

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>1 NOVEMBER 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROJECT UPDATE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>TONY VINCENT, HEAD OF BUSINESS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update and assessment of the progress of the National Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and delivery of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that will replace the current Airwave provision.
- 1.2 The report addresses the current situation set forth by the National Programme (NP) and the RBFRS and ESMCP South Central Region input to this. The report summarises our cautious welcome of the formal adoption of an incremental approach of delivering the Emergency Services Network (ESN) and the extension of the current Airwave system that ESN will replace.
- 1.3 In this context the report highlights work now taking place to ensure that RBFRS, alongside Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) can adopt ESN whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to absorb any National Programme schedule changes and minimising risk to overall service provision across the region.
- 1.4 Updates are provided on the NP and its governance as well as the regional and service governance approach and progress on work-streams in the SC Region.
- 1.5 Finally, the report provides an update on RBFA Correspondence with Sir Phillip Rutnam, Home Office Permanent Secretary and his response.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Audit and Governance Committee **NOTE** this report.

## **3. REPORT**

### **3.1 National Programme Status and Timeline**

3.1.1 The ESMCP National Programme (NP) has now formally announced at high level its approach to the delivery of the proposed Emergency Services Network (ESN). The announcement can be found via the link provided in section [11.1](#) of this report.

3.1.2 NP timescales, alongside the approach to delivery, have been reviewed and restated on the basis of the formally adopted incremental approach to availability of ESN services, which was announced officially by the Home Office on 21 September of this year. The currently understood timescales for delivery are included as appendix A.

3.1.3 On the 16 May 2018 RBFRS (along with all other fire services) received a consultation questionnaire from the NFCC team working within the programme. This questionnaire was designed to gauge services appetite for adoption of specific ESN products as set out in the previous report of 26 July 2018. A return was required by 05 June 2018 and the NFCC team recognised that returns would have a low level of assurance and would be indicative only and based on a range of assumptions.

3.1.4 The NP requested further information in September 2018. The nature of this request was to refine to a higher degree of certainty the likely adoption profile for each FRS. RBFRS, in line with Thames Valley and South Central region partner organisations, did not provide any updated information, as it had been made very clear in the initial submission that additional certainty would only be possible if further information was provided by the NP to address the assumptions having to be made at a service level. This information, regarding costs, transition arrangements and hardened timescales, had not been forthcoming from the NP at the time of the second consultation request.

3.1.5 Separately, to the options appraisal, the NP are reviewing the Full Business Case (FBC) for the ESN. Review of the FBC is now anticipated to be completed by the end of 2018 but will still be subject to agreement within the Home Office, so we do not anticipate a decision and publication until the New Year. Visibility of the FBC should be considered a pre-requisite for RBFRS, other Thames Valley FRS, Thames Valley Fire Control Services and the other partner organisations within the South Central region for:

- Establishing the cost impacts of migration to ESN.
- Establishing the specific timing of any adoption activities across the region and.

- Creating and managing a fully detailed plan to execute adoption activities in concert with other associated strategic projects. It is therefore important that RBFRS continues to work with all interested parties to maintain the maximum possible planning flexibility and to keep as many options for execution open as possible.

3.1.6 The latest information regarding planned cessation of the existing Airwave network has been indicated as being at the end of 2022. This is a change from previous indications of “seven to ten years” from 2018 (i.e. 2025-2028).

3.1.7 The original cessation window was used as an assumption for planning purposes to guide RBFRS/TVFCS approach to ESN migration, taking into account dependant projects and contract renewals falling within the ESN adoption window. The publication and subsequent analysis of the FBC remain the most significant impediment to effective planning for deployment. It is therefore unlikely that any planning decisions associated with ESN adoption can be formulated and recommended for approval before the FBC is published.

3.1.8 There has been no material change to the consensus position amongst engaged FRS’ in the South Central region that:

- Exploitation of increased data capacity and device functionality will require significant change to FRS ways of working that will require lengthy business and cultural change processes to be undertaken. It is positive that the NP recognise this is a change programme not just a technology programme.
- Currently, products earlier in the lifecycle offer little material benefit or compelling business case when compared to existing commercially available solutions; particularly as some earlier service offerings provide no clear update/upgrade path to later, more fully featured products.
- Lack of clarity regarding pricing of ESN products is a significant deterrent to committing, particularly where existing commercial solutions are offered at a highly competitive cost.
- Lack of clarity regarding transitional arrangement and interoperability is a significant deterrent to committing, particularly from a Control perspective, but also in terms of overall digital and device strategies.
- Lack of clarity regarding overall cost envelope is a cause for concern, particularly in terms of ongoing Airwave costs and where funding sources are intended to be derived.
- Currently, there is limited interest in any ESN product until the full suite solution (ESN Prime) becomes available (currently scheduled for Q3 2020)

- TVFCS control systems become a significant strategic factor in planning for any product adoption due to current contractual arrangements and life expectancy of the current solution.
- The window of opportunity for migration appears to be at some point between availability of ESN prime and the Airwave termination window opening, i.e. some point between Q3 2020 and Q4 2022.
- Until we know more about costs and operating benefits of earlier product sets, there is little to be gained in committing to early adoption. We will keep an open mind and remain flexible to early adoption where the business case and opportunity is valid.

3.1.9 To inform decision making on when the service should move to ESN, officers are undertaking ongoing assessments of current technology provision and timing for when we may wish to complete upgrades and renewal of systems. These assessments remain ongoing as officers are adapting to the developing information coming from the NP.

3.1.10 This approach has allowed for development of potential options for timing of migration to ESN and will inform further discussion internally and across the TVFCS partnership. As previously stated, greater clarity from the NP is required in order to bring forward a full option appraisal and recommendations through the appropriate governance routes of Fire Authority and TVFCS Joint Committee.

3.1.11 We are currently applying a working assumption that transition to full ESN is implemented no later than 12 months prior to the confirmed Airwave cessation date. This allows for assessment of viability of achieving delivery in context of other commitments and our wider technology needs. It also allows for a prudent period of overlap between the old and new systems. This assumption would put RBFRS, TV FRS and TVFCS provisional adoption date as end of 2021. To be clear these dates are purely for us to assess viability, challenges and risks of delivery against a forecast timeline and to develop our thinking with colleagues internally and across the Thames Valley.

3.1.12 In the report of 26 July 2018, it was stated that a letter jointly signed by the Chairman of the Fire Authority and the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee would be sent to the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. The purpose of this letter was to urge the prioritisation and early publication of the full business case referred to in earlier sections of this report. Prior to signing and sending of this letter (included as appendix B), the NFCC and LGA jointly signed and sent a letter urging the same prioritisation. In light of this, the letter from RBFA was redrafted to reflect support for the NFCC/LGA position and request. This letter was approved and signed by the Chairman of the Audit of Governance Committee and The Chairman of the Fire Authority and sent to the Permanent Secretary. The redrafted letter is included as appendix C for information. On the 15<sup>th</sup>

October 2018 The Permanent Secretary to the Home Office responded to the RBFA letter. The response is included within this report as appendix D.

## **3.2 Governance**

- 3.2.1 The service continues to have clear internal arrangements for managing our commitment to ESMCP work-streams. DCFO Steve Foye acts as the Senior Responsible Owner for RBFRS with the Head of Business Information and Systems, Tony Vincent, being the internal project sponsor and the project manager role being filled by ICT Service Delivery Manager Lee Arslett. An internal project group meets regularly and provides a highlight report to the RBFRS Programme Board.
- 3.2.2 An ESMCP South Central (SC) Regional Programme Board continues to operate. This is one of a number of ESMCP FRS regions across the UK. The SC Board meets monthly and comprises senior representation from the three Thames Valley FRS's alongside Hampshire and the Isle-of-Wight FRS's. Through this regional approach services have been able to share and align resources to meet the needs of the key ESMCP work-streams. The change to an incremental approach to delivery of ESN has brought into question the need for a regional delivery group. This is because its original creation was to support the regional implementation model of the ESN (the now discounted Option A). However, there is consensus between the NFCC team and the lead officers from across the regional boards to retain the regional arrangements at this time as it supports effective dialogue between the NP and FRS's as user organisations as well as enabling the continued sharing of resources across work-streams.
- 3.2.3 Through the SC Board relationships are maintained with other regional groups (South East Operational Response and Resilience Group); the South East and South West Regional Groups and leads from blue light leads in Police and Ambulance. This supports shared understanding and allows for consideration of opportunities for joint working and potential collaboration, such as on procurement.
- 3.2.4 Programme Management arrangements for the SC Board are delivered through Mott Macdonald using funding from the National Programme. This reduces individual project and programme resources in each service, allowing services to focus on delivery of work-streams. RBFRS take a lead on the technical work-streams and draw down costs from National Programme funding which is held by Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the services in the SC Region.
- 3.2.5 A dedicated team (funded by the NP) works within the NP and reports to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This team acts on behalf of the fire and rescue service within the NP; assures on FRS progress; and coordinates FRS responses to requests from the NP. To achieve this the team maintain relationships with FRS Regional leads through a Fire Customer Group (attended on behalf of South Central Region by DCFO Foye). The NFCC

team also support staff working within services in addressing questions and requirements of the NP.

### **3.3 Work Stream Updates**

#### **Control Rooms and Information Technology Health checks**

- 3.3.1 The DNSP connections are in place and tested. Charges for install and rental are currently funded through the NP and we are making the case that ongoing cover of rental should be in place until ESN provision is achieved by the NP.
- 3.3.2 Control Upgrades continue and are currently forecast for January.
- 3.3.3 A new product called Kodiak which provides a mission critical Press to talk capability is welcomed but will create new work. We are making the case that the NP should address any costs.
- 3.3.4 Incremental delivery may create opportunities and risks in terms of technology changes. We continue to monitor the change against our wider organisational technology plans to reduce risks and exploit opportunities.

#### **Devices**

- 3.3.5 A handheld device produced by Samsung has been selected through a procurement process. We await clarity of device cost but also note that the incremental approach is creating the opportunity for consumer off the shelf (COTS) devices to become a potential option. Device costs and future proofing will influence any decisions for timing of purchasing and deploying ESN devices in RBFRS.
- 3.3.6 Discussions associated with vehicle device procurement are ongoing.
- 3.3.7 Mobile Device Management (MDM) is now developing as a work stream to develop what service support arrangements are put in place to support device management. Our work-stream leads are involved in this work and the range of options being considered:

#### **Training**

- 3.3.8 No changes since last update.

#### **Fleet**

- 3.3.9 No changes since last update.

#### **Trials and Pilots**

- 3.3.10 No change since last update.

## **Coverage Assurance**

3.3.11 No change since last update.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 1 – We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.
- 4.2 Commitment 3 – We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings
- 4.3 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda
- 4.4 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Regional funding is overseen through the South Central Programme Board and services draw down funding to cover costs of work-streams leads and ancillary costs, such as attendance at ESMCP meetings etc. For 2017/18 RBFRS have drawn down circa £18K for specific work. Once the full business plan has been released we will review the financial implications to the service.
- 5.2 We have separate full funding from the National Programme for the control room upgrades and DNSP connections, based on the original delivery plan. With the change to the incremental delivery plan, we are seeking assurance that additional costs that may be incurred due to the extended delivery timelines will be met by the national programme.
- 5.3 All services received a request from the Fire and Resilience Directorate of the Home Office to complete a monitoring form on the utilisation of ESMCP Transition Grant Payments to the their service from 2015 to 2018. The Home Office is required to assess how value for money is being, and will be, achieved. A return was made following approval by Chief Finance Officer and Chief Fire Officer. We await conformation that Home Office are content with our return.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None at this time.

### **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None at this time.

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are 2 ESMCP specific risks logged on the Corporate Risk Register. The first of these, Risk ID 418, addresses our own internal provision of resource

and commitment. Failure to address this could significantly influence future operational response and the services use of technology to support incident command and joint emergency services operation. The second risk, ID 425, addresses the risk of the national programme failing to deliver the ESN.

- 8.2 Both risks have a range of treatments against them to reduce the likelihood or impact of the risk being realised at a service level. They are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to the Strategic Performance Board and the Audit and Governance Committee as necessary. As the programme makes a decision on which option it is adopting during 2018 and the detail surrounding this, we will consider how this influences the current risks or if any new risks are created.

## **9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 We work in partnership with FRS colleagues and those in other emergency services in our own region and across the wider South East and South West ESMCP regions. We will adopt any opportunities to collaborate that further the aims of the Fire Authority.

## **10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Senior Leadership team were consulted on this paper

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 [New Strategic direction for the Emergency Services Network \(ESN\)](#)

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 APPENDIX A – Currently Published ESN service availability schedule  
12.2 APPENDIX B – Original draft of letter to Home Office Permanent Secretary  
12.3 APPENDIX C – Redrafted letter to Home Office Permanent Secretary  
12.4 APPENDIX D – Response from Home Office Permanent Secretary

## **13. CONTACT DETAILS**

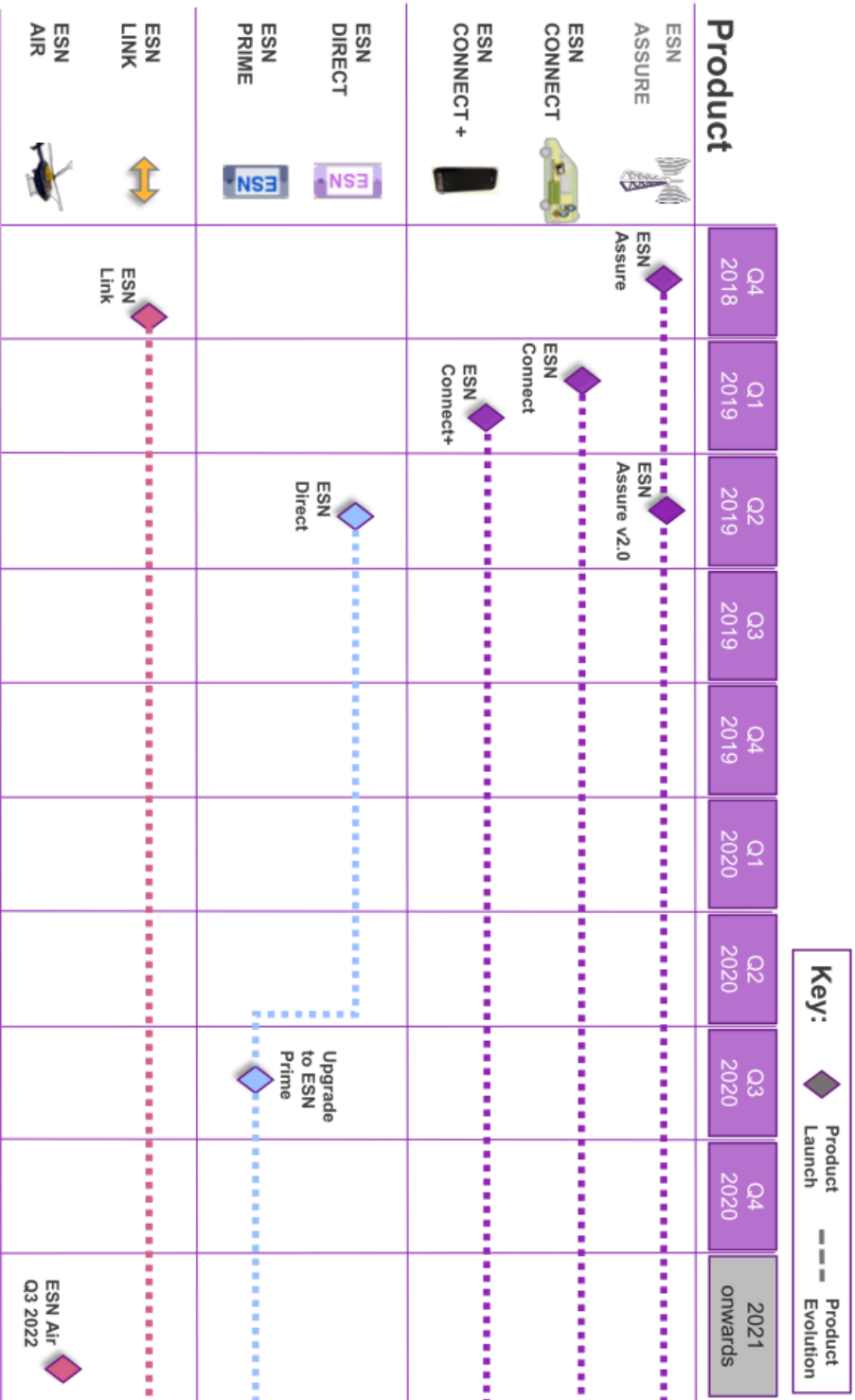
- 13.1 Tony Vincent – Head of Business Information & Systems. RBFRS Project sponsor  
0118 938 4600
- 13.2 Steve Foye - Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Director of Service Delivery  
0118 938 4800
- 13.3 Lee Arslett – ICT Service Delivery Manager. Technical and device lead for RBFRS and TVFCS  
0118 938 4705



# ESN Product Roadmap

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

DRAFT



## **APPENDIX B – Original draft of letter to Home Office Permanent Secretary**

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Sir Philip Rutnam  
Permanent Secretary  
The Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

31 July 2018

Dear Sir Philip Rutnam,

### **Re: Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme**

We are aware that the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) has been considering options for the future delivery model of the Emergency Services Network (ESN). We are also aware that a review of the underlying Business Case is taking place but is not due for completion until late 2018.

On behalf of the Fire Authority, we write to register our concerns and also to ask that you note and recognise that the continued uncertainty surrounding the programme and underlying business case does influence decision making at an Authority and Service level in respect of appetite and timing for the adoption of ESN products.

Greater clarity is required for the Authority to make informed decisions and we particularly want to be reassured as to the future operating capability (such as coverage assurance, capacity and availability), costs (including savings when compared to current Airwave provision) and benefits realisation that can be delivered through ESN.

On behalf of the Authority, we ask that the review of the underlying Business Case be completed and communicated at the earliest possible opportunity. This is particularly pressing given the recent work our officers have been undertaking to inform options for the future progression of ESN and which is being completed ahead of the Business Case review.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) and our Service are committed and continue to support the successful delivery of a replacement for the Airwave system. However, commitment to take on ESN remains subject to clarity on a range of factors and most notably, costs, coverage, availability and capacity. RBFA remain concerned that, without clarity on these matters, final approval for adoption of the ESN is more challenging.

Our officers continue to work positively and proactively to make the service ready for ESN. We support their engagement with the ESMCP Programme as an intelligent and engaged customer but ask that you note that Service resources directed to ESN work reduce focus on other important Service activity. We recognise that funding from the ESMCP programme has enabled delivery of activity across ESMCP work-streams to support Services readiness. We ask that you recognise that consideration will need to be given by the National Programme to on-going funding to match changes and additional work brought about by the Programme, including adoption of a different delivery model, changing timelines for delivery of ESN and outcomes of the Business Case review.

Yours Faithfully,

Colin Dudley  
Chairman  
RBFA

Iain McCracken  
Chairman  
RBFA Audit and Governance Committee

## APPENDIX C – Redrafted letter to Home Office Permanent Secretary

Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SD

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Sir Philip Rutnam  
Permanent Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4JA

24 September 2018

Dear Sir Philip,

### **Re: Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme**

We write following the letter sent to you by Roy Wilshire Chair, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Councillor Ian Stephens Chair, LGA Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) on the 21 August 2018.

As a Fire Authority we would like to place on record our support for the position set out on behalf of the NFCC and the FSMC and the concerns and issues that were raised which we would agree need urgent attention.

Not least of these is clarity on the future of the Section 31 Airwave grant after December 2019 so that we as a Fire and Rescue Authority can seek to agree a balanced budget for the 2019/20 financial year and beyond.

Our officers have endeavoured to inform the programmes recent development of an incremental approach to delivery - the so-called option B. However, we would reiterate that, without access to the finalised detail of the Full Business Case (FBC), our commitment to option B must be in principle at this time and limited until further detail is forthcoming from the programme. We would welcome sight of the FBC as soon as possible so that we can be assured of the viability, affordability and benefits realisation of ESN.

Again, we would mirror the NFCC and the LGA FSMC concerns on increased costs for transition, the affordability of ESN at a local level and the perception that ESN may subsequently cost the Fire and Rescue Service more than the current Airwave provision. Clearly, as a Fire Authority we must be assured that ESN remains affordable and cost effective without putting pressure on an already stretched budget.

Through our officers, we remain committed to working collaboratively to move forward with ESN. We trust that, as a User Organisation, our needs continue to be understood as an equitable stakeholder. Through our officers, and in support of NFCC and the ESMCP Programme Team, we continue to contribute as an intelligent and engaged customer.

Again we reiterate our support for the matters raised by the NFCC and the LGA FSMC in their letter of the 21 August 2018. We ask that you note that our resources directed to ESN reduce focus on other important Service activity. Consequently, improved clarity in respect to the FBC, developed plans for an incremental approach and future funding assurances will significantly assist in our management of risk.

Yours Faithfully,



Colin Dudley  
Chairman  
RBFRA



Iain McCracken  
Chairman  
RBFRA Audit and Governance Committee

## APPENDIX D – Response from Home Office Permanent Secretary



**Sir Philip Rutnam KCB**  
**Permanent Secretary**

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Colin Dudley and Iain McCracken  
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
Headquarters  
Newsham Court  
Pincents Kiln  
Calcot  
Reading RG31 72D

By email

15 October 2018

Dear Colin and Iain

### **Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)**

Thank you for your letter dated 24 September on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and for your continuing commitment to working in collaboration as we move forward with ESN. As you will be aware I am keen to maintain close engagement with the Fire and Rescue Service on ESN and recently attended the Fire Chiefs Council in Cardiff when I mentioned the Programme.

You will be aware that on the 21 September the Home Secretary announced that the review into the programme had concluded that ESN was the right strategic direction for communications in the emergency services. He also said that the Programme would now deliver ESN in an incremental way so that the new capabilities are available sooner to the Fire and Rescue Service. As we move forward I anticipate ESN will be able to make a significant contribution to digital transformation across the service in the years ahead.

I would also like to assure you that no risks will be taken with public safety and the Airwave network will continue until transition is complete, guaranteeing the Fire and Rescue Service continuous access to a critical communications network.


I recognise the need to understand of the details that make up the Full Business Case (FBC) in order to prepare for the next financial year, and that affordability is a concern for all involved. To help inform that process the Programme is turning the outcome of the reset exercise into a revision of the Full Business Case. That work will continue for the next few months.

While that work is completed, the Programme will produce a summary of the financial assumptions being used to develop the FBC, including the non-core assumptions that will impact organisation budgets at a local level. This is a working document that will continue to be updated as the FBC develops but should provide the details needed to complete preparations for the next financial year. If there are further finance related questions these can, of course, be raised directly with the programme.

With regards to Firelink, which will continue to provide communications until it is no longer required, it remains our intention to continue to support the new cost burdens to Fire and Rescue Services via the Section 31 Firelink grant.

As suggested by the Chair of the National Fire Chief's Council, Roy Wilsher, and the Chair of the LGA Fire Services Management Committee, Councillor Ian Stephens in their joint letter of 21 August, the Programme team would be happy to meet with you directly to discuss further the points made in both letters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Rutnam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Sir Philip Rutnam**  
**Permanent Secretary**