

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Fire Alliance Update: Fire Control Project

Purpose of report

1. To update the Fire Authority on progress of the Fire Alliance Fire Control Project.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the update, confirming the development of a new joint fire control system in partnership with Shropshire FRS, Cleveland FB and County Durham & Darlington FRS project has commenced.

Introduction and Background

2. At the Authority meeting on 15 February 2022 Members approved the utilisation of funding against the Fire Control reserve to secure an appropriate replacement command and control system.
3. Subsequently the Fire Alliance Board approved a project to procure a jointly funded single Command and Control system able to work across both Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWRFS) areas from two sites (Telford and Hindlip).
4. In October 2022 the project was re-scoped following an approach from Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) who asked us to consider involving them in the procurement process. This will make this project one of the largest collaborative Fire Control projects in the UK and introduces several new ways of working.

Progress to date

5. In January 2023, HWRFS commenced a full procurement process, acting as the lead authority on behalf of all four Services.
6. Following rigorous evaluation of submissions by representatives from all four Fire and Rescue Services, the panel recommended to the Chief Fire Officers that the contract be awarded to Motorola Solutions.
7. In June 2023, HWRFS, acting as lead authority on behalf of all four Services announced the intent to award a contract to Motorola Solutions who provide a single system and will build a Mobilising Hub which will be accessed over a secure internet link from each of the four control rooms.

8. At the Authority meeting on 18 October 2023 Members were provided with an overview of features of the new system that will bring about improvements to service delivery and enhanced resilience. Members noted and approved the decision to award the contract for a new joint Fire Control system to Motorola Solutions.
9. Following a period of negotiations, led by HWFRS, all four Services signed a 7-year contract with Motorola Solutions on 14 December 2023.
10. All four Services have also signed a collaboration agreement which sets out how both the project and the system will be managed over the lifetime of the contract with HWFRS continuing to act as the lead authority. For ease of reference the collective name for the group is the Integrated Fire Control Collaboration (IFCC).
11. Preparatory work commenced immediately with Motorola Solutions, and a formal project start-up meeting took place on 25 January 2024 with representatives from all four Services and the project team from Motorola. The new Fire Control mobilising system will be delivered within the next 2 years.
12. The contract allows for additional parties to join the IFCC hub and we have been approached by other FRSs expressing an interest in doing so. There have also been other FRSs interested in learning from our experience and considering the IFCC model in the future. The Service will fully explore any benefits and disbenefits in considering any such expansion. However, there may be the potential to make further cost savings, as well as further enhance resilience with the addition of compatible FRS partners.

Summary

13. The replacement Fire Control system will provide a more reliable, flexible and resilient product with increased functionality to better support the work of Fire Control staff. Furthermore, it will streamline the flow of information between the control rooms and to operational fire crews, which will mitigate risk to firefighters and the public.
14. By working in partnership with Cleveland and County Durham and Darlington Fire Authorities, the Fire Alliance has provided the opportunity to make significant cost savings, in comparison to procuring this system alone, which would have most likely been unaffordable. A paper to the Authority will follow outlining the efficiency and estimates of how effective this approach has been, but the early estimates indicate savings of several millions of pounds over the seven-year term.
15. This project allows the Service to provide the benefits of the most up to date technology to better support our communities, and will also improve our ability to scale up operations to deal with multiple calls and major incidents when required. This aligns with the expected outcomes and recommendations from recent high-profile national incidents.

16. Following contract sign-off the project commenced in January 2024, which is a significant milestone for the Service after many years of work. It demonstrates our commitment to provide a high-quality new mobilising system, alongside three partner Fire Services and represents a new way of collaborating and delivering a resilient Fire Control system, whilst maintaining mobilising teams in each Service.

Corporate Considerations

<p>Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).</p>	<p>Budget provision already agreed and approved by the Fire Authority.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics).</p>	<p>Links to delivery of the CRMP and HWFRS Core Strategies of; Response, Prevention, and Protection.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>Not required at this stage of the project.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).</p>	<p>Wide consultation has been carried out with all stakeholders.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).</p>	<p>Not required at this stage of the project.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).</p>	<p>DPIAs are all aligned to current standards and Codes of Compliance for the current system and will be refreshed when the data transfer is completed against the project timeline.</p>