

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

THE INTEGRATED CLOTHING PROJECT

1 Purpose of Report

To update Fire Authority Members on the current position with the Integrated Clothing Project (ICP).

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is requested to note the latest information available regarding the Integrated Clothing Project.

3 The Integrated Clothing Project

The Integrated Clothing Project is a national project, managed by Firebuy to provide a range of protective clothing, which meets the diverse needs of our role and workforce. Its aim, as stated on the Firebuy website, is “to create a national identity that addresses equality and diversity issues and to deliver a standard level of appropriate protection for firefighters nationally”.

The use of Firebuy contracts, including the ICP, is required by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) through the Fire and Rescue National Framework, clause 2.21: “Fire and Rescue Authorities must support the arrangements set out in the [National Procurement] Strategy and procure through Firebuy Ltd where directed”. This statement follows clauses 2.18 and 2.19, which refer specifically to the ICP.

Liaison between the ICP team and authorities is through the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) procurement board and this report is based on information received through this route, not on communication directly from the ICP team or through the formal DCLG circular system.

4 Timescales

Bids from the four suppliers being considered were evaluated in November 2006 and covered financial/commercial aspects (41.3%); service delivery (26%); and, garment trial results (32.7%). The results of this evaluation will be considered by the Firebuy Board during December 2006, when a decision on which options to recommend and whether to award national or regional contracts will be taken.



If regional contracts are awarded, Regional Management Boards (RMBs) will be expected to identify the most appropriate contract for use in their region. The agreement of joint procurement arrangements is a defined responsibility for regional management boards.

Firebuy's recommendations and options will be passed to Fire Authorities in January 2007 for consideration. There is then an expectation that RMBs will reach an agreement on the most appropriate solution (if regional contracts are awarded) and that Authorities will return a signed memorandum of agreement, agreeing to enter into a Firebuy clothing contract at the end of any current arrangements. This is expected to be returned to Firebuy by April 2007.

In the absence of any information being available regarding the products, services or costs it is not possible to anticipate whether the arrangements will be acceptable to the Fire Authority or whether regional agreement will be possible.

5 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Fire Authority to have regard to the Framework in carrying out its functions. The Framework sets out the expectations of the DCLG, which is that Fire and Rescue Authorities must support the arrangements of the National Procurement Strategy.

7 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

8 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

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Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity		Retained	
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	
Environmental		Staff	
Financial		Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link		West Midlands Regional Management Board	*

For further information about this report please contact Andrew Kelcey, Head of Resources, on 01743 260240 or Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201.

