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This circular is	<b>For information</b>	No response required	
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Status	<b>This Circular accompanies a copy of a Written Ministerial Statement announcing future arrangements for FRS national procurement and Firebuy Ltd</b>		

# Written Ministerial Statement on the future of national procurement for the FRS

## Issued by:

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Fire & Rescue Service Finance and Performance

## Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority**  
**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 Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority**  
**The Chief Fire Officer**

## Please forward to:

**Chairs of Regional Management Boards**  
**Directors of Finance**  
**Treasurers**

## Summary

This Circular covers a copy of a Written Ministerial Statement on future arrangements for national procurement for the Fire and Rescue Service and Firebuy Ltd and provides information on the next steps to be taken relating to this. The statement sets out the continuing need for national procurement in the FRS in England and the conclusion that a national procurement body represents the best way to deliver fire-specific collaborative procurement. It proposes that for the future these functions should be carried out by a larger organisation also responsible for the management of the service contracts for the Fire and Resilience Programme.

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## Written Ministerial Statement on the future of national procurement for the FRS

### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Firebuy Ltd was established as an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) in March 2006 to act as the national procurement body for the English Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and take forward the 2005-2008 National Procurement Strategy (NPS). One of its main objectives was to deliver national efficiencies and improvements in FRS procurement. Its establishment followed a series of reports over a number of years calling for greater collaboration in FRS procurement.
- 1.2 Firebuy Ltd has now let national contracts for vehicles/equipment, clothing, and breathing apparatus, as well as a range of other fire-specific equipment, and is undertaking the contract management role for the Long Term Capability Management for New Dimension assets. Firebuy contracts are used widely throughout the FRS in England.
- 1.3 A CLG Review of Firebuy Ltd began in December 2007 (FRS Circular 59/2007) and the summary of the findings was published in June 2008 (FRS Circular 27/2008). The consultation on the revised NPS was issued in August 2008 (FRS Circular 45/2008) and concluded in November 2008. A separate exercise is currently under way to improve information available on FRS expenditure (FRS Circular 24/2009).
- 1.4 The Operational Efficiency Programme (OEP) was published by HM Treasury in May 2009. A collaborative procurement review was a key strand of the Programme. The OEP report set out proposals for future public-sector collaborative procurement generally, including targets.

### 2.0 The Future of Firebuy

- 2.1 A Written Ministerial Statement, issued on 25 June 2009, published at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/statements/corporate/firebuyLtd> announced changes affecting FRS national procurement in England and Firebuy. This confirmed that there is a continuing need to drive procurement efficiency at a national level in the FRS and that a national procurement body represents the best way to deliver fire-specific collaborative improvement.
- 2.2 However, the Government proposes that Firebuy's functions should in future be carried out within a larger organisation, integrating national procurement with the management of the service contracts for the Fire and Resilience Programme (Firelink, FiReControl and New Dimension). Firebuy already performs this function in respect of New Dimension.

### 3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 A consultation paper on future arrangements for the nationally managed aspects of the Fire & Resilience Programme (In-Service Management) will be published in early July.
- 3.2 We are aiming to publish the revised National Procurement Strategy for the Fire & Rescue Service in Summer.
- 3.3 Recruitment of the Board for the restructured NDPB will commence in the summer of 2009 to make appointments by November 2009. This will, of course, be subject to the outcome of the consultation.
- 3.4 Further copies of Fire & Rescue Circulars will be issued to keep you updated on developments.

### 4.0 Further Information

- 4.1 For further information on any of the above issues please contact my direct email [crispin.tuckley@communities.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:crispin.tuckley@communities.qsi.gov.uk) or [fsed6@communities.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:fsed6@communities.qsi.gov.uk)

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