



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/08/27						
MEETING	DEVON AND SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY						
DATE OF MEETING	23 OCTOBER 2008						
SUBJECT OF REPORT	PROVISION OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)						
LEAD OFFICER	Head of Physical Assets						
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the national Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) contract be adopted for the provision of PPE and that the associated commitment on the revenue budget in 2009/10 and subsequent years be approved.</i>						
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The existing South West FRS contract used by DSFRS for fire-fighters Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is due to expire in 2009.</p> <p>It is now proposed that the national Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) be adopted with its fully managed service option for the Service from 2009 for duration of up to 14 years.</p> <p>In addition to providing the full range of fire-fighter PPE clothing, the contract also offers a wide range of other clothing such as work wear, and services such as laundry.</p>						
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The financial implications involve an increase in the revenue budget over current levels as follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>2009/10</td> <td>£63,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010/11</td> <td>£264,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td>£209,000</td> </tr> </table>	2009/10	£63,000	2010/11	£264,000	2011/12	£209,000
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APPENDICES	A. Firebuy Integrated Clothing Project leaflet (enclosed separately with agenda).						
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS							

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) is a national contract negotiated and managed by Firebuy specifically for the purpose of supplying Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS). It forms part of a number of major contracts aimed at strategic supply to the FRS as part of the National Procurement Strategy emanating from the Fire & Rescue National Framework and the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004. Firebuy is the agency set up to negotiate, co-ordinate and manage these contracts as part of the national strategy.
- 1.2 The prime supplier to the ICP is Bristol Uniforms and the contract offers a wide range of garments and items of PPE and work-wear with a range of support services, such as laundering. The Structural PPE ensemble includes tunic, leggings, helmet, fire hood, gloves, leather boots and rubber boots.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The South West FRS's have been successful in recent years in working together under the Procurement Committee to negotiate and let a number of regionally based contracts for the supply of goods and services. This group was successful in establishing the current contract for the supply of PPE.
- 2.2 Both the former Devon (DFRS) and former Somerset (SFRS) Fire & Rescue Services participated in this contract, albeit by adopting different options. DFRS opted for the Purchase Only method and this contract is due to expire in January 2009. SFRS, on the other hand, adopted the fully managed service (FMS) option and this contract is due to expire in October 2009.
- 2.3 As illustrated above, certain FRS supplies are now considered so strategically important that they are intended to be dealt with at a national level through Firebuy. The ICP national project has had a chequered history, but none-the-less has resulted in a national contract being available for the supply of PPE. The prime supplier to the ICP is Bristol Uniforms. Coincidentally, this is the same supplier as that used currently under the SW contract. It is intended through the National Procurement Strategy and National Framework that where national FRS contracts exist, these should be adopted. If this is not adhered to then a business case has to be drawn up for approval by CLG, illustrating why an alternative methodology is preferred.
- 2.4 The South West FRS's considered the possibility of an alternative strategy for the supply of PPE, but concluded that to provide the similar standard and levels of research and development (R&D), physiological and ergonomic considerations together with wearer trials and all combined with quality, risk and financial considerations was not going to be viable. The ICP project involved very extensive R&D and a full programme of dedicated wearer trials set up in a bespoke environment to test all manner of risk, physiological and ergonomic features, addressing all aspects of diversity to include minority groups of personnel. The comprehensive nature of this testing may only be fully appreciated by viewing the DVD compiled as part of the assessment process.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Taking all the background and timescales into account it is now proposed that the ICP contract be adopted by DSFRS. Furthermore, in order to achieve full risk transfer, which is considered an important aspect in relation to potential PPE issues, including litigation, it is proposed that DSFRS adopts the fully managed service option (FMS). The FMS package will transfer all risks associated with provision and maintenance of PPE, including laundry, repair and replacement, to Bristol Uniforms.
- 3.2 The benefits offered by ICP include, amongst other things:-
- Improved garment specification in terms of performance, comfort and higher level of burn protection;
 - Garments are subjected to extensive user acceptance trials;
 - All risks associated with provision and maintenance are borne by Bristol Uniforms;
 - Full compatibility between all PPE items;
 - Equality and diversity needs are a core requirement.
 - Single standard, corporate image
 - Measuring and fitting service
 - Laundry and repair service
- 3.3 At completion of the roll out of the new PPE there will be a single corporate image and an improved standard of PPE. The PPE has undergone various strict and stringent tests, improving the level of protection provided to firefighters against the risk of burns.
- 3.4 Under the FMS service, fire-fighters would be issued with one set of PPE and a pool stock would be held on reserve at station, based on a range of average size charts of those within the station. Less popular sizes would result in the issue of two sets of PPE.
- 3.5 Meeting the Equality and Diversity requirements of the Service is a core requirement for the provision of PPE. To be fit for purpose, the goods must be lawful under the duty, and must be compatible with our duty to eliminate discrimination and promote good relations. The ICP specified equality and diversity requirements as a core aspect for the provision of PPE, conducted evaluations in association with key users, and will ensure ongoing requirements are updated through the FMS contract management. It is anticipated that ICP will meet the full Equality and Diversity requirements of the Service and assurances have been received from the supplier.
- 3.6 The Representative Bodies have been fully consulted through the Industrial Relations Committee process as follows:
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| 11 September 2008 | - | Fire Brigades Union (FBU) |
| 15 September 2008 | - | Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) |
| 19 September 2008 | - | Fire Officers Association (FOA) |

- 3.7 Additionally, on 14 October 2008 a presentation was made by Bristol Uniforms to the Representative Bodies. Members of the Authority were also invited to attend this presentation. The presentation provided details of ICP trials and featured a display of the Structural PPE PBi Gold three layer tunic and leggings for standard fire-fighting together with the other two and single layer PBi Gold PPE suits for other rescue and moorland fire-fighting respectively. Also available to view was an extensive range of the station, work wear and corporate wear garments. All garments included male and female samples. There was also a full range of specialist clothing for ethnic minorities and maternity wear. Garments were tried on at this event.
- 3.8 Further internal viewings of the ICP ensemble will be made available to end users in due course.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The annual ICP FMS cost per fire-fighter is £387.50 compared to the current SW FMS cost which is £397.41. Considering that the latter provides less items of PPE, the ICP FMS represents improved value for money.
- 4.2 Despite the nominal saving on unit cost for the FMS, there would be an overall increase for DSFRS as the former DFRS did not operate a fully managed service. As illustrated earlier, it is now considered that the risks of managing one's own PPE service are too great and that full risk transfer to the supplier is beneficial. Additionally, to obtain the equivalent level of PPE protection now available, would cost more than the previous ensembles and there would be funding issues concerning wholesale replacement.
- 4.3 The Service has appraised the Purchase Managed Service (PMS) option of the ICP contract, but has found the initial purchase cost in excess of £1m in 2009/10 prohibitive. This would be even more costly were it desirable to provide two sets of the new PPE (PBi Gold) from the outset to avoid mixed levels of personal protection on station/within the Service. Clearly the FMS option, being a lease/rental facility, will spread the costs and provide a standardised approach.
- 4.4 In total the ICP FMS will require a budget increase in 2009/10 of £63,000 and 2010/11 of £264,000 and 2011/12 onwards of £209,000 over current costs. Once approved, these costs would become commitments against the budget in those years and officers have already factored these costs into forecast budgets for those years on the assumption that the Authority will be supportive of this solution. The alternative PMS procurement route would involve prohibitive initial costs, issues with standardisation and a greater risk taken by the Service.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The ICP is a national contract specifically intended to meet the needs of the modern Fire Service. DSFRS needs to contract for PPE in 2009 and ICP is the recommended route. Moreover, due to issues such as funding profiles and risk transfer, the FMS option is seen as the preferred solution and it is this solution that is being recommended for adoption across the whole of DSFRS, giving complete uniformity and compatibility.

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