

For Information	
Public/Non-Public	Public
Report to:	Strategic Resources and Performance Meeting
Date of Meeting:	19th July 2021
Report of:	Emergency Services Network (ESN)
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Agenda Item:	3

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Emergency Services Network (ESN)

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Strategic Resources and Performance meeting about progress to deliver the Emergency Services Network (ESN), nationally, regionally and locally.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Nottinghamshire Police continues to plan and prepare for mobilisation activities in readiness for transition onto ESN in line with national timescales, and to deliver an operationally viable critical communications capability over ESN.
- 2.2 Nottinghamshire Police continues to work closely with national and regional ESN Programmes to undertake current mobilisation (i.e. preparatory) activities and to inform future resource and budgetary requirements.
- 2.3 Nottinghamshire Police support the ongoing funding and resource requirement referred to in the East Midlands Regional Collaboration Agreement.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To ensure that Nottinghamshire Police continues to prepare for the implementation of ESN through engagement with the national and regional ESN Programme to identify and complete mobilisation and transition activities.
- 3.2 To ensure an effective and efficient transition from Airwave onto ESN to keep members of the public and frontline officers and staff safe by delivering an operationally viable, mission critical push-to-talk communications system.
- 3.3 Critical communications are vital to the police service. It is the enabling capability most relied upon by all police service organisations and their staff. ESMCP has proved to be more difficult and complex than anyone imagined. It was begun as one of the first such programmes in the World, but as others have followed, so they have caught up. Whilst disappointing, that fact has reassured the UK Government that it is the right thing to do, despite the challenges. It was originally intended that transition from Airwave and onto ESN

would be complete by the end of 2019. At that time of writing, that has been revised to the end of 2026 in the most up to date business case. As the challenges have grown, so has the need for the Police Service to remain central to the Programme. The scale and complexity of Police use of critical communications, mean that the risks the service, our people and the public, could face from ESN failures, have become more evident as time has passed. The Police Service requires a clear, robust and comprehensive approach to accepting ESN into service. This approach also enables the police service to work very closely with the Home Office led Programme, which is the system integrator. It enables close working with the other emergency services and devolved Governments. As well as the Service having a team dedicated to ESN at the centre, each region has its own capability. These vary according to local agreements. The regional structures can influence the national approach through the police governance structure and each region is represented at every level of that.

4. Summary of Key Points (this should include background information and options appraisal if applicable)

- 4.1 The Home Office is leading the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) that is working across administrations and departments to deliver the new (ESN) critical communications system. This will replace the current Airwave service used by the emergency services in Great Britain.
- 4.2 Customers for ESN will include the Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services as well as a range of other users stretching from Local Authorities and utility services to first responders like inshore rescue. There will be potentially around 300,000 individuals who will depend on ESN nationally, using handheld devices or operating equipment in 50,000 vehicles, 115 aircraft and 200 control rooms.
- 4.3 The coverage that ESN will be built on will be provided by EE who are upgrading their existing commercial network, including deploying more 4G radio frequencies in rural areas, and building around 500 new network sites. The national Programme has previously also awarded contracts to Samsung and Motorola to deliver other elements of the programme. All forces will need to upgrade their control rooms and consider implications for their wider force technology infrastructure in order to be ready for transition on to ESN.
- 4.4 The five forces have agreed to collectively deliver mobilisation and adoption of ESN within the East Midlands police region under a legal collaboration agreement (i.e. commitment to work collectively), signed by the five Chief Constables and PCCs. This includes a regionally funded programme team and governance structure overseen by a regional Senior Responsible Owner at Deputy Chief Constable level. The five forces are each responsible for ensuring that they also have local force project resources in place.

- 4.5 In Nottinghamshire Police, the local ESN project has an established governance structure overseen by the Deputy Chief Constable, with a Strategic Lead / Operational Business Change Manager who is supported by various technical and operational work stream leads. The team has regular programme delivery and technical meetings aligned to regional and national governance, to ensure that work is completed to a timely manner and that the force has appropriate influence nationally.
- 4.6 The programme will deliver cutting edge technology and is highly complex. It is imperative for the local project team to maintain close working relationships with regional and national programme teams to ensure operational requirements will be delivered by the national programme that are fit-for-purpose for Nottinghamshire.
- 4.7 The strategic intention of Nottinghamshire Police is to adopt critical voice communication at the commencement of ESN 'go-live' and to exploit data opportunities thereafter, trialling and innovating with new technology which will run alongside ESN. This will allow Nottinghamshire to maximise new technologies to deliver more effective operational communications and technical infrastructure.
- 4.8 Mobilisation activities remain ongoing through numerous operational and technical work streams to ensure that the force will be ready to commence transition aligned to national timescales.
- 4.9 Nationally, the police service working assumption is forces will each require a 12-month period of transition during the 31 months prior to Airwave National Shutdown (NSD) in December 2026.
- 4.10 The current predicted commencement of transition onto ESN for Nottinghamshire Police is Q2 2024.

5. Financial Implications and Budget Provision

- 5.1 The affordability of ESN to the police service and to police forces is a key consideration. It is vital that implementing ESN into operational use can be achieved without having to cut corners because of its cost and without adversely affecting wider service delivery because financial resources need to be diverted into ESN from other funding requirements in police forces. It is important that ESN, which is a government programme, is affordable to police forces.
- 5.2 The overall cost of the programme to policing will include both core and non-core costs and the impact of any reallocations between these categories as well as those concerned with keeping Airwave running until it is safe to rely solely upon ESN.

- 5.3 In support of the national police governance structure for ESMCP, its Chief Constable lead and the NPEC, the Police Finance reference Group (PEFRG) will ensure wider understanding of the above financial considerations through the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), the NPCC Finance Coordination Committee, Police and Crime Commissioner's Treasurers' Society (PACCTS), ESMCP CCRG and Gold governance groups.
- 5.4 The financial model will enable local Forces to assess and make arrangements for the affordability and financial implications of transition in the medium-term. This will include the costs, cashable savings and productivity benefits attached to deploying ESN and relying on it as the critical communications capability for the service.
- 5.5 As the primary contributor to core programme costs and the bearer of the greatest locally borne non-core costs, the police service needs to ensure that it can influence the Programme in a manner which is commensurate with those contributions. The demands upon national and local budgets will increase as delivery gathers pace.
- 5.6 The national Full Business Case has been separated into two key elements; strategic and financial. The strategic business case continues to receive national endorsement at governmental level and is viewed as the correct strategic direction to deliver a critical communications system.
- 5.7 In terms of the financial business case, work remains ongoing at a national level to refine core and non-core costs, which the programme anticipates will be completed by July 2021 when the FBC will be reviewed by the Home Office Major Programme Review Group (MPRG).
- 5.8 The East Midlands Regional Programme is represented on the national ESMCP Finance Working Group to ensure an effective two-way conduit between local, regional and national stakeholders, including local Chief Finance Officers. The service is keen to secure accurate financial information that will enable us to fully understand and mitigate financial risks and issues. The national programme maintains that ESN remains the most cost-effective solution, having considered a range of options, including cessation, suspension, and remaining on current technology.

An additional budget has been allocated to maintain our force stock of Airwave communications devices given delays to the ESN programme nationally. These devices are critical in maintaining communications between all front-line officers and control rooms. This resilience funding will ensure an ongoing supply of our current devices, as well as investing in the future with new technology and the next generation of devices, pending the availability of the new ESN communication device.

- 5.9 There are implications for Nottinghamshire Police associated with the uplift of 280 new recruits over the next 18 months. There is a significant cost implication to procure the additional airwave handsets, which is currently being addressed.

6. Human Resources Implications

- 6.1 A plan will need to be sequenced for the mobilisation, implementation and training for the transition onto ESN. This is likely to be at a time when the force is recruiting additional officers. Once more information is available (i.e. approved national police service mobilisation plan) a detailed resource requirements plan will be developed to ensure specialist capabilities are available, such as technical subject matter experts and Learning and Development resources.
- 6.2 Nottinghamshire Police will be required to provide local resources for a number of key roles in order to ensure it has the capacity and capability to implement ESN. They will also be required to continue the support of secondments to the Regional ESN Programme Team although funding of these is through the 5 Force formulae.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1 None foreseen at present. It is envisaged that the new digital ESN will provide a modern digital platform that will enable more flexible and agile working to further support force equality and diversity strategies.
- 7.2 The Equalities Act 2010 created the Public Sector Equality Duty that ensures all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunity for all. It places a duty on all public bodies to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work.
- 7.3 The three aims of the Equality Duty are to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Consideration of these three aims must form an integral part of the decision-making process in ESN.
- 7.4 The requirement to advance equality of opportunity involves considering the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics, meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life, or in other activities where their participation is low.
- 7.5 The Programme has to ensure that the needs of people with protected characteristics continue to be considered in the design of all ESN products. This will not be achieved by conducting an Equality Impact Assessment in the later stages of the programme but needs to be proportionately considered at all stages. The Programme will need to record the steps it has taken and the decisions it has made to ensure that no one with protected characteristics in the Act is disadvantaged. The nature of ESN as an Android platform lends itself far more to the needs of people with protected characteristics than Airwave and there is an opportunity that should not be missed to ensure it is developed in a way that supports diversity in the work place.

An evidence base to show that the Programme has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that its equality duties are met, will need to be made available to

police decision makers. Police decision makers will need to review the evidence and ensure that if there are issues that affect ESN users widely, that the programme mitigates them. If there are issues which affect individual user organisation, those organisations will need to take the steps necessary to comply with their duties. Work on this area will need to ensure that the needs of all the public can be met.

- 7.6 The thematic lead for equalities is developing the service position, in co-operation with the Programme lead.

8. Risk Management

- 8.1 Risks and issues are managed and escalated through local, regional and national programme governance in accordance with Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) principles.

9. Policy Implications and links to the Police and Crime Plan Priorities

- 9.1 Chief Constables and Police and Crime (and Fire) Commissioners (PCC) have duties under the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). It will be important that the Home Office delivers capabilities which enable continued compliance with those duties and that, in accepting ESN into operational use, Chief Constables and PCCs are satisfied that their ability to comply is not undermined by ESN.

10. Changes in Legislation or other Legal Considerations

- 10.1 N/A

11. Details of outcome of consultation

- 11.1 N/A

12. Appendices

- 12.1 N/A

13. Background Papers (relevant for Police and Crime Panel Only)

13. N/A

NB

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