National Procurement Strategy for the Fire & Rescue Service in England 2009-12

Issued by:
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Addressed to:
The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
Chairs of Regional Management Boards
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chair of the Local Authority Controlled Company
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer

Please forward to:
Directors of Finance
The Regional Control Centre Director
Treasurers
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Summary
This Circular provides information on the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service in England 2009 -12, and the summary of responses to the 2008 consultation on the draft Strategy.

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1.0 National Procurement Strategy for the Fire & Rescue Service in England 2009-2012

1.1 The Department published today a new National Procurement Strategy (NPS) for the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) in England, covering the period 2009-12. This replaces the first NPS which was published in November 2005 and covered 2005-2008. That Strategy responded to earlier reports calling for greater collaboration and efficiency in FRS procurement and the Secretary of State established a national body, Firebuy Ltd, to take forward the Strategy.

1.2 A Task & Finish Group led by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) was set up in 2008 to advise on the new Strategy. It included representatives from CFOA, Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Association of Procurement Practitioners in the Fire Service (APPFS), Local Government Association (LGA), Firebuy Ltd, Fire and Rescue Suppliers Association (FIRESA) and a Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP).

1.3 A 12 week consultation was issued on 22 August 2008 (FRS Circular 45/2008) seeking views on the revised NPS together with some wider questions on the delivery of national procurement arising out of the 2008 CLG review of Firebuy and the existing National Procurement Strategy. The consultation process closed on 14 November 2008. The summary of responses to the 41 questions asked in this consultation is now on the Department’s website at http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/runningfire/nationalprocurementstrategy/.


1.5 The Strategy is linked to the ongoing analysis of FRS expenditure that is currently being undertaken (FRS Circular 24/2009). Though the results of this work cannot be captured in the revised NPS itself, the information will be used to help inform and steer future national, regional and local procurement plans and priorities in the FRS. The role of the Strategy is to set the context and framework within which this more detailed planning will take place.

1.6 The Strategy also recognises that the procurement process can be used to great effect to drive improvement in skills and increase apprenticeships in a local area. Further guidance on how to make the most of such opportunities can be found in the 2009 report by the Office of Government Commerce & Department for Business Innovation and Skills. Public sector procurement can also have a powerful role in developing and shaping markets, driving innovation and the demand for new technologies and skills. The contribution that smarter, more innovative and more strategic procurement can make to the Government’s new industrial strategy is set out in New Industry, New Jobs – HMG April 2009.

2.0 Further information

2.1 For further information on the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire & Rescue Service in England please contact fsed6@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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