

Meg Hillier MP Chair,
Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

5 October 2022

By email

Dear Chair,

Further to my letter of 21 July, I am writing to update you on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and the delivery of the Emergency Services Network (ESN).

The contract with MSI, one of our primary suppliers, for the provision of the Lot 2 'user services' comes to an end in December 2024 and no extension has been agreed. The Home Office has therefore been assessing options to ensure future ESN delivery.

I can confirm that the Home Office has today launched a market engagement exercise via a Prior Information Notice or PIN. The purpose of the PIN is for the Home Office to develop our understanding of the current market for the ESN 'user services' and to inform our strategy for the ESMCP. This includes the mission critical push-to-talk suite of applications that first responders will rely on when ESN is launched.

This is the first stage in the process of procuring a potential new supplier for these services and will open it out to fair and commercial competition. It will also include the provision of services for Connect, the ESN data service. The contract is likely to be worth circa £500m. Details of the market engagement exercise will be published on the Government's Contracts Finder and Find a Tender websites.

The process from market engagement and PIN to the award of contract is expected to be approximately 12 months. In the short term, the Programme will continue to work with MSI. The Programme will also continue to work closely with MSI on the delivery of the legacy TETRA service, Airwave, until it can be shut down.

This activity will have an impact on the timetable for ESN delivery and we will know more once re-procurement activity concludes and integrated delivery plans are built. I will of course continue to keep the Committee updated regularly.

The Lot 3 Mobile Services Contract with EE has a current end date of December 2024. We are considering our options about this arrangement.

Separately, the Committee will be aware that the CMA is expected to publish its Preliminary Decision report on its investigation into MSI's dual role as owner of Airwave and as a key supplier of ESN within the next week to two weeks.

The market engagement exercise and the CMA's preliminary report offer an opportunity for the Programme to review how it delivers ESN for the emergency services.

The Programme's priority continues to focus on achieving the right balance between credible plans that have user confidence and the need to deliver ESN as quickly as possible to enable the safe shutdown of Airwave.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Rycroft', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Rycroft CBE