

## **New technology to improve police response to 999 calls**

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010

New information technology and services are set to revolutionise the way police forces respond to incidents across the country

The Scottish Police Service has invested £2,600,000 in a Scotland-wide Command and Control computer system, which will enhance the service to the public.

The new technology will allow the police service to ensure that no matter where in the country an incident takes place, the right officers are more quickly and consistently deployed to the right locations at the right time, to prevent and detect crime.

A 'go live' date for the first force, Lothian and Borders Police, has been planned for September 2010, followed by a rollout programme to all other forces. When complete, it will mark the first time Scottish forces will share a single, common system for Command and Control.

Led by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) and the eight Scottish police forces, and supported by the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA), the contract, which has been awarded to Steria, is the final piece in a jigsaw to develop and install a single, national Command and Control system, Geographic Information System (GIS), and Gazetteer application that will be used by all the forces and wider police community.

Command and Control is the nerve centre of every police force. It is where all incidents with which forces deal, including 999 calls, are recorded and appropriate resources are deployed to the required locations.

Scotland's eight forces currently use a wide range of different and isolated applications to handle over 2,500,000 incidents annually. This can make data sharing difficult and provides an inconsistent picture of crime in Scotland.

Chief Constable Colin McKerracher, Chair of the ACPOS Business Change Programme Board, said: "It is absolutely vital that the police are able to quickly identify where a crime is taking place - or where a member of the public needs our assistance. In a 999 situation, it really is location, location, location. Once that is established, the priority is to get the nearest appropriate police officers deployed to that location.

"At present, we are working with many different electronic systems to do this. The reality is that criminals don't take police force boundaries into consideration when they commit crime and neither should we when we respond.

"The National Command and Control solution, coupled with other exciting products being progressed by ACPOS, as part of the national business change programme, will provide the police with new tools and support to help us tackle criminals effectively, regardless of where they are or where incidents take place."

Jan Thompson, Chief Information Officer with SPSA added: "Delivering the new single system is a hugely complex task but once it is up and running as a national system, replacing eight disparate applications, there are tangible efficiency savings to be made through the introduction of improved and more effective ICT services."

Tracey Lee, Head of Emergency Services at Steria said: "This is the first time a nationwide Command and Control computer system has been adopted in Scotland, and as such we have worked closely with the Scottish Police Service to ensure it receives the world-class system it demands. Steria has provided similar facilities for a number of public sector organisations, so we have drawn heavily from our experience to produce a system which will enable Scotland's eight forces to operate efficiently and deliver effective policing."

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: "Scotland is well served by its eight police forces. However, crime and criminals don't respect the boundaries between our forces."

"I welcome this investment in a Scotland-wide command and control system. When introduced, this system will mean the police nearest to a serious incident can be deployed, regardless of which force they belong to and when an incident crosses force boundaries it can be handled seamlessly."

"This is the sort of joined-up approach we expect from our police and I am delighted Scotland is leading the way in introducing a nationwide system."

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#### NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

1. The National Command and Control Portfolio of Projects is a key part of a wider ACPOS national business change programme and represents groundbreaking improvements for the Scottish Police Service. In addition to providing improved service to communities the new system will provide enhanced operational capability and better opportunities for joint working between forces, agencies and partners across Scotland. Police forces will quickly benefit from sharing accurate, up-to-date information.

2. Delivery of the project is being taken forward as a partnership between ACPOS, SPSA ICT, and the eight forces. Staff from across all the policing organisations will be involved in the planning and development of the system, new national working practices and management services. For further information <http://www.acpos.police.uk> and <http://www.spsa.police.uk>.

3. To date, ESRI has been selected as the national GIS supplier, while a joint venture between Infotech, Infoshare, and GGP has been selected as the national Gazetteer supplier. With Steria being appointed this completes the portfolio of projects within National Command and Control.

4. Gazetteer and GIS technology is currently used by all forces. As part of the Command and Control portfolio of projects, the various individual systems used across the country will be replaced by single applications for both. The two systems will work together to support national Command and Control by providing accurate and up-to-date geographical information. Gazetteer stores a list of known geographical locations, including historical and local references, which are geo-coded, meaning they provide coordinates to plot locations on a map.

The map coordinates provided by Gazetteer are then linked to the GIS to plot the locations on a map, allowing police to visualise incident data. GIS maps will also display the location and details of available police resources in the area, including whether it is a foot or vehicle patrol and how many officers are available.

The combined data from both systems will allow call handlers to identify precise locations and allocate the best equipped and nearest police patrol, which will improve response times and ensure the most efficient use of resources.