WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	23
MEETING	CFA
MEETING DATE	12 June 2104
SUBJECT OF REPORT	Networked Fire Control Services Partnership & Joint Command & Control Centre
LEAD OFFICER	Simon Routh-Jones, Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that Members NOTE the contents of the report
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report provides Members with an update on the setting up of the Joint Command and Control Centre (JCCC) and the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP). The timing of the 'go live' for handling both Authorities' calls in the Joint Command and Control Centre will be dependent on the implementation schedule of the NFCSP. Where possible the difference in procedures will be minimised, ways of working will be aligned and harmonised but individual variation will be allowed, where necessary, in line with the two IRMPs. The wider operational approaches will be taken into account to ensure that an effective and appropriate mobilisation service is provided, but there will be some impact on operational crews and other teams.
APPENDICES	Appendix A: Summary of combined fire controls nationally

Introduction

JCCC

1 In December 2013, both Dorset and Wiltshire's Fire Authorities agreed to establish a Joint Command and Control Centre (JCCC) in Potterne, Devizes. This will serve a combined population of 1.4 million people, cover an area of 2,400 square miles and will be handling over 14,000 Emergency calls.

2 A project team is now well established and working to resolve the technical solution, human resources issues and agree new ways of working for the two Services. Sometimes, the development of the NFCSP system provides the technical solution and an agreed way of working across the Partnership, but frequently the JCCC builds upon and develops further harmonisation between Wiltshire and Dorset.

3 As a consequence of the decision to set up a Joint Centre, the Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP) architecture was changed to reflect a three site model and, as such, no mobilisation equipment is planned to be installed in Dorset. The shape of the Partnership will now be three sites of a broadly similar scale, providing increased resilience and improving confidence in call handling and incident management across the Partnership.

NFCSP

4 The NFCSP was established to provide a collaborative approach to the provision of fire control services for Devon and Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire fire and rescue services. The business benefits and potential for future commercial developments afforded by the partnership have prompted the partnership strapline of 'One System, Many Opportunities.'

5 Devon and Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authorities currently operate their own control rooms and call handling and mobilising systems. Each Fire and Rescue Authority maintains a secondary control facility and has a fallback arrangement with another Fire and Rescue Authority. These fallback arrangements have recently been changed so that Devon and Somerset and Hampshire support ('buddy') each other, as do Dorset and Wiltshire.

6 The four Fire and Rescue Authorities are in the process of implementing a new resilient call handling and mobilising system which will be a single system networked to serve three control rooms. The new system will enable each Fire and Rescue Authority to fallback to any of the others in the event of spate conditions or non-availability of their fire control. It will provide a full voice and data communications capability using the Airwave network, enhanced information service and an automatic location service for emergency calls, which will reduce emergency call handling times, and an automatic vehicle location system, which will ensure the nearest appropriate resource is mobilised to an incident. The procurement for a replacement command and control system, integrated communications control system and automatic call distribution was completed on 15 July 2013 and the contract was awarded to Capita Secure Information Solutions Ltd (Capita). The replacement system

extends to the operation of mobile data terminals and provides for incident messages and risk information to be sent to crews, contributing to safety improvements. Common operating procedures and ways of working are being developed and implemented already.

Delivery

JCCC

7 To date, delivery of the project is progressing well, with a number of key activities underway:

- Regular meetings are being held with both staff and the accredited representative bodies to communicate progress and follow an agreed consultation process.
- Proposals to harmonise some of our policies and procedures, for example, work is underway to agree a joint policy for dealing with Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) in both Services.
- Work has commenced to re-number our Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be the same; this would substantially aid the adoption of single procedures, if the wider combination were to go ahead.
- New technological solutions are continuing to be explored and both services are considering upgrading their Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) hardware to ensure that they are resilient and able to cope with the demands of the new Command and Control system.
- Fire Control staff from both Services have volunteered to be part of a JCCC User Group and the inaugural meeting will be at the end of June.
- The number of interfaces and functions, over and above the emergency call handling functions, are being explored and the User Group will be pivotal in ensuring that Control staff have an input into how these activities are carried out in the future.
- One of the key interfaces is the Retained availability System, Gartan, which is used by both Wiltshire and Dorset. Wiltshire are leading on developing an interface into the new command and control system for the partnership. For the JCCC project we are examining whether we can reduce the number of licences from two to one and combine the Dorset and Wiltshire business rules so that JCCC operators only need to log onto one system.
- One of the underlying principles of this project is that, we will, wherever possible align our processes and procedures prior to the JCCC handling both services' calls to make the application of our call handling procedures efficient and effective.

NFCSP

8 To date, delivery of the project is progressing well, with a number of key activities already completed or underway:

- Agreement of the technical and functional design of the system (Critical Design Review). This was delayed initially as a consequence of the decision to change from a four to a three FRS/site model, and is the largest payment milestone for the project (20% of contract value).
- Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT) undertaken in April with some re-testing scheduled for mid-June
- Training System deployed in Hampshire, and access to the Reference System ('Sandpit') provided for each FRS.
- SAN H (Airwave radio) installed and commissioned at Hampshire and Devon and Somerset
- Main computer equipment has been delivered to Devon & Somerset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire (JCCC), with installation already underway at all three sites.
- Training courses delivered to System Administrators, FRS Trainers and all Hampshire control operators.
- The Wide Area Network has been fully configured, tested and formally handed over to Capita. This network links partnership control centres and is provided by Virgin Media.

Implementation timescales

JCCC & NFCSP

9 The go-live date for Wiltshire joining the NFCSP system has a direct impact on the commencement date of the JCCC being able to handle calls for both Services. When members were last updated in June 2013 immediately following the NFCSP contract award, it was anticipated that the first FRS would cutover in March 2014 and that full network operation would commence in November 2014. Current planning assumptions are that the first FRS (Hampshire) will now go live in October/November 2014, with Wiltshire going live last in February 2015. Dorset will then subsequently transfer into the JCCC, at which stage the transition will be complete and the network will be capable of full operation.

Challenges

10 As can be anticipated with projects of this nature and complexity, there are challenges to successful delivery, key of which are:

- Both services still struggle to maintain minimum crewing and rely on staff to provide additional cover and duty exchanges to ensure that cover is maintained at an adequate level.
- Provision of hardware – for example appliances and small vehicles having the provision to give route mapping data, have access to operational risk information,

provided with an automatic vehicle location system, have the ability to transmit and receive mobile data and with an Airwave radio capability.

- Provision of data - this was identified as a strategic risk early in the NFCSP project, and despite efforts to control and manage, still presents a major obstacle to timely delivery. It is understood that data was the main reason for the recent delay in go live for the North West Regional Control Centre. Officers from all four services continue to work together to ensure that the data required is supplied on time and to quality.

- It has been necessary to revise the NFCSP project timescales on a number of occasions, mainly due to the change from a four to a three FRS/site model, and some project activities taking longer to complete than planned (e.g. contractual negotiations, completion of Factory Acceptance Testing). It is possible that timescales will extend further, although this should only be in terms of weeks rather than months, and we are working closely with the supplier to plan accordingly.

- Interfaces to all third party systems are unlikely to be ready and available for go live, and provision is being made for alternative processes to be in place, so that operational efficiency is not compromised.

Looking forward

JCCC

11 The project team are sharing the learning from those services that have, or are about to, combine their controls and will build upon their experiences regarding HR, technical issues and ways of working (see Appendix A).

12 A detailed project plan is being refined which will inform the timescales for some of the technical requirements and also some of the HR issues, such as, when selection processes will take place and when formal consultation can commence.

13 Some of the issues around setting up the JCCC have potential impact on other teams and will impact on their capacity moving forward. As more issues are uncovered this will be identified and fed back into both Services planning assumptions. For example re-numbering the SOPs means making changes to the data warehouse, (Service Information System), development programmes, competence recording systems, training presentations, training hand-outs, Operational Key Information (OKI) files, MDTs, Operational Effectiveness database, development programmes, development programme files, H&S/AOR database, LRF documents and any references within MOUs, SLAs etc.

14 There are some implications that have far reaching consequences relating to policies, procedures and working practices. For example, currently both Dorset and Wiltshire have a station number 11 (Swindon & Gillingham). If the wider combination were to go ahead it would be more convenient to renumber all stations jointly.

15 The Joint Leadership Team (JLT) is considering the human resource issues around the JCCC project, and potentially these may set precedence for any wider combination.

NFCSP

16 The Project team are working closely with colleagues from other fire control projects across England, and in particular the Thames Valley Fire Control Service and East Coast and the Hertfordshire and East Coast Control Room Consortium, both of whom are involved in detailed negotiations with the Partnership around the provision of remote buddy/fallback partner services (See Appendix A).

17 Grant funding for the NFCSP was made available on the basis of improving resilience and efficiency, and some of the benefits stated in our original business case are already being realised. The benefits of the wider partnership approach, and the level of confidence in the system being supplied to the partnership, have facilitated and supported the collaborative work being undertaken by Dorset and Wiltshire as work continues towards establishing the JCCC.

Policy Implications

18 Some of the staffing issues around the setting up of the JCCC may set a precedence for the wider combination.

Risks

19 The Fire Authority has a statutory duty for handling calls and mobilising resources to emergencies and must ensure that Fire Control arrangements are resilient and safe. Delivery of the JCCC and NFCSP must ensure that these requirements are met.

As the NFCSP has experienced some delays, this means the setting up of the JCCC is also re-aligned. Although this has the benefit of allowing more time to agree the human resource (HR) issues, solve technical issues and converge new ways of working there is a risk that the timescales become much more closely aligned to the wider combination proposals.

In addition, some of the staffing issues around the setting up of the JCCC may set a precedence for the wider combination.

Control staff have been extremely proactive in providing additional cover and duty exchanges to ensure that adequate cover is maintained. However, there is a risk that there could be a shortfall in the numbers of Control staff available to carry out their duties in the Dorset control leading up to the handover of calls. Failure to deliver the JCCC and NFSC provide clear direction, focus and leadership through the plan would be detrimental to the effective and efficient operation of the service.

HR, Equality and Diversity Implications

20 None.

Environmental Implications

21 None.

Financial and Legal Implications

22 None, other than those mentioned above.

Combination Implications

23 None, other than those contained in the body of the report.

Recommendations

24 The Fire Authority is requested to NOTE the progress being made by the JCCC and NFCSP projects.

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Unpublished documents used in the preparation of this report:

None.

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Appendix A

Summary of combined fire controls nationally

Cambridgeshire and Suffolk

The first joint emergency control room, for Cambridgeshire and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authorities commenced on 25 October 2011, when Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority decommissioned it's fire control and transferred the function to Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Authority under a Section 16 (Fire Services Act) agreement. Out of the 23 staff previously employed in the Suffolk control room, five moved to the new merged service in Huntingdon. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) applied.

Isle of Wight and Surrey

The second joint emergency control room, for Surrey and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authorities, based at Reigate commenced in March 2012. An outsource model was used, with an agreed five year contract. Three staff moved from the Isle of White to Surrey. 'TUPE like' transfer costs were incurred.

North West Fire Control

Manchester, Cheshire and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authorities currently operate their own fire and rescue service control rooms. Cumbria transferred their control room function to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority on 1 June 2012 as part of the transition to the new fire control centre in Warrington; seventeen staff were initially made redundant. The NW Control was due to go live in March 2014 but still has not gone live. North West Fire Control is based at the Lingley Mere Business Park in Warrington. Staff numbers in the existing control rooms totalled 122 and the NW Fire Control has a finalised staffing structure of 61.5 full time equivalents. However, to achieve the 61.5 posts an external recruitment campaign took place.

East and West Sussex

East Sussex and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services have amalgamated their respective command and mobilising functions into a single control room function for the whole of Sussex. A Section 16 agreement was used on 1 May 2013 to allow for the TUPE transfer of the related staff. This has now taken place and staff were appointed/recruited to the new structure by the end of September 2013, which has 20 fewer posts than the two separate controls. Agreement with the trade unions was reached in July 2013 on terms and conditions and a further review will be undertaken in order to achieve further changes prior to January 2015.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service Programme

Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authorities currently operate their own control rooms and call handling and mobilising systems. Each has a secondary off-site control facility and

a manually operated fallback arrangement with each other. In August 2012, an approach was made by Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority to the Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire partnership to join the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Programme. All three Fire and Rescue Authorities have endorsed this approach and a legal agreement, similar to the existing Programme Partnership Agreement, was signed by all three Fire Authorities on 22 March 2013. The three Fire and Rescue Authorities are working together to implement a single joint control room function which will be based in a single location, in Calcot, Berkshire, with capacity for other fire and rescue authorities, clients or partners to join. Their expected go-live date is 31 December 2014. Thirty two staff are thought to be at risk and TUPE is expected to be applied.

Staffordshire and West Midlands

Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authorities are planning to work in partnership to combine the provision of fire control services using a shared call handling and mobilising system. The shared fire control centre will operate from a single premise in the West Midlands. This new shared fire control centre will be governed by a collaborative Governance Board that will also be responsible for other future collaboration between the two Fire and Rescue Authorities. A secondary fire control will be maintained for resilience, thereby reducing the number of sites they have to maintain from four to two. West Midlands and Staffordshire are currently working with London Fire Brigade and North West Fire Control Services to establish a tri-partite arrangement for fallback, spate and spike conditions to replace their existing arrangements. The Project completion date is 31 December 2014 (revised from original projection of 31 March 2014).

Hertfordshire, Humberside, Lincolnshire, and Norfolk

The four Fire and Rescue Authorities are working in partnership to implement a shared integrated and resilient mobilising infrastructure which will improve each of their fallback, remote buddying and resilience arrangements. The new infrastructure will comprise two data centres, instead of the current four, and the changes will improve mobilising effectiveness and resilience extending to mobile data terminals and station-end equipment. The core elements of the proposed new infrastructure and procedures will be delivered across four stages. The first phase of the programme is nearing completion, i.e. the rollout of the first leg of the Wide Area Network and subsequent upgrade of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service onto the Vision3 Mobilising system. Following successful implementation a further stage to develop back office systems will begin. The Project completion date is 20 May 2015 (slipped three months from previous projection of February 2015, and five months from original projection of 31 December 2014). The project has been significantly delayed by the procurement of the wide area network, which is a key enabler for many technical elements of the programme and has a knock-on impact for delivery.