

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

20 January 2025

Integrated Fire Control Collaboration (IFCC) Update Report

Report of Director Emergency Response

Purpose of this Report

1. To provide members with an update on progress with the implementation of the new hosted control room system which is being procured jointly between County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), Hereford and Worcester FRS (HWFRS), Shropshire FRS (SFRS) and Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB).

Background

2. In anticipation of the contractual agreement for the previous control system expiring on 31 December 2023, the Service engaged an independent consultancy to undertake market appraisal of Emergency Mobilising Control System (EMCS) system suppliers and to prepare theoretical costings to demonstrate potential savings that could be achieved through working in collaboration. This work was engaged in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade.
3. The market appraisal indicated that future costing models for the supply and maintenance of similar systems had significantly increased since the current system was procured in 2013, potentially making it prohibitively expensive for individual services to procure.
4. Throughout 2022, the Service engaged with various other FRSs from across the sector who were preparing to procure a new control room solution.
5. During this process, similar requirements were identified in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade, Hereford and Worcester, and Shropshire FRSs. These mutual requirements were subsequently put out for competitive tender on 19 January 2023.
6. Two tenders were submitted and evaluated by a panel comprising representatives from each service involved in the process. The most economically advantageous

tender was submitted by Motorola Solutions Inc, costing the consortium £7.559M over three years, which equated to approximately £5M less than the nearest competitor over the same period of time.

7. The contract was subsequently extended to seven years during contract negotiations leading to expected savings to the Authority of circa £1.9m.

Progress to date

8. A seven year collaboration agreement between the four FRSs making up the consortium was signed on 13 December 2023 followed by the initial IFCC contract for the new solution being signed on the 14 December 2023.
9. A Strategic Command and Control Project Board consisting of a strategic lead from each Service within the consortium was established to ensure full oversight of the project plan is maintained and a technically focused project team created to oversee the day to day running of the project itself.
10. A series of workshops and administrator training sessions have been conducted to determine common configuration of the system for all users within the consortium, this is key to the success of the collaboration.
11. A decision has also been reached on the sharing of Airwave Dispatch Communication Server (DCS) ports between the four FRSs with the consortium now in the process of completing the necessary Change Control Note (CCN) documents with Airwave.
12. Work has been undertaken on the harmonisation of a range of datasets including Station identifiers, Appliance Callsigns and Status Messages so that each FRS's resources and messages can be clearly identified in a shared system.

Key Points to Note

13. To ensure the supplier delivery is consistent and to a high level, all milestone payments are withheld until such time that the agreed work has been completed and the Strategic Command and Control Project Board agree to the payment being made.
14. The first payment, due on Contract signature, was made with two further project implementation payments due on completion of delivery of the Staging Platform estimated to be 17 June 2025 and on the estimated go live date circa 4 March 2026.

Additional Benefits

15. There are several additional benefits of the collaborative approach and the use of advanced communication and mobilising systems including an increase in operational resilience by enabling control rooms to handle each other's calls during spate conditions or business interruptions.

16. The use of cloud-based technology will also free up real estate as well as providing improved cyber security whilst reducing carbon footprint at the same time.

Recommendations

17. Members are requested to:

Note the content of the report.

Rob Cherrie, Director Emergency Response