

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SERVICES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2004 AT 10.00 A.M.

Agenda Item No.

7(c)

FIRE SERVICE BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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Executive Member: Iris Tarry

1. Purpose of report

To update Committee on the Best Value Review of Fire Service Procurement.

2. Summary

The Report shows that anticipated savings have been made but the physical location change still needs to take place.

3. Conclusion

Anticipated savings have been made and Members are asked to note the Report.

4. Background

- 4.1 In undertaking the three statutory Best Value Reviews for Fire and Rescue Services an East of England Best Value Review Unit was established at Bishops Stortford in 2001. In complying with statutory requirements, the Service's Best Value Review and Procurement was completed by 31 March 2002. The main recommendation contained within the Review was the transference of the procurement and stores function within the Fire and Rescue Service in Hertfordshire to (at the time County Supplies and Contract Services).
- 4.2 The estimated budgetary savings from undertaking this transference of responsibility was estimated at £40,000 and this sum has been removed from the Service's base budget since 2002\3.
- 4.3 Since the completion of the Review a limited amount of progress has been made in delivering the location change objective. 1.5 full time equivalent posts have been kept vacant and Stores staff remain on temporary contracts until the physical transference of the Stores area takes place. The advent of the SAP\Sharp project has necessitated that Hertfordshire Business Services (HBS) has had to prioritise this work in relation to this project and have accepted that the move into HBS will take place as soon as practicable. The Service has not deviated from this longer-term aim and will continue to work with HBS in bringing the functions under the one facility.
- 4.4 The situation has been made slightly more complex by the development and publication of a draft National Procurement Strategy for Fire Services. This has been expected for some time as part of the ODPM's modernisation agenda for Fire and Rescue Services. The overall thrust of the draft strategy quite rightly suggests more collaborative and joint procurement amongst Fire Services and the East of England Fire Authorities are already considering the implications of this document and how the recommendations can be taken forward. The issue for Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service will be to ensure that all the existing arrangements, which provide value for money through Hertfordshire Business Services, are not lost by buying into a Regional Procurement Strategy purely for Fire Services. Hertfordshire Business Services have been kept up to date with developments in relation to this national strategy. We will seek to identify the best longer term options for Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and at the same time, buying into the recommendations contained within the final strategy, once consultation is completed by 3 December 2004.