Environment handbook for the fire and rescue service’. This is available on the National Operational Guidance Programme’s website: <http://www.ukfrs.com/guidance/consultation/environment-handbook/> and the consultation closes on the 15 November. The handbook was produced in partnership with the fire and rescue service and will replace the ‘Environmental Protection, Fire and Rescue Service Manual – Volume 2, Fire Service Operations (2008)’.

Outside bodies updates

Cllr Rebecca Knox - Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

Background

7. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme has been gathering pace over the last couple of months. The Programme has now formally engaged with market at a supplier conference day, run a series of partner engagement events with services across the summer and developed a first draft of the Outline Business Case. The proposed timetable is for the Invitation to Tender to be issued in Spring 2014, with the award of contract planned for Summer 2015.

Fire and rescue authority engagement with the programme

8. Fire and rescue authorities are encouraged, both collectively and individually, to maximise the opportunities to influence this major programme and have direct ownership of the solutions that will be developed. It is vitally important that fire and rescue authorities ensure that they are adequately sighted on the programme within their authority and ensure that relevant partners and boards are engaged in the programme. To date the pace of the programme has been such that only limited impact has been felt by fire authorities, this is likely to increase somewhat in the coming months and authorities will need to be ready to react.

Outline Business Case

9. The first draft of the programme's Outline Business Case has now been drafted and the intention is, once the case has been further developed, to share the next iteration with fire and rescue authorities for comment. The anticipated sign-off of the final version is planned for Spring 2014. The Department for Communities and Local Government will be seeking fire and rescue authority assurance of the Outline Business Case via Fire Customer Group and the appropriate Chief Fire Officer Association Boards. The Outline Business Case will provide the Government with wide authorisation for the Programme to proceed towards the issue of an Invitation to Tender. It is accepted that fire and rescue authorities will not be in a position to firmly commit to any Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme solution until full costs, contracts and specifications are clear. The strategy for on-going engagement is therefore one of seeking authorities agreement to proceed in principle at key stages of the programme.

Elaborated Requirements

10. Following on from fire and rescue authority input at partner seminars to date, a further programme of engagement will be undertaken shortly in order to ensure that the elaborated requirements reflect the needs of fire and rescue authorities. The details of this engagement are still to be confirmed, but there will be further joint communications

on this shortly through Fire and Rescue Monthly Bulletins and Chief Fire Officer Association circulars. It will be ensured that the development of the elaborated requirements is traceable back to the High Level User Requirements previously agreed by fire and rescue authorities in May 2012.

Transition Planning

11. Initial thoughts on transition planning and modelling were shared with fire and rescue authorities at partner seminars over the Summer. This work was primarily undertaken to inform the Outline Business Case; however, there is an awareness and understanding that there are a number of projects and initiatives taking place within fire and rescue authorities that means a number of the assumptions used in the planning and modelling will change over the coming months. Accepting the requirement to maintain existing interoperability arrangements during transition, the Programme is particularly interested to understand the opportunities and risks presented by the fire and rescue authority control room amalgamations, consortia and buddying arrangements and the impact this may have on any geographic based transition plan. Please get in touch with the programme if you have any concerns.

As-Is Data collection

12. Earlier in the year an As-Is data gathering exercise was undertaken to assess the range of costs to fire and rescue authorities of their communications. Approximately 75% of fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales provided data, but analysis revealed a great deal of variation in the responses received and the Fire Finance Network are providing the programme with assistance on this. It is anticipated that the programme will also need to run a further data collection exercise on the technical aspects of fire and rescue authority communications systems over the next few months.

David Cartwright - Fire Service College Customer Advisory Board (CAB)

13. The first meeting of the Customer Advisory Board (CAB) took place at the College on 10 September 2013 and was attended by representatives of CFOA (Des Pritchard in the chair), College Management, Peter Holland (CFRA) Jane Cockerill (DCLG - National Resilience), North Wales FRS, The Firefighters' Memorial Trust and Cllr David Cartwright for the LGA. Apologies were sent from ACPO, The Ambulance Service, Skills for Justice, Scotland and Northern Ireland FRSs.
14. Initial discussion centred upon the draft terms of reference, the function of the CAB and who should be invited to sit on the board. It was agreed that until the CAB had identified the training requirements of the Fire Service, the other blue light services would not be invited to attend. Indeed it was felt that, to satisfy the covenants laid upon the College, it might be worthwhile, initially, for there to be a separate group to cater for

joint emergency service issues. Blue light interoperability was however seen as one of the main objectives of both the FRS and the College, and liaison with the other services would therefore continue.

15. The CAB agreed that it would like to see a return to a system of different accredited levels of command training that are universally accepted throughout the FRS, ranging from junior officer level, through middle management to aspiring chief officers. It was interesting to note that this is something the College of Policing is also considering at this time. There was also a useful discussion around who and how training standards should be set and who would monitor and validate those standards.
16. The MD of the College (Jez Smith) said that there are potentially different and more cost-effective approaches to training than have been taken by FRS over the last number of years. The College is developing regional delivery capability and actively looking to partner with FRSs to achieve that. The intent would be to deliver regionally (reducing travel and subsistence and potentially keeping crews on the run), but more importantly to achieve efficiencies within the administration of training and improve utilisation of resources from the FRS. This can lead to a radically reduced total cost of training and significant savings.
17. He said that there is an over-supply of training facilities across the country, and therefore capital spend on new build facilities should be questioned by members as to whether there is an alternative course of action (using neighbouring services' facilities, or going to the College).
18. It was a very worthwhile first meeting.