

## New Levels of Collaboration

Collaboration is no longer an unusual approach in government; it is accepted as normal practice, not only within organisations but also between them. Furthermore, sharing best practice is expected right across the whole of the public sector and our news item about the OGC Collaborative Opportunities team's move to OGCbuying.solutions is an example of the consolidation of this thinking. The already wide range of frameworks and arrangements in relation to collaboration are set to expand and will continue to be extended to the wider public sector.

This brave new world of collaboration is also evident in the Memorandum of Understanding between OGCbs and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) – itself an excellent collaborative relationship – and should set the trend for others to follow. *GC forum* introduces the work of the IDeA and we intend to develop a series of articles around its activities with, and parallel to, central government. We also feature an in-depth piece reporting on one of the recent results of co-operative working - the development of the Core Accounting System Specification (CASS) project, which has been enthusiastically received by all involved.

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### Collaborative Opportunities Team join OGCbuying.solutions

The OGC Collaborative Opportunities (CO) team is to transfer to OGCbuying.solutions (OGCbs) on 30 June 2004.

The transfer is seen as a logical extension of the close working relationship between the CO team and OGCbs. The transition is not expected to disrupt the team's continuing role in identifying, promoting and implementing opportunities for collaborative procurement or their relationships with departments. The skills and experience of the CO team in developing sourcing strategies and a structured approach to engaging with stakeholders and others across the entire public sector, will complement and strengthen existing OGCbs capability.

The move has also been influenced by the emerging thinking on the procurement workstream of the Efficiency Review; this is focussing attention on the "Commodity Goods and Services" market and the potential benefits of greater collaboration across the public sector. OGC is likely to have a key role in co-ordinating the wider collaborative agenda. The responsibility for developing the overarching strategy and policy will therefore remain with OGC which, for now, will continue to chair the interdepartmental Collaborative Opportunities Advisory Group (COAG).

For the latest news on COAG, see the article below [COAG Goes from Strength to Strength](#)

For further information contact: [mike.burt@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mike.burt@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

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### The Door to ODPM Contracts

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has launched a new Procurement Portal within its website. It offers suppliers the ability to view ODPM contract announcements in real time. ODPM uses BiP Solutions e-notice service project for placing EU and non-EU public notices, and facilitates the publication of these notices immediately on the Procurement Portal giving suppliers instant access to the contract opportunities. The European Commission recommends in the Consolidated Procurement Directive that authorities provide their purchasing and procurement information via a buyer profile and this facility has been incorporated into the Procurement Portal. The buyer profile provides information on purchase plans, contact details, future, current and past contracts. By publishing this information, ODPM offers suppliers the opportunity to identify future opportunities, respond to current opportunities and to view which suppliers have already been engaged along with the goods and/or services purchased. For further information visit: <http://www.procurementportal.odpm.gov.uk/>

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### Working Together Brings Better VFM

OGCbuying.solutions, and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) have entered into a partnership agreement aimed at boosting the use of e-commerce across local government. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will see both agencies working together to encourage online purchasing, through an arrangement, based on the IDeA:Marketplace system. Local authorities will have easy access to OGCbuying.solutions' framework contracts via online catalogues which will allow them to buy quicker, easier and more cost effectively - paving the way for some of the savings envisaged by Sir Peter Gershon in the Efficiency Review.

Colin Barrow, IDeA Chairman, said:

*"IDeA:Marketplace provides a powerful tool which helps many local authorities to implement e-procurement quickly. This agreement will greatly expand the range of products and services that can be purchased through IDeA:Marketplace and will enable local government to obtain the benefits from contracts negotiated by OGC on behalf of all public services."*

The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) is part of, and for, local government. It was set up in April 1999 to deliver better public services by supporting self-sustaining improvement



Colin Barrow

from within local government. Visit [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk) for further information. The arrangement will be managed by OGCBuying.solutions. For further information contact: OGCBuying.solutions' Customer Service Desk 0870 268 2222 or email [custcare@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:custcare@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk)

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## New Head and New Image for e-Government



Ian Watmore, UK Managing Director of the global management consultants and technology services company Accenture, has been appointed the new Head of e-Government. Taking over in September from Andrew Pinder, the outgoing e-Envoy, Mr Watmore will be accountable to Douglas Alexander, Minister for the Cabinet Office, and will report to Sir Andrew Turnbull, Cabinet Secretary.

The major part of the Office of the e-Envoy has started its transition into the e-Government Unit which will be based in the Cabinet Office. It will work with departments to deliver efficiency savings while improving the delivery of public services by joining up electronic government services around the needs of customers. It will also provide sponsorship of [information assurance](#).

Douglas Alexander said:

*" Ian has the task of leading the work of the e-Government Unit, whose remit we are also announcing today. The achievements the Government has made so far have been notable. Already 71% of Government services are available online. Indeed, only last month we launched Directgov which has the potential to transform the way that citizens interact electronically with Government. The change to e-Government Unit represents a development from the original e-Envoy's task of "getting the UK online", to ensuring that the Government capitalises on the potential of ICT to both transform service delivery and achieve a step change in operational efficiency across the public sector."*

Specific responsibilities of the e-Government Unit include:

**strategy:** developing policy and planning and providing an element of programme management for implementation.

**architecture:** providing policy, design, standards, governance, advice and guidance; commissioning government-wide infrastructure and services; and addressing issues of systems integration with other levels of government.

**innovation:** providing high-level advice to government bodies on innovative opportunities.

**IT Finance:** with OGC, monitoring major IT projects and advising on major investment decisions.

**IT HR:** Head of the IT Profession in Government.

**projects:** undertaking ad hoc policy and strategy studies.

**research:** identifying and communicating key technology trends, opportunities, threats and risks.

**security:** overseeing IT security policy, standards, monitoring and assurance, and contingency planning for the critical national infrastructure.

**supplier management:** with OGC, managing the top-level relationship with strategic suppliers.

For further information visit: [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government).

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## Small but Excellent Value

Business Gas (Centrica) has been awarded, by OGCbuying.solutions, a 5-year contract to supply electricity to smaller public sector sites.

The sub 100kW contract enables any customers to have their smaller sites on prices which are among the most competitive in the industry as well as saving the significant costs incurred in going through a full EU compliant procurement process. OGC's energy, which pioneered the concept of "Partnering Arrangements" for public sector electricity and gas contracts, has recently re-let the contract which already covers approx. 5000 sites belonging to Central Government, Local Authorities, Charities and NDPBs.

The new contract will allow customers to have competitive prices either fixed or linked to the wholesale market and will be supported by the highest level of customer service and information. Business Gas provides a team of dedicated people who look after the OGC's portfolio of customers. The contract is fully EU compliant and avoids the administratively intensive (and potentially costly) multi-site tendering process that organisations have to go through, sometimes with disappointingly low levels of response from suppliers not wishing to bid for large numbers of small sites.

For further information contact: [Custcare@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Custcare@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk)  
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## In-Depth

### One System Accounts for Huge Efficiency Savings

OGC, OGCbuying.solutions and HM Treasury, supported by a number of other government departments and the National Audit Office (NAO), have developed a specification which will improve the way in which civil central government specifies and then procures financial systems. The Core Accounting System Specification (CASS), which can be tailored to meet the requirements of any size of organisation, was formally launched to the supplier community on 4 June at HM Treasury where a number of solution providers confirmed their readiness to adopt such a specification. The future ownership of the specification will be determined shortly. [Full article top](#)



### A New Look for Leeds

Alexandra House, OGC's office accommodation in Leeds, has been completely refurbished and staff have recently moved back into the office. The successful refurbishment of Trevelyan House was the model for the redesigned and modernised Alexandra House which has been transformed into an open plan workspace along the same lines. [Full article top](#)

### IDeA Bringing Out the Best in Public Service Delivery



Public service improvement is as much about inspiring political vision as it is about better management, as the country's best councils show. They excel at creating local solutions to local needs by combining visionary goals with highly professional management. The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), established in 1999, was created by local government for local government to use the lessons learned from these councils. This is the first of a series of articles about IDeA and its work across the public sector.

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### The Professionals Get Together

The first Professional Services Forum has taken place in Trevelyan House. The event was jointly chaired by John Oughton and Bruce Petter, Executive Director of the Management Consultancies Association.

The Forum brought together representatives from a number of professional service suppliers, industry bodies and government departments, including both OGC and OGCbuying.solutions. They met to discuss the proposition that a formal dialogue between industry and government would strengthen relationships, explode myths, and address systemic issues to achieve increased value for money from government's use of professional services. An action plan will be drawn up following members' discussion, with working groups initially addressing two or three issues. The next full meeting of the Forum is scheduled for 7 October. For further information, please contact Nick Streets [nick.streets@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nick.streets@ogc.gsi.gov.uk) or Alison Edwards [Alison.Edwards@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.Edwards@ogc.gsi.gov.uk) of the Supplier Management team.  
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### COAG goes from Strength to Strength

Senior representatives from across the government procurement community had an opportunity to exchange views on the possible impact of the Government's efficiency agenda on collaborative procurement at the third meeting of the Collaborative Opportunities Advisory Group (COAG), which took place in May.

Group members heard a presentation from Dr Sue Hurrell, of OGC, about the establishment of the OGC Efficiency Team, followed by a presentation from Dr Clare Poulter, Deputy Chief Executive of OGCbuying.solutions, about the role of a procurement change agent. Following some lively debate, prompted by the opening presentations, the group greeted with some enthusiasm presentations about two potential areas for collaboration. Lesley Tyrer, of OGCbuying.solutions, outlined plans for taking forward the work begun in the OGC Collaborative Opportunities team on a collaborative approach to procuring a wide range of travel requirements. OGC's Jane Grant then presented thinking on a collaborative approach to the introduction of learning management systems.

COAG was formed in November 2003 with the purpose of improving co-ordination of collaborative activity and securing increased customer buy-in for collaborative projects. OGC chairs the quarterly meetings of the group, with membership comprising senior representation from 14 organisations and OGCbuying.solutions. Although predominantly focused on civil central government, COAG includes representatives from MOD and NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency. The group reviews proposals, comments on priorities and proposes the most appropriate delivery mechanisms for individual collaborative projects.

For further information about the work of the Collaborative Opportunities Advisory Group, please contact Stephen Haran at: [Stephen.haran@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.haran@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)  
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## Future Events

**Westminster Explained:** Project Management in the Civil Service & Wider Public Sector. **06 July 2004**  
1 Whitehall Place, London. Event organised by *The House Magazine*.  
Contact: [gareth.mccallion@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.mccallion@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

**Small and Medium sized organisations (SMO) Centres of Excellence Forum.** **18 August 2004.**  
Contact: [liz.underhill@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:liz.underhill@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

**Solution Providers Open Day (SPOD) II - Project Zanzibar.** Follow up from SPOD I in April, to engage suppliers in Project Zanzibar from an early stage. **23 August 2004.**  
Contact: [Amabel.Grant@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Amabel.Grant@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Publications

### Working Without Walls – An Insight into the Transforming Government Workplace

*“There are real cultural changes happening at the heart of the civil service that are affecting what we do and how we do it... My own experience confirms there are tangible benefits to be gained from workplace and organisational change... This book offers good practice advice, thinking points, successes and learning based on expertise and experience.”*  
Sir Andrew Turnbull, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service.



Government workplaces are changing. Across government, workplace projects are underway that embrace not just physical change but integrated business, organisational and cultural transformation.

Celebrating some of the best workplace projects taking place within government in the UK today, this book - co-authored by OGC and international workplace and design consultancy DEGW - analyses historical context and the catalysts for change, highlights emerging best practice and summarises lessons learnt.

*Working Without Walls* falls broadly into three sections: Part 1 looks at the historical context and the catalysts for change in the government workplace; Part 2 examines the current themes influencing the design of these workplaces; and Part 3 explores the practical aspects of understanding, achieving, and sustaining successful workplace change.

Many individuals, organisations and projects have contributed to the content and richness of this book. *Working Without Walls* has, in particular, drawn extensively upon five main case studies:

- The GCHQ purpose-built office complex in Cheltenham
- HM Treasury redevelopment of their offices at 1 Horse Guards Road, London
- The Ministry of Defence Main Building redevelopment, Whitehall, London
- The Office of Government Commerce Head Office refurbishment at Trevelyan House, London
- The Scottish Enterprise Headquarters office complex at Atlantic Quay, Glasgow.

This aim is to provide an accessible publication that captures and explores current government workplace developments and emerging good practice in order to inform, encourage and support wider improvement and innovation, across both the public and private sector. The authors hope the insights from the case studies included will provide a stimulus for those thinking of embarking on similar organisational change projects and perhaps also give some reassurance that others have already successfully been there, done that and survived to tell the tale.

*Working Without Walls* will be launched by Sir Andrew Turnbull on 30 June 2004. For further information or to order a free copy please contact the OGC Service Desk, telephone 0845 000 4999 or email: [ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

*Working Without Walls* can be found at: <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1001529>

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## Buying Timber



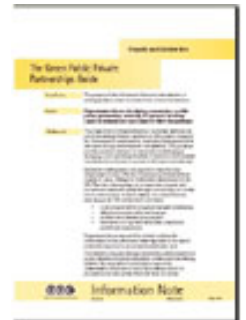
Information Note 5/2004 draws attention to the release of the latest guidance issued by Defra on the procurement of timber. Seeking supplies from well-managed sustainable forests remains government policy, and preference should be given to variant bids, provided they are affordable and represent an efficient and effective use of funds. Available at: [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1001939](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001939)

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## Green Public Private Partnerships

Information Note 6/2004 draws attention to existing guidance issued on Green Public Private Partnerships. This guide supports the Government's commitment to sustainable development on its own estate through environmental considerations. Departments who are developing or managing a public private partnership, including PFI projects involving capital investment, are encouraged to follow the guidance. Available at: [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1001940](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001940)

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## VFM Through Design



Information Note 7/2004 draws attention to the publication of *Getting Value for Money from Construction Projects through Design*. It provides auditors with an understanding of the value of good design in construction and a firm basis for establishing whether good design has been achieved in a particular project. It includes a set of simple but searching questions to evaluate construction projects, and suggests the types of evidence that will help to answer those questions. Available at: [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1001941](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001941)

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## ECOЕ Newsletter

Issue 8 of the ECOЕ Newsletter has been published on the OGC website.

Highlights include:

- Tips on Portfolio Management
- Common causes of project failure
- COEs – Measuring Progress
- Useful information for Senior Responsible Owners

Available at: [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1001948](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001948)

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## Think Voluntary Sector

The Home Office, in conjunction with OGC, has published new guidance aimed at a wide range of people inside and outside government. The guidance raises awareness of the value for money that the Voluntary and Community Sectors can offer when competing for public contracts. It focuses on opening supply opportunities to voluntary and community organisations, building effective relationships with them and removing some of the barriers they face when competing for public contracts. Available at: [http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1001957](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001957)

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## Partnering and Procurement News

Issue 7 of the Partnering and Procurement News, published by the ODPM Modernisation and Efficiency team (MEt) and The National Procurement Forum is available at:

[http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_localgov/documents/page/odpm\\_locgov\\_029225.pdf](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_029225.pdf)

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If you have any comments or would like to contribute to *GC forum*, please contact the editor on: phone 01689 838104 or [christine.barnicoat@btinternet.com](mailto:christine.barnicoat@btinternet.com)

The Editorial Board Members are: Bryan Avery, Chair (OGC), Nic Hopkins (OGC), John Kitching (British Library), Sandy Flatman (The National Archives), Jason Skill (Department for Education and Skills), Sue Broyd (OGC), Suzanne Fred (OGC), Philip Cunliffe, Deputy Editor and Christine Barnicoat, Editor.

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## One System Accounts for Huge Efficiency Savings

**OGC, OGCbuying.solutions and HM Treasury, supported by a number of other government departments and the National Audit Office (NAO), have developed a specification which will improve the way in which civil central government specifies and then procures financial systems. The Core Accounting System Specification (CASS), which can be tailored to meet the requirements of any size of organisation, was formally launched to the supplier community on 4 June at HM Treasury where a number of solution providers confirmed their readiness to adopt such a specification. The future ownership of the specification will be determined shortly.**



Until the development of the CASS project, there was little collaboration across government on specifying and buying financial systems. Each organisation had their own finance system which represented a significant investment in money and time. The CASS project has allowed OGC to investigate whether savings could be generated across the public sector by specifying the core elements common to all.

The project team consists of members from OGC and OGCbuying.solutions. Martin Sykes is the SRO; Mike Burt, of the Collaboration and Property Co-ordination team, is directing the project; and Dave King, of OGCbuying.solutions, is the project manager.

Despite some practical difficulties, such as OGC and OGCbs having separate intranets and thus being unable to share electronic folders etc, the cross-organisational arrangement has worked extremely well and perhaps may lead to more projects such as this being structured in a similar way. As Dave King said when asked about the project went:

*"A key element in every project is communication. Mike, Martin and myself ensured that we met regularly and conversed frequently on the project. Clear levels of responsibility and authority were set that allowed me to crack on with what needed to be done without constantly asking for direction or clarification. Overall it has to be one of the best projects I have worked on. The fact we are from different organisations has been a positive factor not a negative one"*

Undertaking initial research for the project, Dave and his team found that the 250 or so departments and associated bodies in central government change their accounting systems every 5-10 years. This equates to an average of one change per fortnight and costs government and the taxpayer around £20 million a year! They also found that all accounts were based on UK GAAP and the Resource Accounting Manual (RAM). Further research found that although 80% of each core specification was the same, requirements were still defined in isolation which lead to organisations forever re-inventing the wheel. Thus the concept of CASS was born.

A User Acceptance Team was formed and included the National Audit Office, HM Treasury, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department of Culture, Media and Sports and the Office of the Rail Regulator amongst others with a vested interest. They have signed off a good quality specification that can be tailored to meet the requirements of any size of organisation.

Unsolicited comments from organisations who have requested a preview include *"Fantastic. It will save us weeks of work"* and *"Excellent document that has the potential to save a considerable amount of effort and cost"*.

The specification was formally launched to the supplier community on 4 June at HM Treasury where a number of solution providers confirmed their readiness to adopt such a specification. The future ownership of the specification will be determined shortly.

Mike Burt said: *"Overall the CASS project has demonstrated that undertaking a co-ordinated approach would be welcomed by the majority of departments and associated bodies - saving the public purse a possible £12 million per annum. The proof of concept project has indeed proved it's worth."*

The project has also had the full backing of both the Heads of Accountancy Profession Group and the Treasury's Systems Accountants Group who recognise the project as potentially delivering something of real and practical benefit.

Further information is available from Dave King on 020 7271 2951 [dave.king@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dave.king@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk)

## A New Look for Leeds

**Alexandra House, OGC's office accommodation in Leeds, has been completely refurbished and staff have recently moved back into the office. The successful refurbishment of Trevelyan House was the model for the redesigned and modernised Alexandra House which has been transformed into an open plan workspace along the same lines.**



John Oughton (right) at Alexandra House

The similarity does not end there. The new furniture and storage units have the same look and the office has the same telephony system as London and Norwich, enabling four digit dialling across most of OGC's estate.

The transformation to an open plan design has already led to improved team working and enhanced communication and visitors have complimented the new entrance and reception area that powerfully promotes OGC's corporate image. Along with OGC, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which occupies approximately 22m<sup>2</sup> of space on a lease, is extremely pleased with the

refurbished accommodation. Mark Buckle, from Defra, commented: *"The refurbishment has created a modern, pleasant working environment with enhanced facilities. We're very happy to be based at Alexandra House."*



The reception area before

and after

Unanimous approval and support for the design and quality of the accommodation was given at the well-attended user review meeting held recently. Staff said they are particularly pleased with the open plan refreshment / breakout area and the fully-equipped air conditioned meeting rooms. Surprise was expressed at the ease with which the internal security shutters operate and the way in which they are concealed during the day. Any minor snagging has been undertaken out of office hours to avoid disruption to normal office operations and the works are now complete.



Charles Payne  
Project Sponsor

In true OGC style, lessons learned from the Trevelyan House refurbishment project informed the Leeds project. These include:

- Project Sponsor Charles Payne, and Programme Manager Phil Harrod, worked very closely with staff, taking on board their advice and preferences and keeping them informed through a very active user group.
- Staff were kept up to date through a dedicated section on the intranet.
- Application of the Gateway review process had a positive impact, not least in ensuring regularly updated project documentation.

The benefits of the project will be assessed via post-occupancy surveys. Claire Lees, Workspace Services Project Officer, added: *"We are very confident that the modernisation and rationalisation of the workspace in*

*Alexandra House will meet project and organisational objectives of improved efficiency and value for money. And it will be a jolly nice place to work in to boot!*

A Design Quality Indicator (DQI) Workshop "Ready for Occupation" has been held and the assessment report is being processed. Furthermore, an "In-Use" assessment and a Gateway 5 Review have been programmed for February 2005.

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## IDeA Bringing Out the Best in Public Service Delivery

Public service improvement is as much about inspiring political vision as it is about better management, as the country's best councils show. They excel at creating local solutions to local needs by combining visionary goals with highly professional management. These councils deliver top-quality basic services, which they do by focusing unashamedly on the needs of local people and local communities to drive improvement, and by welcoming external challenge and competition.



The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), established in 1999, was created by local government for local government to use the lessons learned from these councils to help all councils improve, so that they can match the standards of the best.

By advocating the best in local government, the IDeA aims to:

- deliver practical solutions to improve local government performance
- develop innovative approaches to transfer knowledge within local government
- act on behalf of local government to develop new ways to deliver joined-up, local services
- promote local government success
- influence public service policy so that it supports local government improvement
- employ highly-skilled people to meet the needs and priorities of local government as and when they are required - from member peers to chief officers
- work with its customers in a way which respects diversity and promotes equalities
- be recognised as the improvement partner of choice for all local authorities.

### Our Services

The IDeA is the leading practitioner in local government improvement. It has led the way in sharing knowledge, best practice and member development and has pioneered the use of peer reviews and peer involvement, which are now widely accepted as the key to local authority improvement. It has also innovated cutting edge e-government services whose use of new technology helps management across local government to develop new e-solutions.

There are five key themes that support the IDeA's work:

#### **Leadership**

The IDeA supports authorities in developing their political and officer leadership so they continually improve the ways they serve their communities

#### **Strong performance**

The IDeA can help local authorities review their performance and ensure that they have the resources to deliver change to meet the needs of their communities

#### **Improving council services**

The IDeA works actively with local authorities to continually improve local services and challenge poor performance

#### **e-Government**

The IDeA helps local authorities transform the ways in which they lead their communities and deliver services through the opportunities offered by e-government

#### **Community well being**

The IDeA can help local authorities engage effectively with their communities, by building local partnerships and integrating sustainable development within their decision-making processes and delivery of services.

## Who We Are

Established in 1999, the Improvement and Development Agency was created by local government for local government. The IDeA is an independent, non-party-political body with a board made up of representatives from all political parties and independent members as well as representatives of other key stakeholders. The IDeA is funded by a combination of local authority grants and fees generated from local authority services and projects.

The IDeA's work covers all local authorities in England. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is responsible for driving local government improvement in Wales and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) plays a similar role in Scotland.

We work in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including government departments, the Audit Commission, the Local Government Association (LGA), other central bodies and the private sector.

The IDeA has nine Regional Associates to represent the IDeA in each of the English regions. The Regional Associates will ensure the IDeA understands the improvement needs of councils in their areas and that its services are tailored to their needs.

## How will our success be judged?

The success of the IDeA will be judged by the extent to which local government improves, measured by clear evidence of improvement in performance including evidence of satisfaction among local people and communities with their councils and the services they provide.

For further information visit: [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

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## Central Sponsor for Information Assurance CSIA

The increasing dependency of our society on information and communication technologies means that our reliance on such systems also carries considerable risks for government, finance, health and social welfare as well as national security.

The Cabinet Secretary has asked Andrew Pinder to take on the role of Central Sponsor for Information Assurance, alongside his role as the e-Envoy. This acknowledges that Information Assurance is both a business enabler and is needed across government and the wider economy.

The Central Sponsor has set up a new unit in the Cabinet Office to support him in his role - the CSIA (Central Sponsor for Information Assurance).

<http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/csia>

The unit brings together IT security and telecommunications expertise from across government. The CSIA will provide a central focus for Information Assurance within the UK government. It will be working with the public and private sectors to ensure that risks to the National Information Infrastructure are appropriately managed.

The CSIA is part of the UK government's Cabinet Office and works with partners in both the public and private sectors to help safeguard the nation's electronic and telecommunications services.

For more information on the role and scope of the CSIA please visit our website.

<http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/csia>