

*Notable practice case studies
from the Fire & Rescue Service*

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On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

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GUIDANCE NOTE	3
Procurement, financial planning and performance management	

Introduction

1. Following the Fire Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2005, Fire and Rescue Authorities requested that any notable or innovative practice be captured and made available to them to help support improvement. This third batch of case studies brings together examples of efficiency gains and of notable practice identified by the Audit Commission in the CPA reports and aims to provide Fire and Rescue Authorities with a variety of information about different approaches that have been adopted in the Service.
2. The first two batches of case studies were published on 23 March 2006 (as the second annex to Fire and Rescue Service Circular 14/2006) and 7 June 2006 (annexed to Circular 31/2006) respectively. The case studies aims to provide Fire and Rescue Authorities with a flavour of the activities that are being pursued in other Fire and Rescue Authorities to secure efficiency gains with a view to encouraging authorities to consider different approaches which might be applicable to their own authority.
3. The case studies have been explored further and supplemented by additional examples considered by a working group which includes DCLG, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Fire Service College and the Audit Commission. As with the earlier batches, some of the case studies included in this guidance are of projects that are only starting to be implemented, so have yet to be proven to work in practice. Others represent opportunities only available in specific circumstances that may not be available to all FRAs, so cannot be described as universally transferable. They cannot therefore be described as “best” or “good” practice at this stage. The intended purpose of making these case studies widely available is to ensure that individual FRAs are aware of changes in practice which have been successful elsewhere, thereby providing an opportunity for other FRAs to consider whether they could adopt any of the approaches identified in the guidance notes.
4. Batch 3 of the case studies focuses on a range of procurement, financial planning and performance management issues.

PROCUREMENT

5. The procurement case studies include a number of examples from Regional Management Boards. In the East of England, following a successful bid to the Centre of Excellence, a procurement manager has been appointed for a three year term to co-ordinate the work of the region and identify procurement related efficiencies. The East of England's efficiency gains for procurement depend on

having the additional capacity gained from a dedicated post. Efficiency gains of £1.5m over three years are predicted. Further information about the East of England Regional Procurement Group can be obtained from debra.dennis@fire.norfolk.gov.uk

6. Procurement functions have traditionally been discharged at local (and in some areas regional) level and thus may not always have achieved maximum efficiency. The Government's National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2005-08 set out the arrangements for specialised central and regional purchasing. The new national procurement institution, FiReBuy Ltd, has been set up with the aim of making the procurement process more effective and to generate back office and procurement savings for FRAs. FiReBuy has delivered savings on radios, software, smoke alarms, vehicles and operational equipment. Details of these arrangements are at Annex A.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

7. Case studies from two district councils have also been included which we hope may prove useful for FRAs. These have been included to give a flavour of approaches which have worked in two particular areas and which we hope may encourage FRAs to consider approaching local authorities as well as other local organisations, such as the police, for examples. Further local authority examples can be found on the Improvement Development Agency's website at: www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1215907

BATCH 4

8. We will be issuing a further batch of this guidance in the autumn under the theme of partnership management and Community Fire Safety.
9. It is hoped that, with your help, this guidance will grow in coverage and depth over time. Please share with us and keep us up to date with what you are doing in your FRA so that we can include it in updates to this and further guidance.



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Efficiency Case Study in Procurement

The introduction of effective procurement policies has enabled Authorities and Regional Management Boards to make efficiency gains.

LFEPA – Centralised procurement strategy

Previous position	There was no overall strategic responsibility for the procurement function.
Changes made	The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority centralised responsibility for Procurement in 2001 and adopted its first 3 year procurement strategy in April 2002. In 2005 a new strategy was devised, building on the success of the first. Its main themes support the Authority's strategic objectives.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key changes have involved collaboration with other services and authorities, sustainable procurement, a systematic approach to contract management and the simplification of systems. • As an example of collaboration, an agency staff framework agreement was put in place by Thames Valley Police following consultation with potential users, including LFEPA. It is a call-off contract for use by all UK emergency services and is worth about £23m annually. As a result, the annual staff budget has been reduced by £150,000 on a recurring basis. • A wide range of contracts and invoicing arrangements have been replaced by far fewer invoices with more consistent information and reductions in costs such as introduction fees. • The Authority has also been leading on a project funded through the London Centre of Excellence to document best practice in contract and relationship management, and then embed it within London authorities' procurement practices. In this way LFEPA's experience is being shared within the public sector procurement community. • A number of performance management measures are in place, including average time taken from requisition to delivery, prompt payment, net % cash gains achieved on value of all new contracts, and progress against the Fire Service National Procurement Strategy. • All major contracts incorporate key performance indicators, and the Authority has a dedicated contracts management group which oversees how they are applied and advises on contract management generally.
Key benefits	Recurring savings of £329,300
Implemented	The procurement strategy includes an implementation plan for the years 2005/2006 to 2007/2008. It is supported by yearly departmental plans
Contact	Ryan Johnson Tel: 0207 587 6993 Email: ryan.johnson@london-fire.gov.uk

Performance Case Studies in Procurement

The introduction of effective procurement policies has enabled Authorities and Regional Management Boards to make efficiency gains:

North West RMB – Regional framework contracts to replace separate and disparate clothing and PPE contracts

Previous position	In the North West there were previously a number of separate and disparate clothing and PPE contracts, with various arrangements for management and maintenance.
Changes made	Two framework contracts have been let which relate to the supply of PPE and the management and maintenance of PPE.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased level of standardisation across the region. • Significant savings on the two procurement exercises. It is estimated from the experience of Greater Manchester FRS (GMFRS) that savings of 25% could be delivered across the North West region on the maintenance contract. This is based on the fixed price of £110,240 for the first year of a full service contract including laundering, Competence Person inspection and repair, compared to the previous year's cost of £148,000. • Annual on Station inspection of all fire fighting PPE. • Fully compliant PPE which meets/exceeds all national and European standards • Provides a benchmark for service standards and price against which the ICP can be measured. • Introduced Commodity Managers concept. • Tracking and tracing system for PPE. • Agreement of specifications. • Collaborative working. • Working group looking at other areas.
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved fire fighters tunics and over-trousers across the region. • Tracking, tracing and inspection by competent person of all firefighting PPE. • Savings in reduced inventory with pooled stock system. • Standardisation and stock holding by supplier. • Significant cost savings (see Main features above).
Implemented	Maintenance – GMFRS September 2005 others on phased basis. Supply – January 2006.
Contact	Peter Holliday GMFRS Procurement Manager Tel: 0161 736 5866

South East RMB – Contract re-tender to include all FRAs in the Region (Negotiated by Kent Fire & Rescue Service KFRS)

Previous position	The KFRS contract for Occupational Health Services was nearing its expiry date and needed to be replaced via competitive tender. Kent offered its regional partners the opportunity to participate.
Changes made	The requirement specification was extended to include an advisory service and as many of the regional partners requirements as possible.
Main features	<p>The main features of the contract are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-employment health screening; • Routing health assessments & well person screening; • LGV medicals; • Work place assessments; • Sickness absence monitoring; • Operational employees – maternity; • Physiotherapy; • Retirement cases; • Medical appeal hearings & representation at outside bodies; • Advice; • 24 hour telephone helpline; • Occupational health records; • Reports. <p>Role of key players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent led the tendering process engaging other regional partners to provide comments/inputs with the aim of letting a contract that best met the requirements of other authorities; • Surrey played a part in contributing to the requirements specification. Whilst unable to join at the beginning of the contract due to their current arrangements, circumstances have changed and they are evaluating if the contract can meet their revised requirements. <p>The intended outcomes and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a structured approach to provide an appropriate contract; • To obtain best value; • To provide a contract that was available for other Authorities to join. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the input from our other eight regional partners; • Deriving a requirements specification meeting as many of the regional partners requirements as possible without making the resulting contract unmanageable; • Arranging the pricing schedule in a way that would allow joining Authorities to accept some but not all of the available services. <p>Communication across the organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication was achieved via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meetings of the SE Procurement Working Group; – Papers sent out by the SE Procurement Working Group.
Key benefits	The provision of an Occupational Health & Advisory Services contract that is open to other Authorities that may wish to join. Other Authorities have shown an interest in the contract. It has not been feasible for most to join at this stage, primarily due to having established arrangements/contracts or that local requirements may not be fulfilled by the Kent contract. However, in looking at services or in re-tendering, valuable administrative time is saved by using the ITT as a basis for other contracts.
Implemented	The contract was placed on 1 April 2006.

Contact	Peter Austen Contracts & Technical Services Manager Tel: 01622 698282 Email: peter.austen@kent.fire-uk.org and/or Mike Bush Contracts Officer Tel: 01622 698285 Email: mike.bush@kent.fire-uk.org
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South East RMB – Extension of existing LA contract to give all FRAs in the Region the opportunity to participate

Previous position	Each FRA had its own arrangements for obtaining print and design services. Many are based on using the services of their County Councils or through local arrangements.
Changes made	The Kent Buying Consortium (comprising the County Council, a unitary authority, a number of districts and Kent FRA) re-tendered its requirement for print and design. The opportunity was taken to give all FRAs in the South East region the opportunity to benefit from this process. Kent Fire and Rescue Service were part of the evaluation team and represented the two other regional partners. The contract is open to these nominated Authorities.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A contract for printers, print and designers and designers. • The role of key leaders was to represent the interested fire partners and participate in the evaluation process. This demonstrated a collaborative approach, not only in Kent but across the wider region. • The main challenge for this was to ensure that the contract met the desired outcomes of a range of organisations. This was achieved by using a project group to produce the specification and evaluate the tenders, under the leadership of Medway Council. This gave the widest possible input into identifying the needs of the organisations involved. • The following link is to the report produced by Medway Council, the awarding Authority http://ww2.medway.gov.uk/FTP/Cabinet_Decisions/is934/reports/report_934_1335.doc
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative arrangement which combined print volumes from a number of Authorities. • To remove the need for separate tenders, rather an arrangement for obtaining quotations from the contracted providers. • Using the contract brings savings in administrative time in tendering local arrangements. Whilst it has not been feasible for all Authorities to join, due to having current contracts or arrangements with their respective County Councils, the opportunity still exists for them to access the contract.
Implemented	Contract started 15 January 2006.
Contact	Peter Austen – Kent Fire and Rescue Tel: 01622 698282 Email: Peter.austen@kent.fire-uk.org

South East RMB – Regional review of Stores & Distribution

Previous position	Each of the FRAs comprising the SE Region operates an equipment store. The National Strategy requires that a review of stores and distribution be undertaken to coincide with the introduction of the ICP.
Changes made	The purpose of the initial review was to identify the options available for the review of stores & distribution and to identify potential savings.
Main features	<p>The main features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering, e.g. staff numbers, duties of staff, type of equipment stored, etc; • Meeting with other agencies, authorities, providers etc. to establish the potential for collaboration across the region and the opportunities for direct delivery of goods, etc; • Risk analysis associated with the identified options; • SWOT and PEST analysis; • Cost analysis. <p>Role of key leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) led the review, gathering data from other regional partners. • Once the data had been gathered KFRS conducted the review and analysis of the data asking additional questions, where appropriate, with a view to refining the data. <p>Intended outcomes and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather information on the existing storage and distribution arrangements within the SE Region; • To assess whether a single SE Regional Store was practicable; • To examine the possibility of sub regional stores; • To assess potential advantages associated with the amalgamation of store facilities; • To identify risks associated with change; • To identify potential savings; • To recommend future action(s). <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main challenge of this project was the gathering of accurate information within the identified timeframe. <p>Management of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although changes have not yet been implemented the study has identified that there is likely to be a change in the work content of some staff. Within Kent the management team has kept the staff likely to be affected fully apprised of the likely outcomes; • Kent has encouraged regional partners to involve their staff in the same manner. <p>Communication across the organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication was achieved via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meetings of the SE Procurement Working Group; – Papers sent out by the SE Procurement Working Group; • Meetings and discussions with individual FRAs, Centre of Excellence, NHS Logistics and other potential providers details of which are reported to the regional procurement working group.
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review has provided a database of information that can now be improved by the second phase of the study. • Undertaking the review early will give the SE Region a better chance of meeting the target within the National Procurement Strategy. • Kent, East Sussex and West Sussex have formed a group to conduct the second phase of the review thus providing a pilot study for the SE Region.

Implemented	Changes have not yet been implemented. Individual FRAs have or are in the process of reviewing their stock holding with a view to reducing the level of stock held by means of write-off, sourcing direct delivery, arranging consignment stock, etc.
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South West RMB – Regional Procurement Strategy

Previous position	No procurement function, strategy or staff in the SWFRS in 2003. Little compliance with EU regulations and legislation. Focus on purchasing and payment rather than strategic activities, but willing to collaborate.
Changes made	Regional Procurement strategy, function agreed with 3-year work programme. Designated staff in each service undertaking professional development. Delivery of strategic procurement activities resulting in cashable gains and efficiencies.
Main features	<p>Regional Procurement Strategy for 2005-2008 agreed with an emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development of dedicated staff • Establishing a professional strategic procurement function • Establishing transparent regional procurements • Conducting robust business cases and option appraisal • Transformation of purchasing practices and processes • Introduction of regional approach to e-procurement • Realisation of efficiency gains over 3 years of 1m (2.5% of spend) <p>Role of key leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMB and CFOA responsible for scrutiny of procurement programme, regional procurements and delivering efficiency agenda. • Procurement Committee-Principal Officer and Procurement Officer in each service responsible for delivering on a matrix structure key goods and services and scrutiny of processes and procurements. • Regional Procurement Manager responsible for management of procurement work-programme, staff training and development, liaison with key stakeholders. • Procurement Practitioners-Procurement Officers responsible for delivery of regional procurements, realising savings and efficiencies. • Appliance and Equipment Workwear (AEW)-Senior operational officers responsible for project lead, specifying, monitoring and management of operational contracts. <p>The intended outcomes and evaluation</p> <p>Outcomes are based regionally on meeting a challenging 3-year work programme and individually within each service through a performance assessment undertaken annually on development of the procurement function and practices.</p> <p>Mission is to ensure a professional matrix procurement function, delivering regional procurements, improving the quality of the goods and services and realising savings and efficiencies in the processes and practices.</p> <p>Challenges</p> <p>Regional Procurement Workstream is a change management programme of people, roles and processes. Challenges have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with a wide variety of stakeholders • Buy-in of change with a large variety of stakeholders • Ensuring continuous senior management support • Developing local procurement awareness • Operating a challenging work programme with limited resources <p>Management of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on consultation, communication, options appraisal and conducting robust business cases. • Training of staff to deliver transparent, professional procurements, whole life cycle costing and business benefits. • Establishing local procurement groups with key stakeholders to ensure change at local level.

<p>Main features (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of e-procurement to ensure change of processes and transparent processes. • Use of ICT to communicate through websites, directories, databases. • Project approach to each procurement, to establish ownership and roles and responsibilities. <p>Communication across the organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication throughout the region through committees, user groups, technology, websites, newsletters and advocates within each service • References to any relevant public documents such as committee reports • Regional Procurement Strategy • Service Procurement Policies • Procurement Committee Meetings • Procurement Practitioners Meetings • RMB reports • Websites (www.bluelight.gov.uk/ www.blpd.gov.uk) • Newsletters • Articles 																						
<p>Key benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic direction of procurement activities • Transformation of procurement function and practices • Development of procurement staff • Delivery of key operational regional contracts • Use of corporate regional contracts • Improvements of quality of goods and services • Procurement involvement for other FRA projects • Regional procurement for RTC (Road Traffic Collision) now a national interim arrangement • Regional project for contracts database now a national arrangement • Regional project for e-tendering now a national arrangement • Cashable savings over 2 years circa £900k • Will meet the £1m over 3 years savings target • Estimated savings for P-cards project circa £500k <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Cashable Income/Savings (Gershon)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recorded savings from regional procurement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">370,794</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income from regional procurement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">101,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total for 2005</td> <td style="text-align: right;">471,791</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">2006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Savings from Breathing Apparatus (Somerset alone)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">158,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Savings from Hydraulic Equipment (Dorset alone)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">220,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income from regional procurement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">45,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total for 2006 (part year)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">423,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total for 2005 and 2006 (part year)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">894,791</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Cashable Income/Savings (Gershon)		2005	£	Recorded savings from regional procurement	370,794	Income from regional procurement	101,000	Total for 2005	471,791	2006		Savings from Breathing Apparatus (Somerset alone)	158,000	Savings from Hydraulic Equipment (Dorset alone)	220,000	Income from regional procurement	45,000	Total for 2006 (part year)	423,000	Total for 2005 and 2006 (part year)	894,791
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<p>Implemented</p>	<p>2004 Model business case Standard PTQ, ITT, Evaluation Proformas Established regional portal Established contracts database www.blpd.gov.uk Established regional stationery, computer consumables, hardware and software, watercoolers contracts Regional training programme started</p> <p>2005 Regional E-Tendering solution Business Case for Breathing Apparatus Business Case for RTC Business Case for Asset Management Solution Business Case for Fire Safety Solution Business Case for Occupational Health Business Case for Light Operational Vehicles PID for P-Cards Appointed P-Cards implementation manager Staff undertaking professional CIPS qualifications</p> <p>2006 Regional Contract for Breathing Apparatus Regional Contract for RTC Regional Contract for Asset Management PID for e-marketplace Business Case for P-cards Prince 2 Training Regional Spend Analysis with Exor</p> <p>Due later in 2006 Fire Safety Solution Light Operational Vehicles Contract Occupational Health Contract Leadership and Management Training E-Marketplace Business Case Regional Approach to temporary staff contract</p>																																																								
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West Midlands RMB – Liaison with the Regional Centre of Excellence (RCE)

Previous position	FRA's had little or no involvement with the full detail available via the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCE).
Changes made	The changes made are greater involvement with the RCE and this has created far more access to the RCE's work and electronic data sharing. Includes bidding options for direct financial support.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main features include access to a much wider database of procurement activity. Also access to contracts which have led to cashable and non-cashable savings, e.g. agency staff contracts. • Challenges and change management issues include the management of large amounts of data and options appraisal. • Communication is facilitated by the electronic circulation of data.
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above £15k direct funding for consultancy to assist in the stockholding rationalisation work package. • Better procurement by better informed, better qualified staff and access to wider procurement expertise and contract databases.
Implemented	June 2005 – ongoing.
Contact	Alan Brandon, Regional Procurement Project Manager Tel: 0121 380 6007 Fax: 0121 380 7006 Email: alan.brandon@wmfs.net

West Midlands RMB – Regional collation of baseline data

Previous position	Procurement activities took place in each of the five FRAs with limited regional awareness of the range, timing, spend, specification and supplier base for the provision of goods, works and services. Albeit there was some very good individual procurement practice in each FRA in its own right.
Changes made	The Regional Management Board approved £20k funding for an external consultant to produce a baseline report that collated all of the above to provide a prioritised action plan to gain the benefits of regional procurement.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure breakdown by category. • Analysis of existing Standing Orders. • Baseline review for each FRA. • Highlighted good practice. • Promoted areas for action. • First draft of a regional contracts register. • Analysis of spend by type. • A baseline to start from. <p>Members of the West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) approved the funding and received the report. Regional PRINCE2 Project Manager to action with Lead Officers from each FRA.</p> <p>The outcomes are a contracts register, a clearly prioritised project mandate (action plan). In time, the evaluation will include the measure of cashable and non-cashable savings for maintained or increased quality of goods, works, services.</p> <p>The challenge is to agree a common standard and jointly work on a number of differently timed and styled contracts and work them up into Regional contracts.</p> <p>The management of change is controlled by a PRINCE2 Project Board reporting to a Programme Board and a Regional Management Board. The Project Mandate is focused on the National Framework Document.</p> <p>See www.wmrmb.co.uk for public documents/RMB reports.</p>
Key benefits	As detailed above.
Implemented	Report received 2005 – action ongoing.
Contact	<p>Alan Brandon, Regional Procurement Project Manager</p> <p>Tel: 0121 380 6007</p> <p>Fax: 0121 380 7006</p> <p>Email: alan.brandon@wmfs.net</p>

Hampshire – Extension of Ambulance Trust agreement to Fire and Rescue Service

Previous position	Bio Hazard Face Masks (FFP3V) on special order with the Ambulance trusts. (No agreement previously bought ad-hoc to historic data the FFP2 mask at £1.52 each.)
Changes made	HFRS moved from this original activity and now orders through the above contract through Romar Work Wear. (This agreement was originally set up by the Ambulance trusts due to their large volume call off orders for these Bio Hazard masks. Current price £1.10 each.) This has saved HFRS in the region of £2,520.00 per annum based on current usage.
Main features	The main features of this contract is its improved rates for a higher level protection mask. Improved equipment in service at a reduced cost than first anticipated. No anticipated changes in service or operations as the current specification is over and above what was previously used. Romar Work Wear (Mr Richard Hare) 07884 180091.
Key benefits	Reduced costs to HFRS (see under 'changes made' above). Part of a bigger framework agreement so efficiencies were gained by not going to tender or quotation. Applicability to other services will be if they use similar masks as Romar can provide FFP2 masks if preferred.
Implemented	Contract and price agreed 27-01-2006 no expiry as no contract in place ordering ad-hoc as required by usage.
Contact	Paul Drake (Procurement Manager) Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service Tel: 02380 644000 ext 3304 Email: paul.drake@hantsfire.gov.uk

Hampshire – Utilisation of agreement set up by DCLG for USAR teams

Previous position	Thermal Imaging Cameras DCLG contract A917427. (No agreement previously used bought ad-hoc to historic and quoted prices.)
Changes made	HFRS moved from this original activity and now through speaking with E2V supplier and an agreement by DCLG to buy for the USAR teams, prices have been reduced by £400.00 per camera. (This agreement was originally set up by DCLG for their specific use on procuring a number of cameras for delivery into the relevant services and it has now been opened up for use by the Fire Services for any purchases that they wish to make to improve their capability in this area.) This has saved HFRS in the region of £400 per unit based on the last 4 purchased at the end of 2005.
Main features	The main features of this contract is its improved rates for Argus 3 Cameras. Contact at E2V Mr Gary Collins 01245 453774. This contract reference (A917427) needs to be quoted on subsequent purchase orders. Improved equipment in service at a reduced cost than first anticipated. No anticipated changes in service or operations as the current specification is the same, although an Argus 4 model is now available.
Key benefits	Reduced costs to HFRS (see under 'changes made' above). Part of a framework agreement so efficiencies were gained by not going out to quote. Applicability to other services if they use these cameras.
Implemented	Prices agreed as at 10-11-2005
Contact	Paul Drake (Procurement Manager) Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service Tel: 02380 644000 EXT 3304 Email: paul.drake@hantsfire.gov.uk

Performance Case Studies in Performance Management

A range of initiatives aimed at improving performance management

Essex – Change in Leadership Style

Previous position	Essex Fire and Rescue had endured a difficult industrial relationship in the past. In addition there was a lack of clearly focused strategic aims.
Changes made	A change in leadership style was put in place, focusing on individual and team contributions, responsibility and accountability. Highly participative throughout the Service, proactively engaging trade unions as partners. A move to a performance-based culture using specialist external assistance and deliberate, marketed focus-change.
Main features	<p>Main features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint partnership agreement signed with FBU setting out agreed way of working and the principles underpinning the relationship based on TUC Partnership best practice. Extending this to all representative bodies. • Using management consultants to assist in developing clear, outward looking priorities and objectives, cascading to all levels of the service using proven methodologies. • Widespread participation and consultation using key change agents. • Significantly increased elected member involvement. • Explicitly rejecting poor performance and using affirmative action where necessary. • Adopting a highly effective communications and marketing process for the service wide change programme. <p>Role of Key Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible and transformational leadership style, setting out the reasons for, nature of and benefits arising from the improvement programme. • Making people feel valued by involving, consulting, listening and responding to core issues. • Displaying a clear set of values – open, honest and participative, supporting individuals and teams to accept responsibility for their own improvement. <p>The intended outcomes and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved industrial relations, leading to a reduction in the number of ‘reactionary industrial conflicts’, faster progress on policy development and implementation, greater degree of positive trade union involvement in improvement delivery, improved morale. This has led to the development of a much more effective working relationship. Regular localised, reactionary events have reduced to virtually zero, union involvement in policy and implementation issues is greatly improved. The levels of sickness absence were adopted as an indicator of morale, with levels falling by 25% in the last 12 months. • Clear, easy to understand and relevant strategy for future priorities and objectives underpinning a new performance management framework – A simple, easy to understand ‘strategy on a page’ setting out the Service’s future direction, priorities and business objectives has now been adopted. This is being cascaded throughout the Service, with clear performance measures providing a simple, but effective performance management framework. • Higher degree of involvement of staff at all levels generating ownership of improvement programme – Staff at all levels have/are now contributing to the Service’s business, setting local priorities contributing directly to the Service’s overall priorities and objectives.

<p>Main features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased delivery of community safety using broader range of partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Service now has a comprehensive community safety programme building on existing partnerships and expanding dramatically the number of joint initiatives, including being partner in pilot Local Area Agreement. The Service now runs and is developing a number of flagship safety campaigns involving local and national partners. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingrained scepticism of workforce in respect of modernisation. • Lack of understanding of need for change and improvement. • Significant lack of trust in management. • Perceived de-professionalisation of service. • Size and breadth of the required improvement programme. <p>Management of Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of research and evidence-based decision-making allows clear and supportable arguments to be presented underpinning reasons for change. • Using an incremental programme of development over a three year period ensuring improvement planning matches capacity, also ensuring that there is a logical flow to the development. • Linking the improvement programme to elements of what was best about the Service and peoples’ roles. • Clearly setting out that the aim is to become the best fire and rescue service in the country, building pride and value into team and individual roles. <p>Communication across organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The change programme has been entitled ‘Getting Back to What Matters’ with a simple message as to what it means to people. This has proved very successful in terms of giving the programme an identity to which people can subscribe and contribute to. • A highly effective multi-media presentation was developed setting out in plain terms the long-term direction of the Service. • New communications tools have been developed including a team-briefing system, the introduction of a new service magazine and monthly news DVD ‘Smoke Signals’. In addition a new web site has been introduced, as has a new intranet with notice board style chat room facilities. • Senior managers have made significant investment in face-to-face communication and groups of change agents have been developed across specific elements of the service. • The Service’s corporate image is being developed to more adequately reflect the high-quality service provider and public sector partner we wish to be.
<p>Key benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer communities. • Clear strategic direction, simple to understand and communicate strategy, and developing performance management framework. • High degree of political support and the development of a unique Fire Authority governance structure focussing on performance and innovation. • Improving morale and reduction in sickness absence by 25% in the last 12 months. • Organisation-wide knowledge of improvement programme. • Improving external perception of Essex as a partner. • Increased and increasing delivery of community safety. • Improving service performance.
<p>Implemented</p>	<p>Change programme began in August 2005</p>
<p>Contact</p>	<p>DCFO Mark Jones Email: mark.jones@essex-fire.gov.uk</p>

Humberside – Improved ‘Golden Thread’ from strategy to action: Plan on a page

Previous position	The old performance management system consisted of a set of Chief Officer Priorities, the Authority's annual strategic objectives with a number of tasks listed beneath to show progress. Station plans were put into the PB views performance management software system.
Changes made	The main change this has instigated is an improved golden thread which translates the strategic intent to front line action and focus. The linkages are clearer and measurable. Consultation with the public also took place when setting corporate objectives.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic plan is a “plan on a page”. • The principal management team, Chair of the Fire Authority and area managers were all involved and took ownership of the plan. • It is intended to have a clearer perspective on what it is we are trying to achieve and everyone in the organization can see how and where they contribute. • A key challenge was managing the large work load that comes with reviewing the whole planning cycle and corporate objectives, and communicating the changes to the organisation.
Key benefits	It is outcome focused and measures activity as well as the effects of those activities.
Implemented	September 2005.
Contact	Tony Parrott Tel: 01482 567414

Humberside – Networked arrangement for Retained Duty System

Previous position	Historically, retained availability was managed and administered on Humberside Fire and Rescue Service's (HFRS) 22 retained stations by a mixture of local manual systems; whiteboards, paper and bulldog clips, telephone calls, etc.
Changes made	This inconsistent arrangement has been replaced by a fully networked computer system accessible by station personnel, managers and administrators across the service.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In early 2004 HFRS embarked on the in-house development of a "Retained Availability System". The initial brief was to produce a networked system to manage compliance under new contractual arrangements for Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel with the emphasis on speed and ease of use. Key to the success of the project has been a close and positive relationship between developer and end user. Enhancements to the system resulting from requests and suggestions from users, managers and administrators have led to significant further developments beyond the initial brief. • Using an Admin Module, RDS personnel can input availability amendments at their station where the process typically takes less than twenty seconds from starting up the program to clicking Exit. Personnel can also 'text' availability amendments by mobile phone; a response is 'texted' back which includes warnings of any significant effects on appliance availability. Availability can be monitored via the Internet (www.retainedavailability.co.uk) and a facility to submit amendments via the Internet, currently under development, will be available shortly. Also under development is the ability to enter, manage and analyse turnout and attendance information. • A Station Module shows current availability and is used on stations for operational turnouts. A Brigade Module displays a map showing the current 'state of the brigade' in terms of retained availability. • A key part of the system is a set of extensive auditing and reporting tools. Reports can be generated against a variety of criteria; for example, compliance with Declared Availability Bands, annual leave, the system can be "rolled back" to show the position at a certain date and time, etc. At the request of users, ad hoc queries and reports can be produced and embedded in the system; for example, analysis of 'pumps off the run'. • The Retained Availability System is part of HFRS's wider RDS modernisation agenda which is championed at Principal Officer and Fire Authority level. • Two key challenges have been met. The replacement of a range of manual systems which have been in use for many, many years with a complex technical solution but presented to the user in a quick, easy to use interface. Secondly ensuring the 'buy-in' of users; this has been achieved by working closely with users at all stages and has been a significant factor in the success of the project. This latter item is also a key factor in both the management of change and communication during the life of the project.
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of management and administration across the service. • Monitoring of RDS contractual compliance. • Extensive auditing and reporting. • Availability can be amended remotely.
Implemented	Piloted 2004-2005, fully live on 1 April 2005.
Contact	Richard Taylor Tel: 01482 567449. Email: rtaylor@humbersidefire.gov.uk Demo available at www.retainedavailability.co.uk

Greater Manchester – Borough and Local Management

<p>Previous position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCFO overall responsibility for performance management. • Annual Service Action Plan. • Three territorial commands using BVPIs with very few local PIs. • PIs reporting quarterly to Fire Authority. • SAP reported every six months. • Very well managed at corporate level.
<p>Changes made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced borough command in May 2005. • Performance Managed at local level by Borough Commanders. • More local PIs introduced. • Audit and review team introduced 1 x AMA and 5 x SMBs as part of Central Service Delivery. • Monthly monitoring of performance by ACFO with borough commanders as a group. • Process Greater Manchester Review of Improvement in Performance (GRIP).
<p>Main features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main features of the system are that PIs are managed at the appropriate level with the line managers who have responsibility for them. • Elected members meet with individual boroughs who deal with the wards they represent and discuss the issues in the areas based on the PIs and the trends. • The key leaders in the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Fire Authority members B) Deputy County Fire Officer C) Assistant County Fire Officer (Service Delivery) D) 11 Borough commanders. • The intended outcomes are that ultimately there will be a reduction in the number of incidents with this being continued over time. Local community safety initiatives can be more effectively evaluated based on the trends. Successful initiatives can be used in all boroughs across Greater Manchester as best practice. • The challenges are for borough commanders and their staff to establish effective means of managing the performance at local level appropriate to the risks in their area. • The change has been managed as part of the introduction of borough commands. There have been no significant difficulties with the introduction of the approach as it is similar to that used previously under the territorial command structure. • The GRIP process provides an effective means for communicating performance management across the organisation as it is managed at the right level via borough commanders. • Fire Authority Members are given regular updates on an Individual basis on the performance at ward level within the borough they represent. • The Chair and Vice Chair are updated on a monthly basis and the full Fire Authority is updated on performance against the targets set, on a quarterly basis. • Identified Fire Authority Members are involved in the specific monitoring within specific areas e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Absence Management Board – Innovations and Partnerships – Equality and Diversity. • Progress of individual initiatives are reported at intervals to the appropriate Authority Committee which meet on a monthly basis. • The overall performances against the Milestones/targets set in Service Action Plan are reported to the Brigade Management Team on a six weekly basis. • An interim out turn of the Service Action Plan is presented to the Full Fire Authority on a six monthly basis.

Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main benefits are the management of performance at the appropriate level. • Targeted community safety initiatives based on intelligence lead performance information. • A reduction in the number of incidents resulting in a better service to the local community.
Implemented	Changes were made as part of the introduction of a borough command base service delivery structure in May 2005.
Contact	Assistant County Fire Officer (Service Delivery) Patrick Corcoran Tel: 0161 608 4004.

Local Authority Case Studies in Performance Management

Chichester District Council – Improvement planning

Previous position	Ad hoc monitoring arrangements.
Changes made	Review and monitoring of key information through six-weekly meetings of the Improvement Planning Group.
Main features	<p>At a senior level, the Improvement Planning Group (IPG) – comprising the strategic management team and two portfolio holders and service heads – keeps a grip on performance by regularly monitoring and reviewing key information. This sets a strong example for staff at all levels.</p> <p>The group looks at the long-term vision and improvement for the authority as well as short-term performance.</p> <p>The success of the IPG in supporting improvement is made possible by its ability to make recommendations to the Executive Board (Cabinet) for changes in resourcing. This has happened in the two areas where improvement has most been sought, planning and benefits, with additional funds being released to provide additional resources (including staffing), together with upgrades in information technology.</p> <p>Members are also actively involved. They sit on the IPG and each portfolio holder signs off service action plans and annual performance analysis sheets for their areas of responsibility. These sheets set out performance outturn, trends, targets for the next 3 years, and comparison to other authorities. Commentary is provided by the respective Heads of Service on outturns and targets.</p> <p>The IPG sets a strong example in the high value it places on monitoring and review (reflected in the time it sets aside for this) and this is emulated at other levels in the Council. Time is regularly allocated at a service level to talk about performance and improvement, and to plan how to resolve performance issues.</p> <p>A robust framework</p> <p>Good performance management is also illustrated by Chichester’s clear framework and annual cycle for performance management that is integrated with the budget and with improvement. At the top level, Chichester went through a process of thinking through which of the community priorities they can deliver and this helped form the basis for prioritisation of corporate priorities.</p> <p>Challenge and support to solve performance problems</p> <p>The focus is not simply on monitoring. It is also on solving performance problems. If performance is not as expected, those accountable attend the IPG to talk through why there is a problem, how it can be unpicked and what can be done. For example, additional resources can be allocated where necessary. Timescales are set for reporting back on improvements in areas of concern. Planning is one of the areas kept under close review by the IPG.</p> <p>Understanding what drives performance</p> <p>The Council have moved on from one-off Best Value Reviews. Best Value is now seen as part of the culture of the authority. The aim is to continually improve services, all the time, in terms of quality, speed of delivery, and cost.</p> <p>Continuously improving performance management</p> <p>The focus on continuous improvement at Chichester is also reflected in the approach to performance management more specifically, with elements regularly picked off for improvement. Project planning is currently under review and a Performance Improvement Guide is being developed to pick up on developments in the framework nationally and locally.</p>

Key benefits	This has resulted in significant improvements in key areas such as Planning and Housing Benefits. Key performance indicators for planning have risen by 20 percentage points. The average time taken to process new benefits claims has improved from below average to almost top quartile, reducing by twelve days in a year. Un-audited figures for 2003/04 point to further improvements.
Implemented	2003.
Contact	Email: skane@chichester.gov.uk For more detail from case study and further examples please go to: www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=1215907

Lewes District Council – Developing commitment to and ownership of performance management at every level

Previous position	Ad hoc arrangements.
Changes made	<p>Work to develop the approach to performance management began before CPA in 2003 but the inspection helped Lewes focus on what needed to be done. Lewes identified four clear improvement themes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear framework that was recognised and understood within the organisation. • Ensure monitoring and measuring systems provided the right information at the right time and that the information was acted upon. • Communicate and engage with councillors, managers, staff and service users about performance. • Develop the culture, skills and disciplines necessary to make it all work.
Main features	<p>Through the project Lewes set a number of improvement objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen our approach to setting priorities linked to the medium-term budget. • To develop commitment to and ownership of performance management at every level (more detail below). • To develop tools and mechanisms to support effective performance monitoring and measurement. • To improve staff and customer involvement in service standards, improvement planning and target setting. • To support better performance management linked to our strategic partnerships. <p>Developing commitment to and ownership of performance management at every level</p> <p>The commitment to improving and developing performance management at a senior level was already in existence. Senior councillors and the Corporate Management Team had previously agreed a number of areas for improvement as part of our CPA Improvement Plan.</p> <p>A small team of officers and councillors assigned to the PMMI Action Research project used examples and experiences from the project and good practice from other councils to draw up a framework document which would act as a means of communicating the approach more widely both internally and externally.</p> <p>The Framework clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of councillors, officers and staff thereby ensuring everyone is aware of their role in performance management. It also captures the key elements of the approach, demonstrates how they are linked and shows how, as a whole, these elements can help the Council to improve services and performance.</p> <p>The commitment to improving performance management was further enhanced by the Council's acceptance onto the PMMI Project. The potential benefits of participating were communicated to councillors and staff through internal Briefing Notes, emphasising the 'buy-in' from Cabinet Members and Corporate Management Team. This also resulted in the initial decision to appoint a Cabinet member onto the PMMI Action Research Team. Member involvement was subsequently enhanced by the addition of a Review Board (Scrutiny) Chair. A recent review of Lead Councillors' portfolios and powers of delegation has provided greater responsibility and accountability to them for the actions and performance of services within each of their portfolios.</p> <p>Ownership of performance management at second and third tier management level was enhanced by broadening the membership and remit of the Performance Management Group. Originally this group focused on the technical aspects of national performance indicators, but now includes service heads in developing performance management systems and practices. This group shares good practice and collectively tries to resolve performance problems. It has a clear link to the Corporate Management Team to ensure that performance issues which cannot be resolved easily are raised, considered and dealt with. In addition, Corporate Management Team receives a monthly report on the achievement of key targets within the Council Plan.</p>

Main features	Ownership at lower levels is being developed through team meetings, appraisals and induction sessions for new staff whereby there is increasing emphasis on team targets and performance, developing better customer-based performance information and identifying areas for potential improvement.
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By avoiding a 'big bang' approach the development of performance management is not seen as something new and additional. We have focused on building on the systems and good practice which already exists and strengthening areas around service planning, performance monitoring and reporting, customer feedback and complaints and internal communication systems. • Councillors at both Executive and Scrutiny level have a greater awareness of how their respective roles contribute to performance management. • Service planning is now well-embedded and continues to develop as a tool for councillors, managers and staff to establish targets, and monitor progress and performance.
Implemented	2003
Contact	<p>Email: sue.harvey@lewes.gov.uk</p> <p>For more detail from case study and further examples please go to: www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=1215907</p>

Performance Case Study in Financial Planning

Kent – Integrated service and financial planning

Previous position	Budgets were developed on a bid process, with individual ‘bids’ being considered in isolation.
Changes made	A strong integration of service planning and financial planning has enabled all key developments to be fully funded, through a combination of “re-cycled” funds (i.e. budget savings redirected to pressure headings) and new funds.
Main features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All management reports that seek a decision on a new investment or policy, or a change in the way an activity is delivered, or procured requires the resource implications to be identified, prior to the proposal being agreed. This means that the financial implications are considered at the time the decision is made, and allows the costs to be reflected in future budget developments. • The investment programmes (for replacement vehicles, premises and IS/IT infrastructure) are developed on a medium to long term basis and are considered alongside one another, to enable resources to be directed to the area of greatest need. • The processes in place enable a 3-year medium term financial plan to be produced, which allows the medium term funding implications of decisions to be taken in context of the overall impact on the council tax payer. • Often growth budget is provided on the best information available at the time that the budget is built. Sometimes the pressure doesn’t materialise, or sometimes it is less than originally anticipated – where growth funds are provided, this is done on a ring-fenced basis until actual need has been established (and proven). • Regular and detailed budget monitoring (including predictive forecasts) are presented at a variety of forums, to enable variances from budget to be dealt with promptly and proactively. • Detailed “spending plans” are required from all budget holders at the start of the financial year, to illustrate their intended spending. Whilst these can (and do) subsequently change during the year, the spending plan enables comparisons to be made across different services. • All of these measures mean that at all levels in the chain of delegated budget management responsibilities are aware of, and are kept informed of budget issues as they arise. This helps with in-year budget management, but is especially useful in informing future budget planning and prioritisation exercises. • Communication issues – Aside from the monthly management reports, other information sources include on-line real-time financial management information that is accessible by all budget managers and all Authority and committee reports, which are available on the internet.
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets are able to be planned to minimise the impact on the council tax payer, whilst directing funds to the areas which support service delivery and the achievement of the Authority’s objectives. • Most budgetary pressures are flagged and quantified in sufficient time for proactive measures to be taken ensure that all key service pressures are adequately funded. • Decisions on new policies, investments and activities are made in the knowledge of the resource implications they will have – both revenue and capital; financial and other (e.g. HR or training). • The requirements of the Prudential Code, three year settlements and other best practice guidelines in respect of the production of a 3-year medium term financial plan are able to be complied with.

Implemented	Over a number of years the financial processes are continually being reviewed and improved. Many improvements have been made since the implementation of the new financial system, in 2003, which has improved information available to budget managers.
Contact	Sue McGonigal Head of Finance Kent Fire & Rescue Service Tel: 01622 698262

Annex A

FiReBuy Ltd

As explained in the Procurement section at the beginning of this guidance note, FiReBuy Ltd has been set up with the aim of making the procurement process more effective and to generate savings for FRAs. Details of the arrangements which have been put in place for FRAs to utilise and of some of the available savings follow:

HANDHELD RADIOS

- This Framework Agreement was let in December 2005. Hereford and Worcester FRA, by using the new framework agreement negotiated by Firebuy Ltd, have been able to increase the number of radios provided and still demonstrate a budgetary saving – their budget allocation was originally for a total of approximately 250 radios (supply only). They have increased this to 362 (meeting the operational needs of the brigade completely) whilst saving £12,000 on the budget allocation. LFEPA have estimated that cashable gains in the region of 15% can be achieved by using this framework agreement.

SOFTWARE

Firebuy has provided licences for the following solutions which have been made available to all English FRAs:

- Manual Handling software – Together with the Fire Service Procurement Association, Firebuy has assisted in the development of a software package called FireStore. Firebuy has provided 2 user licences for each English FRA to enable them to identify and mitigate manual handling risks.
- Blue Light Procurement Database – This database allows FRAs to store and share contract information with Police and Fire & Rescue Services. It has been funded for 2005/06 and 2006/07. This is worth £600 per FRA.
- Bluelight eTendering solution – This solution has been demonstrated to all Regions. It allows FRAs to obtain quotes and tenders electronically which saves officer time, reduces human error and reduces advertising, printing and postage costs. This provides cashable gains of £1,150 per FRA.

SMOKE ALARMS

- This framework agreement was let in December 2005 and secured savings over the previous framework agreement let in December 2003 by London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). The saving over the cheapest 10 year smoke alarm on the new framework and the old framework agreement was approximately 2%. Depending on the usage of this framework agreement, potential savings of up to £400k could be achieved over the 2 year framework if all FRAs purchased smoke alarms off the framework. LFEPA have calculated that cashable gains in the region of £0.30 per smoke alarm (depending on model) can be achieved (using the guidance in FRSC 14/2006).

VEHICLES AND OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT

- The existing framework agreements for pumping appliances let by the Fire Service Procurement Association and the Fire Service Appliance Consortium run until April 2007. The replacement pumping appliance framework agreement commenced the tender process in May 2006 and is scheduled for award during January 2007.
- A number of interim arrangements for vehicles and operational equipment endorsed by Firebuy are available for FRAs to use. These include arrangements for Aerial Appliances, Combined Aerial Rescue Pumps (CARP), Road Traffic Accident Equipment and Operational Equipment.