

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

ICT provision

Letter from Deputy Chief Constable Neil Richardson to the Sub-Committee in relation to ICT projects

Further to your letter of 31 January 2014 please see below a response to each of the points that you raised.

i6 programme

In relation to i6, detailed delivery planning is currently being finalised. On completion of this, appropriate Gateway Reviews will be undertaken and as proposed by the Convenor, updates on progress could be scheduled after these. This will ensure that any feedback and recommendations from that process are factored into reporting to the Committee.

Airwave communications network

Mission critical voice communications for operational policing (as well as the Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Service) is provided through the Airwave private network radio system. The contracts that the police boards for the legacy forces in Scotland signed for this service were transferred to the Scottish Police Authority on 1 April 2013. These contracts expire variously in 2019/20 for Police Scotland with earlier dates for police services in England and Wales and the Ambulance Service and Fire and Rescue Service across the UK.

The system continues to meet operational needs in respect of voice and short data messages and is managed through the appropriate contractual provisions. Increasingly Police Scotland and the other emergency services do have a desire to transmit larger volumes of data that is not served by the Airwave contract resulting in use of other technologies and mobile data devices.

The programme to replace Airwave is known as the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme. It is led by the Minister for Cabinet Office, Francis Maude and is governed by a cross government Ministerial Steering Group that includes the Scottish Government representative and Lead Minister, Kenny MacAskill.

The UK Government in partnership with the Scottish and Welsh Governments established the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme to provide the emergency services with a full and extended range of mobile communications upon expiry of the current Airwave contracts from 2016.

The need for change was made on basis of:

- Recognising the expiry dates of Airwave contracts and,
- The need to maintain mission critical interoperable voice communications as a minimum on expiry of the current contracts

Additionally it was accepted that:

- Current Airwave contracts are considered very expensive for what is provided
- The Airwave TETRA network infrastructure will require significant upgrading around time of expiry of current contracts.

Cost modelling and solutions development in the build of the ESMCP OBC suggests that solutions can be delivered on a commercial platform of a Mobile Network Operator (MNO) that

- Enhance capability of current voice services
- Extend service provision to include broadband data capability
- Deliver both at same or less cost, than current Airwave contracts (approx £23million p.a. for Police Scotland service provision)

The programme is committed to delivering a secure voice and broadband data communications platform for the emergency services across a commercial mobile telephone network. The service shall be known as the Emergency Services Network (ESN). This service will be a core and common product that to which every service subscribes.

Handheld data devices

Police Scotland have two major deployments of handheld data devices at this point in time. The first is a deployment of approximately 2000 devices within E and J divisions; a deployment which has been running for a number of years. The devices act as an electronic notebook and are docked in order to upload information to a number of integrated back end systems. Within G division, there is a trial, sponsored by ACPO, of approximately 750 devices; the trial is due to complete in November 2016. These devices also act as an electronic notebook with integration to back end systems; however, there is additional “over the air” functionality to undertake CHS and PNC checks as well as to receive briefing materials.

Police Scotland ICT are engaging with major suppliers in this evolving area to understand current developments and the latest roadmap for such devices. The current convergence of legacy systems planned within existing projects will provide a more integrated platform into which handheld data devices can be incorporated. Police Scotland, in delivering the Corporate Strategy, will consider an appropriate national solution which can provide increased benefit to policing based upon lessons learned from the existing deployments and informed by the latest marketplace developments.

Neil Richardson OBE QPM

Deputy Chief Constable (Designate), Police Scotland

17 February 2014