

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

FIREBUY AND THE INTEGRATED CLOTHING PROJECT

1 Purpose of Report

This report updates the Fire Authority on the current position with Firebuy Ltd. and the Integrated Clothing Project.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is requested to note the current position with Firebuy Ltd. and the Integrated Clothing Project.

3 Firebuy

Firebuy Ltd. was formally established on 1 April 2006. A board of non-executive directors has been appointed and are listed in the attached appendix.

Through Firebuy a number of contracts let on a local or regional basis have been made available for national use. These include contracts for operational and rescue equipment. Work is progressing on a contract for appliances and it is expected to be available from 1 April 2007 to replace the expiring Fire Service Procurement Association contract we currently use.

These contracts are 'framework' contracts placed with a range of suppliers for various items of equipment. This enables the Service to assess the equipment, which best meets its needs or represents best value, and purchase that as if using a catalogue. Framework contracts may also include arrangements to carry out a 'mini-competition' enabling competitive quotations to be obtained without carrying out a full tender exercise.

4 The Integrated Clothing Project

Unlike the newer Firebuy contracts, the Integrated Clothing Project was not established as a framework but was planned as a single supplier contract with common provision across all Fire Services. This lack of flexibility and loss of local control over the cost/performance balance has been a concern to many Services, ourselves included.



Current indications are that the contract will now be awarded on a 'regional lots' basis and that the Regional Management Board will be expected to identify a supplier for all Fire and Rescue Services in the region.

The Services Equipment Contracts Manager and two users of firefighting protective equipment have recently attended the trials being carried out at the Health and Safety Executive's laboratories and were very impressed with the quality of assessments being carried out on sample items.

The latest advice from the project is that contracts will be awarded in December 2006, with garments being supplied towards the end of 2007.

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly out of this report.

6 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7 Appendix

Firebuy Ltd Structure and Non-Executive Directors – taken from the Firebuy website on 28 September 2006

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

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 Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Andrew Kelcey, Head of Resources, on 01743 260240.



Firebuy Structure

This information is copied directly from the Firebuy website (www.firebuy.gov.uk).

Firebuy is a Non Departmental Public Body, set up as from 1 April 2006, to act as the professional procurement body and the contracting Authority for the UK Fire Service. The Chief Executive will report to the Firebuy Board and advise it on all matters relating to major contracts for Fire & Rescue Authorities. The Chief Executive and the Board will also take the lead in contract management and service level monitoring.

The people who have been appointed to the Firebuy Board are:-

Chair

Liz Barron

She is an Honorary Alderman for Hampshire. She is also an advisor to the Fire Service College, a former chair of the employers' National Joint Council for Fire and Local Government Association's Fire Forum. She is currently a political and environmental consultant. She holds no other Ministerial appointments.

Directors

Elizabeth Bennett

She is the Executive Head of Democratic and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer at Nottinghamshire County Council. She is an accredited Peer of the Improvement and Development Agency. She is the Legal Director of Fire Service Procurement Association, Clerk and Legal Advisor to CLASP (a local authority consortium) and Scape Ltd (the trading company arm of the consortium) and a representative of English County Councils at Standards Board for England Liaison Board.

George Herbert

Former Chief Fire Officer of Durham and Darlington Combined Fire and Rescue Authority. He retired after 31 years in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Martin Kitchen

He is the former Surrey Chief Fire Officer retiring in 2002 after 33 years in the Fire and Rescue Service. He is currently the Chairman of the East Surrey Primary Care Trust.

Robert Light

Mr Light is the Managing Director of RC & SJ Light – a family farming and equestrian business. He is a Councillor and Group Leader of Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council and has stood as a parliamentary candidate in the last three general election campaigns on behalf of the Conservative Party. He is also a member and Vice Chair of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority and a Member and Chair of Yorkshire and Humberside Fire Authority Regional Management Board.

David Rowe

Mr Rowe is the former Deputy Leader of Suffolk County Council. He stood as a parliamentary candidate in the 2005 General Election for the Labour Party. He is also a former Justice of the Peace and former member of Suffolk Police Authority. He works as an Environmental Protection officer at Ipswich Borough Council. He holds a ministerial appointment as Chair of Suffolk Probation Board. He is also a Trustee of the Felixstowe Youth Development Group.



Ex-officio Appointments

Ex-officio appointments are made to an organisation rather than to an individual and it is for the organisation to nominate their own representative and they are free to change their nominated person at any time.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has nominated Councillor Les Bryom as their representative on the FiReBuy Board. He serves as the Chairman of the Fire Services Management Committee and Fire Forum, Local Government Association.

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) has nominated Paul Fuller, the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service. He is also the Chairman of the CFOA National Procurement Board.

The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) have nominated Councillor Anne Gallop as their representative. Anne Gallop is the Liberal Democrat, Borough representative for the London Borough of Sutton, she is also LFEPA's representative on the LGA's Fire Forum. LFEPA's will hold an ex-officio appointment for three years in recognition of the key role LFEPA has played in getting FiReBuy Ltd up and running.

