



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>DSFRA/11/5</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>DEVON &amp; SOMERSET FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY (BUDGET MEETING)</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>14 FEBRUARY 2011</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) REPLACEMENT</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF SERVICE SUPPORT</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>that the report be noted</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The programme to replace Service personal protective equipment (PPE) has been problematic. Initially, the Authority approved, at its meeting on 23 October 2008, adopting the Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) contract for the replacement programme. Subsequently, and upon further investigation, a number of legal issues were identified with this contract which, had the Authority entered into the contract, would have meant that it was not securing best value for money.</p> <p>Other fire and rescue services (FRSs) across the country raised similar concerns and consequently, the Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service commenced exploration of alternative options to secure a replacement contract on the most advantageous terms. Following this review, the Service has now entered into arrangements with the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation consortium for the provision of PPE. This contract will improve firefighter safety and save this Authority approximately £164k compared to the ICP contract.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	The cost of the PPE contract can be met within the funding previously agreed by the Authority and generates a saving of circa £164k over the life of the contract.
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	A full equality impact assessment has been conducted as required of the original specification.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Nil.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report DSFRA/8/27 (Provision of Personal Protective Equipment [PPE]) as submitted to the meeting of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority held on 23 October 2008.

Report RC/9/9 (Personal Protective Equipment [PPE] Replacement – Integrated Clothing Project [ICP]) as submitted to the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 16 November 2009.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This paper updates the Authority on the current position on the replacement and harmonisation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) following the initial decision on replacement made by the Authority at its meeting on 23 October 2008 (Minute DSFRA/53 refers).
- 1.2 There have been a number of legal issues since that meeting that have prevented contract award and as a consequence the Service has, in consultation with stakeholders, now agreed to a three year rolling replacement of PPE commencing this year.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In October 2008 Members received a paper outlining the need to review and harmonise PPE arrangements due to the South West (SW) contract expiring. Although the SW had been very successful in working together it was considered, after a contract review, to be more cost effective to enter into national contract arrangements through the Integrated Clothing Project (ICP), managed by Firebuy, rather than conduct a new regional procurement exercise.
- 2.2 The ICP has had a somewhat chequered history and consequently a further report was submitted to the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 16 November 2009 outlining concerns regarding legal issues associated with the contract, these being:
- Complexity of the Contract.
  - The length of the contract (15yrs with 7 year reviews)
  - The inability to terminate for convenience without penalty
  - The requirement to purchase from the contract all clothing already in use, such as work wear, undress uniform and other non-PPE items.
- 2.3 There was also a legal challenge by another major supplier concerning the manner in which the contract had been let. During this period, it also became apparent that, nationally, there was also a lack of take up for the ICP contract by other fire and rescue services (FRSs) who were by then sharing similar concerns. Overall there was no satisfactory outcome from these protracted legal discussions.
- 2.4 Consequently the Service decided to formally consider alternative procurement options one of which was using the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) consortium. This arrangement provides more freedom of choice in our future purchasing decisions.
- 2.5 In addition, an updated garment came onto the market, which has been fully evaluated, incorporates all aspects of the original specification which had been developed over many years by end users through the ICP requirements and has also now been agreed locally with Representative Bodies.

**3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Authority has previously agreed to the replacement of firefighter PPE but due to legal issues associated through the national contract there have been delays in implementing a contract. This has now been progressed by using the YPO framework arrangements, allowing improved purchasing, improved Firefighter protection and has secured - over the life of the contract - a saving in the region of £164,000 compared to the ICP contract.

**ACFO TREVOR STRATFORD**  
**Director of Service Support**