



Home Office

Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP  
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Service

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Gareth Bacon AM  
Chairman of GLA Oversight Committee  
City Hall  
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15 October 2018

Dear Gareth,

Thank you for your letter dated the 29 June regarding the Emergency Services Network (ESN). I apologise for the delay in responding.

As you may have seen, on 21 September the Home Office signed Heads of Terms with Motorola Solutions International (MSI) and EE. These Heads of Terms represent a significant milestone in the ESMCP programme reset with formal contract change notices due to follow around the turn of the year. This reset follows the review of the programme that we have previously discussed at PAC.

The review concluded that ESMCP remains the right strategic approach to replacing Airwave and the programme continues to represent good value to money for the taxpayer. The review also concluded there is growing confidence in the technical viability of the solution, particularly given the improved software solution now being deployed. The programme team and governance has also been strengthened. The review concluded however that a new delivery model is needed to ensure that the emergency services benefit from the new network as soon as possible.

The programme plan was previously based on completing the entire solution before users started transition. Problems with the software and the sheer number of separate projects that had to be delivered in parallel meant that this was putting significant pressure on the programme timescale.

The new approach to delivering ESN is based on the incremental release of products. This will allow our police officers, fire and rescue crews, paramedics and other users to choose the individual communications tools they want and need, and decide when they want them, rather than having to wait until every element of the new network is built.

The first ESN products are due to appear around the turn of the year, which will allow the emergency services to start testing and using them. The first of those – a network coverage testing product which we are calling 'ESN Assure' - will be delivered to the

emergency services by the end of 2018. We expect critical voice and data products to be available from early 2019 with the final version of the product available by Autumn 2020.

This compares with the plan to start user transition in September 2017 which was subsequently shifted back 9 months as a result of the CR110 contract changes.

The Home Office has negotiated an extension to the Airwave contract to the end of 2022, three years later than provided for in the original contract.

Following the Heads of Terms, Home Office and the suppliers are looking to sign revised contracts at the end of the year. To the same timescale the programme is looking to work up a revised Full Business Case with a revised programme plan and costs.

Clearly the delays in turning off Airwave mean that these costs are higher, delaying the point at which savings were planned to be realised. While the cost of the core system provided by MSI and EE have not materially changed, the programme continues to refine the plans and costs for other parts of the solution, including the projects for which the Home Office is directly responsible (eg additional coverage, resilience, Air to Ground coverage and coverage in the London Underground).

The programme will work with users, sponsor organisations and stakeholders across Government to develop a revised Full Business Case with a view to getting this through governance in the New Year.

In parallel, timeline critical work has started including building ESN infrastructure with TfL for London Underground. While EE will provide the 4G equipment that will carry ESN in the Underground, TfL and their subcontractors are responsible for delivery activity. Funding for this investment is in place and work is underway. Good progress has also been made in installing the necessary cabling in underground tunnels, with 236km out of a required 421km in place.

You also raise the issue of EE's coverage in London. I understand that EE's 4G services already cover more than 99% of the geography of London. This has been independently assessed by Rootmetrics in its latest 4G coverage report for the capital.

Since the Committee's evidence session last year, I understand EE has continued to deploy additional spectrum on sites in London to further improve network capacity and coverage experience, and has continued work to optimise coverage for emergency services end users. The emergency services will have access to detailed measured coverage data to ensure full confidence in where ESN coverage is available.

Finally, you may be interested to learn that EE and representatives of the emergency services performed a number of tests of the ESN network at the Notting Hill Carnival to investigate how some of the prioritisation features performed under real world circumstances. The tests were successful and showed that emergency service traffic could be prioritised in situations where there is extreme congestion over the network. This follows previous, similar tests, including at the recent Royal Wedding in Windsor.

I hope this letter reassures you that there is a workable solution being developed and that the new ESN will have significant benefit for London and for the emergency services. If you do require more information on coverage or how the network will perform, I know that EE would be very happy to meet with you. Please let me know if that would be useful.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Hurd". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**RT HON NICK HURD MP**  
**Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service**