



REPORT TO:	STRATEGIC SCRUTINY MEETING
DATE:	November 2020
TITLE:	Contact Management Quarterly Report
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1. **Issue for Consideration**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to the continued development and performance of the Contact Management department of Lancashire Constabulary, for the period July to September 2020.

2. **Recommendation**

The Commissioner is requested to review the report and make comments as appropriate.

3. **Background**

This report will provide an update on the latest call performance and significant organisational developments in Contact Management for the quarter July to September 2020.

Section 4 provides an update on significant programmes of work within the Force Control Room (FCR). This includes the current status of the FCR decant project, the refurbishment of the FCR and plans to return to a single control room in Spring 2021. To support the establishment of POD working within the new FCR, details of the FCR Transformation Action Plan and updates in relation to Police Communications Room Operator (PCRO) recruitment and progression are also included.

Section 5 provides an update on the performance within the FCR across a number of key 999 and 101 call performance metrics.

Section 6 provides a brief overview of a number of other important workstreams, predominantly Information Communications Technology (ICT) workstreams, that will have significant current, or future impact on the FCR.

4. Overview of Key Developments

Refurbishment of the FCR

Since the last Strategic Scrutiny meeting, work has continued apace to prepare for the return of the East, South and West PODs into the refurbished single Force Control Room early next year. The key developments during this quarter are as follows:

- The POD methodology is now well established across the three PODs, which make up the FCR, and there is a noticeable sense of belonging and pride amongst staff associating with their individual POD as well as the wider FCR. Pleasingly, this sense of POD loyalty is contributing to an increased focus on quality of service and performance within PODs and FCR Teams. In addition to improved Contact Management working practices within PODs, there is a significant and increasing alignment of FCR PODs with their respective Basic Command Units (BCUs) in terms of operational service delivery. This is the result of increasingly closer working relationships between POD Team Leaders and BCU Sergeants/ Inspectors as well as respective FCR and BCU Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs).
- Throughout the decant process, revised Operating Models and Business Continuity plans have been developed to ensure the resilience of Contact Management during the decant process. In readiness for the return to a single FCR in 2021, Business Continuity plans have continued to be developed to support every stage of the planned phased return to a single FCR grounded in geographically aligned POD working.
- On-going staff engagement and involvement in the redevelopment of the new FCR has been considered critical to delivering a FCR which meets the needs of staff, is fit for purpose and supports staff to deliver a first-class Contact Management service to our communities. To ensure that staff remain fully engaged with the development and delivery of the new FCR, operational Police Communications Room Operators (PCRO) and Police Communications Room Supervisors (PCRS) have continued to be involved in all aspects of the continuing POD Project. This includes:
 - The involvement of operational staff in helping to redesign FCR working practices through their involvement in the development of the Contact Management Transformation Plan.
 - Consultation with staff concerning the final design and colour scheme /aesthetics of the room.
 - The development of measures to ensure the redeveloped FCR is Covid-19 secure, minimising not only the future impact of Covid but also routine annual influenza type infections.
 - The continued provision of updates to staff regarding the progress of the redevelopment through newsletters, videos, Sherlock blogs and Sharepoint site content.

- Since the appointment of City Build to lead the FCR redevelopment in July 2020, very significant progress has been made on the FCR build process. The decommissioning of the old FCR has been completed, as has the first phase of the data centre work. Progress is now being made with the redecoration and initial fit out of the refurbished FCR in preparation for the installation of the desks and the services infrastructure. The rebuild of the FCR remains on track for a January handover and a phased return to a single room in April/ May 2021.

Contact Management Transformation Plan

To deliver continuous improvement across Contact Management and ensure the provision of a service which is both efficient and effective in delivering a high quality, cost effective FCR, a Contact Management Transformation Plan has been established. The plan is led by the Head of Contact Management with support from James Harvard project management staff. The development of the Transformation Plan involved Contact Management staff across every POD and FCR function, with representation in the various workstreams from staff at every level.

The Transformation Plan for the new FCR has continued to develop, with SLT leads appointed for each of the Transformation workstreams, supported by an identified team of staff from across Contact Management, and where appropriate external subject matter experts.

The following outlines the current main areas of developing work under each of the workstreams:

- **Workforce Planning**
 - Review of demand, both traditional and digital, into the FCR.
 - Completion of a workforce profiler to review FCR workforce rotas, including the consideration of daytime and core flexible working rotas ability to meet demand profile.
 - Improved Verint workforce planning and forecasting functionality.
- **Communication and Engagement Strategy**
 - Development of a comprehensive departmental strategy for staff engagement.
 - Development of a comprehensive staff engagement plan to ensure staff are fully sighted and involved in how the POD project is progressing.
 - Development of plans to address issues highlighted from the annual force survey and recent Contact Management survey.
 - Workforce Representation engagement and support.

- **Training, Progression and Recruitment**

- Development of a Contact Management 2 year' departmental training plan to ensure delivery against forecasted FCR recruitment and training needs.
- Embedding of revised PCRO recruitment processes.
- Establishing a revised PCRO initial training programme to enhance individual skills attainment and earlier introduction to POD environment.
- Mainstreaming of improved 'in-role' PCRO training, to increase the speed of attainment of full PCRO skill sets.
- Talent Management and succession planning.

- **Performance Management**

- Development of departmental performance process.
- Identification of quantitative and qualitative performance framework.
- Development of PDR objectives to support performance framework.
- Development of identified performance measures by role; Dispatch, Call Handling, Facilitating.

- **Innovation and New Technology**

- Development of 2 year Contact Management Technology Programme Plan.
- Continuing refinement of existing technology programmes; Smart Storm, ICCS, Centricity.
- Embedding of Digital Team, supported by a Digital Plan.
- National Programmes; NLEDs (National Law Enforcement Database), SOH (Single Online Home).
- Innovation Projects; EBIT (Evidence Based Investigation Tool), Voice Analytics.

- **Continuous Improvement**

- Development of Contact Management career pathways through improved PDR lateral and vertical development pathways.
- A consistent and improved approach to reward and recognition.
- A departmental Wellbeing Plan.

This approach will support improved processes across the key areas of FCR delivery, for example; establishing a clear performance framework at individual, team and POD levels, developing Contact Management career pathways supported by improved

training and recruitment plans designed to reduce staff turnover, improved staff engagement and understanding as well as developing a clear understanding of how new technology and innovative working practices will be introduced.

Progress of the Transformation Plan will be updated at the POD Programme Board, chaired by ACC Lawson.

Force Control Room PCRO Staffing / Training and Recruitment / Progression arrangements of Contact Management

The FCR continues to recruit PCROs to maintain a staff establishment of 345 PCRO Full-time Equivalents (FTE). Our objective remains to move away from large intakes of 30 PCROs, due to the disruptive impact this has on PCRO numbers and the consequent impact on call handling performance and quality of service. Owing to the impact of Covid-19 and the reduced capacity of Human Resources (HR) Services, it has not been possible at this time to move away from such large intakes. However, it remains a core objective of Contact Management to recruit smaller intakes, more often when capacity allows.

The 27 new PCRO recruits who commenced training in April 2020 are now all contributing to call handling within the PODs, with some having achieved sufficient skills attainment to enable them to progress to the facilitating role. This follows an amended training programme to allow for home working and 'social distancing' when in the training environment at Headquarters. A second intake of 28 new PCRO recruits commenced training in September and are now nearing the end of their initial training period. The learning from the amended training programme in April, was incorporated into the training regime for September to improve the quality of 'socially distanced' training, improving the timescales for the new PCROs to join their PODs.

Throughout the first half of 2020, attrition rates within the FCR averaged 4 PCROs per month, largely due to increased police officer recruitment across the region. During Q2 2020, the attrition rate has reduced to an average of 3 per month, with September experiencing significant reductions in leavers, reflecting the reduced job opportunities outside the public sector due to Covid-19. Despite this current reduction in PCRO leavers, the previous high attrition rate and consequent high recruitment has resulted in a Contact Management workforce which lacks experience. 23% of PCRO staff (89) have less than 12 months' experience. It is anticipated that current Transformation Plans promoting Contact Management career pathways and improved training and development, coupled with the recently revised pay progression arrangements, will reduce attrition rates in the future, leading to a more experienced and skilled Contact Management workforce.

During Q2 2020, specific development pathways have been launched to support staff seeking to work towards Team Leader and POD Manager skillsets, demonstrating the increased focus on staff development across the department.

All of these developments have been widely welcomed by the staff and Unison.

COVID-19 Impact

The onset of Covid-19 and the consequent lockdown had a significant impact on the operating practices within Contact Management as it undoubtedly did across the Constabulary. Early Covid-19 specific business continuity planning, coupled with robust table top testing of the plans, enabled Contact Management to flex and respond to the changes in the volume and nature of demand, the availability of FCR resources and the need to operate in a Covid-19 secure, 'socially distanced' manner.

At the onset of Covid-19 lockdown, a phased business continuity plan was designed and where necessary implemented, enabling the FCR to respond progressively to between losses of 10% and 60% of the FCR workforce. At its height, staff absences accounted for 30% of staff not being present in the FCR, due to sickness, self-isolation, 'social distancing' and consequential secondments to maintain FCR functionality.

During Q1 2020, the FCR lost 9549 call taking hours due to Covid-19 absences. During Q2 Covid-19 absences accounted for a significantly lower loss of call taking hours, only 4252. The significant reduction in Covid-19 absences is not only a testament to the professionalism of the Contact Management workforce, but also reflects the measures introduced across the PODs to support staff to remain in work. These measures included;

- Developing a Business Intelligence product to enable forward planning of POD capacity levels in order to ensure that 'social distancing' was maintained within the PODs and where necessary, staff were moved to work in alternative office accommodation at times of peak staffing levels.
- Regular Health and Safety reviews were completed in conjunction with Health and Safety Officers and Unison representatives, to ensure that appropriate mitigation of risk was introduced where needed.
- Provision of PPE equipment and supporting procedures.
- Support for vulnerable staff, enabling them to work at alternative 'socially distanced' accommodation.
- Use of home working where necessary.

To support the continued functionality of the FCR PODs, the Constabulary's online reporting portal was redesigned in Q1 with a user friendly one-page Covid-19 breach reporting form, diverting non-urgent Covid-19 reports away from the traditional telephony service. This was promoted via a range of online portals to encourage the public to report Covid-19 breaches online. This reduced demand on 101 and 999 call handling services and enabled online Covid-19 reports to be efficiently managed and deployments triaged. To manage the increased online demand, front counter staff were upskilled to manage the force mailbox. Additionally, FCR staff who were unable

to attend work were equipped to work from home, undertaking a variety of functions including; helping advanced duty planning, managing outstanding Grade 3 deployments and helping manage increased online demand.

Throughout Q2, online Covid-19 demand has continued to rise and fall in line with the introduction of increased or lowered local Covid-19 restrictions. Every increase in local restrictions has coincided with a notable increase in online Covid-19 reporting. During Q2, in excess of 2500 Covid-19 breach reports have been received online, requiring risk assessment and where necessary deployment.

To manage the increase in Covid-19 specific demand, the FCR introduced new processes to effectively triage and manage deployments to reported breach of Covid-19 regulations and established working practices to enable the FCR to exchange information and work with internal and external partners. These included Border Agency to manage quarantine breaches, Local Authorities to manage breaches in commercial premises, and more recently the NHS to manage isolation breaches.

5. Performance Update

As previously reported, there are a number of factors that can impact on the performance of the FCR in a reporting period. This quarter, for both 999 and 101 calls has been no different. The ongoing impact of Covid-19, with repeated changes to local and national regulations requiring the FCR to adapt to new working practices, coupled with ongoing ICT infrastructure upgrades, has created a very challenging environment during Q2. Despite this very difficult background, positive interventions and forward planning are resulting in improved performance when compared with the same period in 2019.

Throughout the reporting period, there have continued to be significant planned upgrades to the FCR ICT infrastructure which have impacted on the stability and performance of the FCR. Work has continued to progress regarding the upgraded Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS), the implementation of the Centricity upgrade and the continued refinement of SMART STORM, which was a necessary upgrade implemented earlier in 2020. In addition, new working practices have been developed and implemented to enable more demand to be transferred online, away from traditional telephone call taking demand. This has required the abstraction of staff to develop new working practices and increased training of FCR staff to manage the increased online demand.

The necessary work to upgrade FCR ICT infrastructure has also necessitated multiple periods of planned fall-backs in the FCR during Q2. While these fall-back periods impact on the smooth running of the FCR, the fact that they are planned enables preparations to be made, minimising the resulting impact of the fall-back. Previous periods of unplanned fall-back, due to system instability, have been greatly reduced during Q2, following improved system stability in Q1. Significant disruption to call

taking in the FCR occurred on multiple days in September due to external telephony infrastructure issues which repeatedly impacted on the ability to receive calls. This resulted in the requirement for calls to be redirected to neighbouring forces for extended periods. This was rectified by external telephony suppliers after a number of repeated periods of disruption which impacted on service provision by the FCR.

During Q2, the FCR has continued to progress the necessary recruitment of new PCROs to ensure sufficient staffing is maintained within the department. The recruitment and training of 55 new PCROs during Q2, and the increasing levels of inexperience within the FCR has also presented challenges, as once initial training has been completed, the new PCROs require ongoing training and mentoring to support them to progress through the various PCRO skillsets, towards full PCRO competence. The challenges presented by Covid-19 to the training of new recruits has been considerable, requiring the development and continued refinement of training programmes, as well as designing and implementing 'socially distanced' training and mentoring. Despite these significant challenges, 27 new PCRO recruits joined their POD following initial training in September 2020, and a further 28 new recruits commenced their training in September.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 during Q2, the newly enhanced FCR Training Plan has continued to be progressed, increasing the skills base across all three PODs, and thereby the resilience of each individual POD to be able to function independently.

Following the introduction and development of the Contact Management Transformation Plan in early 2020, there is now an embedded performance culture across Contact Management, driven at an individual, team and departmental level through a daily, monthly and bi-monthly performance framework. The enhanced performance focus within the department is continually focussing attention and effort at reducing inefficiency and increasing quality.

While the Transformation Plan is a long-term project for the FCR, it is already changing the way demand is processed within the FCR to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Examples include; the trials of Quick Crime within the West POD, initial changes in response to how unlogged demand is managed, and the completion of profiler demand analysis to better understand demand and prepare for the trial of amended workforce patterns to match demand profiles.

Call Performance – 999 Emergency Calls

Emergency calls remain a primary focus for the FCR. Whilst it is recognised that there is a correlation between 101 call performance and the demand on the 999 service, the FCR understandably continues to prioritise answering 999 emergency calls above any other type of demand.

Key Points: 999 demand and service levels

- 999 demand has increased significantly during Q2 2020 compared to the previous quarter and is now just 3% below 999 demand levels for Q2 2019. During Q2 2020, performance for 999 service levels (calls answered in less than 10 seconds) has improved in relation to the corresponding quarter in 2019. 71.9% of calls were answered within target in 2020 compared to 69.7% in 2019. This improved 999 call handling performance has been achieved despite the many resourcing challenges caused by the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.
- As the Commissioner will recall, the Constabulary reported in previous Strategic Scrutiny meetings that Lancashire 999 demand has been on an increasing trajectory. This trajectory reversed in Q1 2020 due to the onset of Covid-19, however the upward trend of 999 demand has returned during Q2, reflecting nationally increased 999 demand levels.

Call Performance - Non-Emergency 101 Calls

Q2 2020 has seen significant reductions in 101 demand in Lancashire when compared with the same quarter in 2019, equating to a 20% (44000 calls) reduction in demand. Again, this trend is reflected nationally. There has however been a 4.5% (8000) increase in 101 demand during Q2 compared to Q1 2020. 101 service levels have remained largely unchanged during Q2 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, at 31.8%.

The percentage of abandoned 101 calls has reduced from 43% to 29% during Q2 2020 compared to the same period last year.

PCRO experience levels, as highlighted within the last Scrutiny report, continue to be of concern. The increasing proportion of FCR staff with under two years' service continues to present a significant challenge in delivering a high-quality call handling and dispatch service. The relative inexperience of staff continues to be offset by the FCR enhanced PCRO Training Plan which has continued to progress and increase the speed at which new PCROs attain the full range of FCR skills. Continuing the enhanced training has been challenging during Covid-19 due to the need to abstract mentors to upskill colleagues and the need to maintain 'social distancing'. Encouragingly, PCRO's are progressing more quickly toward suitability for the facilitating and dispatcher roles. It is pleasing that the increased standard of applicants experienced in the most recent intakes of new recruits, is resulting in new PCROs progressing through the FCR skillsets at an increased rate. Some of the April PCRO recruits have already progressed to enhanced skillsets, in advance of projected training objectives.

Since POD went live in September 2018, 101 calls have been deliberately held within the geographic POD where the call originated. The intention being that a localised service is provided to the caller, rather than the previous more generic approach. Following a period of analysis and evaluation, the overflow time was set at 7 minutes,

i.e. if a 101 call is not answered within its originating POD within 7 minutes, it will then become available to the two other PODs.

The Commissioner will recall that during Q1 2020, the decision was taken to reduce the overflow time to 3 minutes due to the challenges posed by increased Covid-19 demand coupled with resourcing challenges. In reducing the overflow time, it is recognised that this is a move away from the purist POD methodology, however all calls are still routed initially into their geographic POD, allowing the opportunity for a localised FCR service, however in the event that demand outstrips the call taking capacity in the home POD, the reduced overflow time increases the ability to answer the call from a member of the public before it is abandoned. Following further analysis of demand and abandonment rates, the decision was taken to reduce the overflow time to 20 seconds, with the objective to reduce the likelihood of call abandonment, thereby protecting vulnerable members of the community. This remains under monthly review.

In Q2 2020, 52% of 101 calls were answered in their own POD and 58% of 999 calls were answered in their own POD. Despite the reduced overflow times and consequent reduction in calls being answered in their own POD, there has been a considerable reduction in the number of calls abandoned compared to the same period in 2019. Abandonment rates reduced from 43.5%% in Q2 2019 to 29.5% in Q2 2020 for 101 calls. Abandonment rates for 999 calls increased during this quarter from 0.9% in Q2 2019 to 1.6% in Q2 2020. However, this 999 'anomaly' is explained by the persistent misuse of the Lancashire 999 system by one hoax caller who made over 700 hoax 999 calls into the FCR during Q2. Following investigation, the caller's mobile was deactivated by the provider. The caller could not be identified despite an exhaustive investigation.

The overflow time continues to be monitored and is subject to regular reviews. At an appropriate time, the overflow rate will be increased to support the POD model.

Online Demand

Key Points: On-line demand

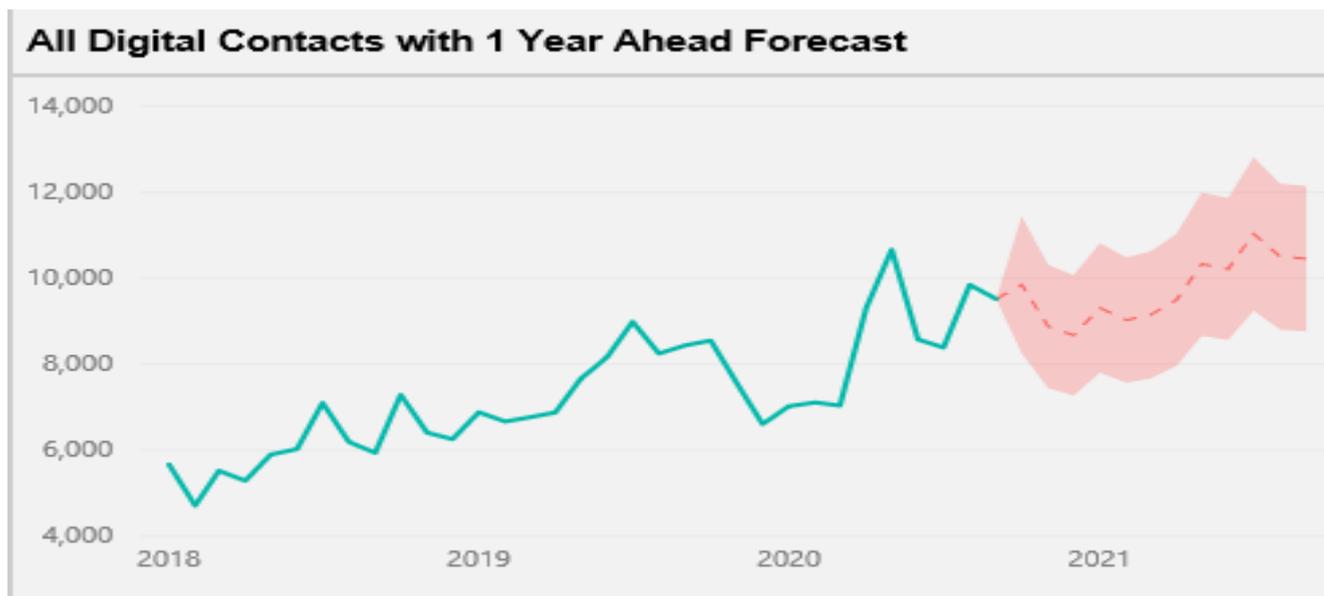
The public of Lancashire can currently contact the FCR by digital means via the Force Control Mailbox and the Public Engagement Portal to report incidents to the FCR. There also exists the option to 'submit a crime' or 'contact an officer' by digital means. During Q1 2020, in order to better manage and triage deployments to reported breaches of the new Covid-19 regulations, the digital offer was rapidly reviewed. A simple one-page Covid-19 Reporting Form within the Public Engagement Portal was developed. The use of the online Covid-19 Reporting Form was quickly adopted by the public with 4728 online Covid-19 reports being received during the height of the initial lockdown in Q1 2020. Online reports of Covid-19 breaches reduced during Q2 2020 as lockdown restrictions eased with 2546 Covid-19 reports being received,

however reports are increasing again following increased Covid-19 tensions and restrictions.

Overall, the levels of digital demand have been rising steadily, mirroring the national trend. Online demand across Q1 to Q2 2020 remained largely static at just over 30,000 digital contacts per quarter. Online demand is still predicted to continue rising for the foreseeable future, with monthly online demand having doubled over the last 12 months.

Month	Outlook	PE	Covid-19	Total
April	5559	3747	576	9882
May	8329	2335	3369	14033
June	6250	2326	781	9357
July	6138	2250	402	8790
Aug	6985	2861	1028	10874
Sept	6865	2652	1101	10618

Current forecasts indicate that online demand based on current available digital means of contact is increasing and will rise to over 11000 contacts per month during 2021.



If further avenues of contact were introduced e.g. Twitter, Facebook, then it is likely this would increase further.

Previous reviews of digital demand and the experience of other forces is that digital demand does not replace traditional demand and that the trend is that digital brings extra demand into the FCR.

Following the agreement to develop and recruit a dedicated Digital Team to manage existing and developing online demand, aN FCR Digital Operating process has now been established. The process to recruit the Digital Supervisor and 18 Digital Operators is now close to completion and it is anticipated that the digital operators will complete their initial training and go live in January 2021.

The team itself will receive bespoke training and will provide a dedicated digital first point of contact for anyone wanting to report an incident or raise an enquiry using online services. The team will cover shifts over a 24hr period and will work in line with current Contact Management rotas.

The objective of the Digital Team will be to provide a dedicated digital first point of contact for anyone wishing to report an incident or an enquiry to Lancashire Police via a digital channel. Whilst we are able to predict their workload based on current contact online methods, we are expecting to see an additional increase in contacts following planned media campaigns, and with the introduction of Twitter and Facebook interaction. The team will provide out of hours support to the Constabulary Media and Engagement Team for high profile social media cases as well as proactive social media postings and replies concerning live time events of concern to the public.

The development of digital functionality within the FCR will support:

- The national roll out of the Single Online Home (SOH) police website, which the Constabulary is expecting to adopt during 2022.
- The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Policing Vision 2025, advocating increased digital policing capability and capacity.
- The adoption of mandatory European Union legislation requiring police forces to provide members of the public with the ability to report emergency incidents via digital channels from 2021.

6. FCR Key ICT Workstreams Update

As has been described, the FCR successfully decanted into the 3 locations of Preston, Burnley and the upper level in site B at HQ. Preparations are now being made for the return to a single FCR with improved, stable ICT functionality. As planned, all the control rooms have successfully transitioned to Windows 10, USB functionality and SMARTSTORM.

Within the FCR environment there is always an element of change with the ICT systems and as the FCR prepares to return there are still a number of ICT work streams ongoing. This is to ensure that the FCR ICT platforms and systems are stable, up-to-date, and Contact Management is supported to be able to continue to pursue further innovative opportunities. Moving forwards into 2021 we will continue to explore our Digital Footprint in the FCR and how we can improve our service to the public.

The current significant ICT projects on-going in the FCR at this time are:

SMARTSTORM upgrade

Within the POD project we identified an opportunity to move from the old command and control system STORM, to the new upgraded version SMARTSTORM. The rationale supporting this upgrade was the fact that we were unable to make any further technical changes to STORM and the supplier is now providing an enhanced version with multiple benefits and opportunities. Since being introduced, a number of issues with SMARTSTORM have been identified which are currently being addressed by Lancashire's ICT department and STERIA. Significant improvements in the performance of SMARTSTORM are now expected at the end of November 2020.

Capita ICCS (Integrated Command and Control System) upgrade

The full upgrade of the ICCS continues to be a major project for the FCR. The delivery of the upgrade is a significant programme of work and is governed by the 'ICCS Board'. The main benefits for the FCR and the public of Lancashire will be:

- Implementation of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) which allows 101 callers to know their place in the queue and their estimated wait time. This is scheduled to be available November 2020.
- Improved stability and resilience of the ICCS and telephony system in the FCR on a day-to-day basis (this has been an issue in the FCR since the move to the new single contact centre in 2013). In addition, there will be a fully mirrored hot standby ICCS at the force Disaster Recovery, significantly improving the current fall-back arrangements.
- The upgraded ICCS will allow the Constabulary to meet its national obligations around control room readiness for the transition from Airwave to the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that is scheduled to take place in the coming years (no date for the Lancashire transition is available as yet).

Emergency Service Network. (ESN) ports replacement.

As part of the national ESN project, Lancashire have been working with the project

team to upgrade the airwave ports from an old 'out of date' platform to a new enhanced more stable platform. The ports are available within our ICCS system and control the way the transmissions are received into the control room, and the way the control room transmissions are communicated to operational officers. The ICT work required to replace the ports has been added on to the ICCS project and is scheduled to take place Q4 2020.

National Enabling Program (NEP)

As a force, we signed up to the NEP and in Q1 2021 and we will see the PODs return to the main FCR site on the NEP platform. This enables us to move to Office 365 and explore further opportunities within this for the FCR such as, home working, initial trials of which were explored during Q1 during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.