
REPORT AUTHOR(S): ACFO IAN EVANS**SUBJECT: MOBILISING SYSTEM OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

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Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL			FINANCIAL	✓
HUMAN RESOURCES			EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL			POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) of the contractual situation in relation to the current emergency call handling and mobilisation system and recommend an approach to identifying the most appropriate arrangements for the future provision of emergency call handling and mobilisation.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the FRA endorse the options appraisal approach for the future provision of emergency call handling and mobilisation set out in this paper.

1. Background

- 1.1. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service emergency call handling and mobilising system is provided through a partnership arrangement with Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS). The system was procured in 2012 through a tender process supported by Government grant funding.
- 1.2. The system comprises two components - an Integrated Communications and Control System (ICCS) provided by Frequentis and a Call and Despatch system (CAD) provided by Remsdaq.

- 1.3. The contract term for the system components was five years and this expires at the end of 2019 (Frequentis) and early 2020 (Remsdaq) respectively.
- 1.4. Alongside this contract expiry issue, the Government is in the process of replacing the Airwave communications system used by all emergency services with a new Emergency Services Network (ESN). The transition to ESN was originally anticipated to take place in 2018 and requires an upgrade to the ICCS and CAD system to work with the ESN new technology. Due to delays in the Government ESN project there is now uncertainty over when the transition to ESN will actually take place, and this could be 2020 or later. The indicative costs for upgrading the current system to ESN compliance are considerable.
- 1.5. EFRS have indicated to BFRS that in consideration of the end of the contract and upgrade costs they intend to procure a new ESN compliant system and will not be seeking to progress upgrade of the current system and will not seek any extension to the current contract. We await written confirmation of this position.
- 1.6. The intention of EFRS to procure a new system means that BFRS will also have to identify the most appropriate arrangements for the future provision of its emergency call handling and mobilisation requirements when the current contract concludes.

2. Proposed Approach

- 2.1. The procurement and implementation of an emergency call handling and mobilisation system is a major project within a complex area of rapidly developing technology. Over recent years a number of fire and rescue projects for replacement mobilising systems have encountered delays and technical problems (including our own current replacement mobilising system project).
- 2.2. Preliminary investigation has highlighted that there are wide range of potential options for the future provision of emergency call handling and mobilisation for BFRS. These range from a 'stand-alone' BFRS system or a collaborative approach with other FRS or other emergency services, through to completely outsourcing emergency call handling and mobilisation.
- 2.3. Given the scale of the project and procurement process timescales it is essential to progress an options appraisal quickly as well as thoroughly.
- 2.4. In order to ensure that the FRA can make the best decision for our future mobilising provision it is considered appropriate to seek the assistance of specialist consultants to assist in an options appraisal. This has a number of potential benefits:
 - It will bring in specialist expertise and knowledge beyond that available in-house
 - It is likely to reduce the time taken to conduct an options appraisal
 - It will provide a measure of independence and transparency to the options appraisal

- It will assist in mitigating the risk associated with a complex risk critical decision
- 2.5. Discovery sessions have been held with prospective consultancies with suitable experience and expertise in this type of work and the Service is considering proposals with a view to selecting a company to undertake the work at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.6. It is proposed that the consultants undertake an initial data capture exercise enabling a long-list of potential options to be short-listed down to three options (by end of January 2018). There will then be detailed appraisal of the short-listed options aiming for a recommendation with supporting business case to be put to the FRA (by end of March 2018).
- 2.7. The consultancy work will explore a range of factors such as:
- Estimated cost to deliver the option (including ongoing costs)
 - Optimum life of the contract
 - Estimated delivery timescale
 - Project management & resource requirements
 - Procurement and legal constraints
 - Ability to utilise existing assets/infrastructure
 - System capabilities & concept of operations (e.g. resource management, system integration and AVLS)
 - Technical requirements
 - Resilience and fallback arrangements
 - Collaboration opportunities with other emergency services (now and in the future)
 - Technological solutions offered by the market (e.g. cloud based system)
 - ESN compliance and transition
 - Implementation and transition considerations (risks, benefits)
 - Interim extension of the current system and other contingency arrangement
- 2.8. Members should be aware that as the communications with prospective providers are still ongoing and no final proposal has been accepted there could be some change to the methodology and timeframe, which is partially dependent upon a range of external stakeholders.

3. Implications

- 3.1. The procurement of a call handling and mobilisation system has significant capital and revenue implications and budget provision has been included within the medium term financial plan. This may need to be revised as dependent upon the outcome of the options appraisal and future tendering process.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1. It is recommended that the FRA endorse the options appraisal approach for the future provision of emergency call handling and mobilisation set out in this paper.

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