



OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

# Emergency Services Mobile Communication - Assurance partner

## Executive Committee

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Date: 3 August 2020

Agenda Item:

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Submitted By: Director of Service Support

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- Purpose** To update members on the decision to award West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) assurance partner status for the Emergency Services Mobile Communication programme (ESMP) and the additional funding arrangements
- Recommendations** Note the decision to award WYFRS assurance partner status and approve the recruitment of staff and the extension of existing contracts to deliver this programme
- Summary** Following an extensive planning and auditing process of WYFRS, the ESMCP has formally confirmed that WYFRS has been selected as one of only 5 Emergency Services to become an assurance partner for the delivery of the Emergency services network (ESN). This decision demonstrates WYFRS's proven track record of delivering consistent high performance and continued confidence from the Programme and will provide WYFRS additional funding that will enable WYFRS to transition onto ESN. As a consequence, we will have direct support from the programme, allowing us to technically host operational assurance activities in conjunction with the Programme, becoming one of the first Fire and Rescues services in the country to operate under ESN.

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Local Government (Access to information) Act 1972

Exemption Category: None

Contact Officer: Director of Service Support

Background papers open to inspection: None

Annexes: None

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Home Office is leading the cross-government programme to deliver the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) critical communications system. This will replace the current Airwave service used by the emergency services in Great Britain.
- 1.2 The strategic aim of ESMCP is to deliver a much better voice and data service to the emergency services. It will replace the reliable but limited and ageing Airwave system. Customers for the ESN include the 3 Emergency Services (3ES), Fire and Rescue, Police and Ambulance services as well as a range of other users stretching from local authorities and utility services to first responders.
- 1.3 A programme review into ESMCP was completed in early 2019. The review undertook an in-depth and exhaustive analysis of all the benefits and risks of continuing with the programme. The review demonstrated conclusively that ESN is the right strategic choice to replace the existing Airwave network, but that a new delivery direction was needed to ensure that the emergency services benefit from the new network as soon as possible.
- 1.4 From the outset of ESN, WYFRS has adopted a leading role within the Fire sector, supporting the planning and delivery of ESN as the Yorkshire and Humber regional leads and more recently by undertaking a pilot of functionality known as Direct 2 through our CLM Watch Managers.
- 1.5 The key benefits of taking a leading role will allow us to receive expert technical support directly from the programme, shape the implementation and user benefits on behalf of the sector, as well as receiving additional funding as detailed under section 4.

## **2 Information**

- 2.1 As a result of our positive working relationship with the programme, WYFRS were agreed as the Fire sector nomination to become Assurance Partner to test, evaluate and assure ESN on behalf of all FRSs as well as part of a collective effort involving all 3ES.
- 2.2 Following our nomination, the programme undertook a period of due diligence and significant detailed planning assessing our ability to achieve the required technical readiness timelines for Operational Assurance, by satisfying Operational Validation and Operational Evaluation technical requirements.
- 2.3 On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020, CFO Roberts received confirmation from the Programme of our selection as an Assurance partner for the ESN along with Merseyside FRS, South West Police (Avon & Somerset Police as tech hosts), North West police (Cheshire Police as Tech hosts) and the Ambulance Radio Programme.
- 2.4 For the purpose of ESMCP, an Assurance Partner is defined as an organisation that will support programme Operational Assurance activities, and the production of corporate information and evidence for the acceptance of ESN by the emergency services. An Assurance Partner will:
- Technically mobilise, and on-board and enrol to ESN early
  - Where required, act as a host or hub organisation for other User Organisations across the 3ES within their region to participate in or observe operational assurance activities

- Have capacity to support Mobilisation and Operational Assurance activities
- Provide a source of good practice to all ESN organisations in terms of preparedness, mobilisation and transition

2.5 The decision to award WYFRS as an Assurance partner continues to support our place at the forefront of the Fire sector and cements our current position within the programme. It provides further opportunity for local employment to enable us to deliver the Assurance Partner role.

2.6 It should be noted that the resilience of WYFRS mobile communications during this process will be maintained through the current Airwave network. The Airwave will only be removed when all the required assurance measures have been confirmed and a comprehensive testing process completed.

### 3 Financial Implications

3.1 WYFRS financial governance of ESN is provided through both the Finance and Resources and Audit Committees where assurance of accounts and expenditure is reported.

3.2 The ESN Programme recognises the commitment of being an AP organisation and the significance of Operational Assurance to the ESN Programme’s critical path, and as such have provided a funding model for incentivising Operational Assurance activity to a level which is both feasible to the ESN Programme and satisfactory to the 3ES and their representative AP organisations.

3.3 The below table outlines for the funding available to WYFRS. It should be noted that further funding of approximately £300k will also be available as we transition in to the mobilisation phase of the project.

	Mobilisation costs incurred	Funding available
<b>Category 1</b>	Project Management, Change Management, Training	Up to £10k per month available to draw down per Service for maximum 18 months.
<b>Category 2</b>	Technical Support	Up to £7.5k per month available to draw down per Service for maximum 18 months.
<b>Category 3</b>	Facilities, estates and overheads	Up to £30k to draw down per Service over the entire 18-month period.
<b>Total maximum funding available (categories 1,2 and 3)</b>		<b>£345k per Service over 18-month period.</b>

3.4 WYFRS will be required to evidence spend (invoices sent to the ESN Programme on a quarterly basis) in order to draw down upon the funding available. Spend levels will be reviewed by the ESN Programme every 3 months in order to assess the continuing value for money.

3.5 Timelines for the implementation of this proposed funding mechanism are from 1st August 2020 onwards, from which time funding will be available to support Assurance Partner organisations continued technical mobilisation.

## 4 Legal Implications

The Chief Legal & Governance Officer has considered this report and has no observations to make at the time of submission of this report but may provide legal advice at the committee meeting and/or respond to any requests by members for legal advice made at the meeting.

## 5 Human Resource and Diversity Implications

5.1 We will be required to recruit to implement and support the delivery of ESN. The initial 4 posts are for 18 months and will be filled subject to a recruitment process. Furthermore, we require an extension of the additional fixed term service desk position until January 2021 to support the infrastructure team during this validation period.

OVERVIEW OF INITIAL POSTS	
POST	GRADE/RANK
Project Support	Station Manager (A)
Business Change Ambassador	Station Manager (A)
Technical Authority X2	7
Service desk support	5 - Contact extension to Jan 2021

## 6 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Implications

6.1 ESN will drive improved Incident management through more efficient incident information transfer, whilst pushing the boundaries of traditional communication methods.

6.2 Training and development of staff on the ESN will improve understanding of how we manage incidents and continue to develop our employees in the state-of-the-art communications.

## **7 Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 Due to the need to assure the coverage of the ESN there will be an increase in vehicle usage for approximately 3 months as we test coverage across West Yorkshire.

## **8 Your Fire and Rescue Service Priorities**

- 8.1 Continue to keep Fire fighters safe.
- 8.2 Support and enable our people to be at their best.
- 8.3 Work smarter throughout our Service.
- 8.4 Make better use of technology and innovate where possible.

## **9 Conclusions**

- 9.1 The ESMCP's decision to award WYFRS as an assurance partner demonstrates the position of WFFRS within the Fire sector and underlines the commitment and technical ability of our employees to deliver the competence required to be an assurance partner. The opportunity to further develop our employees and prepare WYFRS for the transaction to ESN with direct technical support from the programme positions WYFRS at the forefront of 3 ES communications programme.
- 9.2 To enable WYFRS to deliver our role as an assurance partner we will be required to recruit an initial 4 posts on a full time contract for 18 months and extend an existing contract until January 2021. Funding for these positions will be provided by the programme and subject to audit through the finance and resource committee.