



**Procurement, Capital and Shared Assets  
Productivity Workstream**

Response to Spending Review  
Quick Wins Strategy

October 2010



“The Local Government Improvement Board and local councils across England need to step up to the challenge set by the Comprehensive Spending Review. There is much work of good procurement across many councils. I hope council Leaders, Chief Executives and staff will all use this document as a starting point to think about procurement, cost reduction and efficiency. For those councils that have been dealing with these issues I hope this is helpful. For those councils that have to start or do serious work I hope it points you in the right direction.

The National Productivity Workstreams provide us now with an opportunity to shape how we respond to the challenge and I very much hope all councils will embrace the spirit of what we have indicated here but also the specific actions required on behalf of their communities”.

Councillor Paul Bettison  
Bracknell Forest Borough Council

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## Foreword

### Response to Spending Review - Quick Wins Strategy

The output of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) sets out the size of the challenge local government now has in meeting the spectrum of local community needs with far less money.

The purpose of this Quick Wins Strategy is to offer 10 key actions that councils and their partners can undertake to help them meet this challenge. The strategy focuses on the remit of the newly formed local government Productivity Workstream – Procurement, Capital and Shared Assets. Procurement represents **50%** of a typical council's budget and accounts for approximately **£50bn** per annum. Procurement performance, however, is variable across the local government sector. Many excellent examples do exist, but the challenge is in locating them. This document seeks to do just that and utilises the established Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (IEP) network to identify many exemplars.

A key focus has been to highlight practical examples of best practice that clearly demonstrate how to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and costly procurement exercises – cutting through the procurement red tape.

The proposals support the key themes of the recent Efficiency Review by Sir Philip Green. In particular, increasing a local council's commercial leverage whilst safeguarding its local control, improving spend data, removing duplication and inconsistency, managing down specification and demand and proactively managing supplier relationships are at the core of this Quick Wins Strategy for local government.

Each recommended action is thematic in nature and capable of application across all spend category areas. Actions are also designed to be practical, capable of implementation within a three month period and require minimum specialist support. These proposals will in effect represent the first phase of the longer term proposed service delivery models that this Productivity Workstream will offer to local government. Critically, the examples quoted have worked in practice and delivered **savings, typically up to 20%**.

Each organisation is different in its nature, its own local needs and its place in the continuous improvement journey. Hopefully this practical guide will help individual authorities is assessing for themselves *where* and *how* they could further improve to meet the financial challenge. This assessment should only take a few hours consideration to deliver a real return.

I commend this Quick Wins Strategy to you and welcome both your comments and contribution. Should you wish to discuss any aspect or simply need help, please call myself on 01962 847300 or Michael Lee, Programme Manager on 01962 845044.

**Andrew Smith**  
Chief Executive Hampshire County Council  
Chairman of NIEP for the Built Environment  
Lead for Procurement, Capital and Shared Assets  
Productivity Workstream

## **Councillor Leadership**

As local government finances are squeezed in difficult economic times, councillors up and down the country will be making tough decisions about how they procure and commission goods and services and make best use of capital and other assets in order to meet priorities for local people. Councillors will not wish to be involved in the detail of improving procurement processes, but their leadership in setting the 'big picture' direction will be essential to drive through change.

As part of the Place Based Productivity Programme, a new range of support for Councillors to deal with the impact of the spending review is under development.

For more information, please see the Place Based Productivity website: <http://www.local.gov.uk>

A series of procurement guides for councillors is available at: [www.idea.gov.uk/procurement](http://www.idea.gov.uk/procurement)

# 10 Key Actions

**1** Develop a procurement strategy – or borrow someone else's capacity



**2** Up-skill staff or find capacity through a partner



**3** Carry out a spend analysis



**4** Aggregate spend through category management



**5** Develop an asset reduction strategy



**6** Collaborate



**7** Review costs and specifications



**8** Utilise technology



**9** Develop a supplier management plan



**10** Manage demand



# 1

## Develop a procurement strategy – or borrow someone else's capacity

Raise your game by developing an overall strategy. Use this to become more influential within your organisation, by demonstrating the strong contribution effective procurement can make to reducing costs at this unprecedented time – procurement accounts for 50% of total local government budgets. Work towards adopting a strategic sourcing approach rather than just covering the transactional areas. Create a central procurement team or a virtual team through an inter departmental professional network.

The strategy should include your organisation's approach to actions 2-10 detailed overleaf.

Many authorities have developed their own procurement strategy that can be adopted as a basis for your own; alternatively consider a shared service from another council or help from your local IEP.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Building the team

Despite working with 37,000 different suppliers Northamptonshire County Council historically had no dedicated procurement team. They responded by launching a new and far reaching procurement strategy. In addition to the creation of a procurement core team it also formed a 'virtual procurement team' drawn from each department to embed new policies, procedures and best practice across the authority. For more details: [NCC example](#)

#### Strategic procurement plan

Hampshire County Council has developed a Strategic Procurement Plan which sets out the organisation's overall procurement strategy, new approaches and key deliverables, including an improvement programme. For more details: [HCC Procurement Plan](#)



#### Category based approach

Improvement East is funding an innovative project in Essex. Essex County Council is developing a procurement strategy based on category management, procurement and supplier relationship development across the public sector in Essex in 3 pilot categories: ICT, commercial fleet and passenger transport. The programme is supported by local authorities, fire and rescue, police, health, probation service and higher education. For more details: [IE IEP example](#)

#### Policy through procurement

The North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership is using its strategic procurement plan to maximise the social, economic and environmental impact of procurement and **save £70m** over 5 years. This entails up-skilling local authority procurement teams; introducing excellent common policies and practices; and fully engaging with suppliers. For more details: [NE IEP Procurement Plan](#)

# 2

## Up-skill staff or find capacity through a partner

Ensure that the workforce has the right skills and experience to make a real contribution to delivering savings through best practice procurement. Ensure that they are kept up to date with latest developments and improve their 'softer' skills including stakeholder engagement, project management and relationship management.

If this is not possible, then build capability by finding a partner, either through a shared service arrangement with another council, or with help from your local IEP.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Shared procurement service

The creation of Procurement Lincolnshire demonstrates effective capacity building in local government procurement. The service provides a shared procurement team between eight councils and is on track to produce savings of **£9m**. For more details: [EM example](#)

#### Licensed procurement practitioner programme

Portsmouth City Council has developed a Licensed Procurement Practitioner Programme. Through the identification and training of key individuals involved in procurement decisions, Portsmouth "licensed" these individuals with the authority to procure. This has clarified roles, improved professional capability and also meant that those who do not have this license cannot commit any spend to external organisations. For more details: [SE example](#)

Hampshire County Council has also worked jointly with Improvement and Efficiency South East to create a new procurement training and skills development programme. For more details: [HCC example](#)

#### Developing professional excellence

South West One is a joint venture between IBM, Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and Avon and Somerset Police.



One of the main drivers for creating Southwest One was formalised collaboration across the three organisations to radically transform the Procurement Service into a centre of professional excellence. For more details: [SWO example](#)

Capital Ambition (the IEP in London) has offered London authorities access to a tailored, practical training programme for procurement and non procurement specialists that enables delegates to achieve the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Introductory Certificate in Purchasing and Supply. This is the first project of its kind in the country to offer this professional accreditation approach without undertaking the whole CIPS professional stage. For more details: [Capital Ambition Programme](#)

#### Expert specialist procurement assistance

In addition, expert capacity is available to organisations in the field of construction procurement and asset management. The National Improvement and Efficiency Partnership for the Built Environment (NIEP) represents the best practice of the nine IEPs across England and offers this to local authorities in the form of easy to use business models. Expert specialist procurement assistance is also available where required. In addition to releasing efficiencies, the NIEP's work helps authorities to improve the quality of the built environment, meet carbon reduction commitments and improve local economic benefit. For more details:

[www.niepbuiltenvironment.org.uk](http://www.niepbuiltenvironment.org.uk)

## Carry out a spend analysis

Get in control by identifying how much you spend, on what, with whom and by whom. Identify what's already contracted and what's not contracted. Ensure that you have systems and processes in place to capture and report on spend on a regular basis. Use this intelligence to focus on the main cost areas rather than be diverted into worthy but insignificant areas. Use category spend analysis to focus your organisation's procurement efforts on the primary category spend areas.

For a typical county or unitary council the majority of external spend is accounted for in the categories of:

- **Construction and asset management**
- **Social care**
- **Waste**
- **IT**

### Examples of best practice:

#### Analysing the costs

Benchmarking costs - The London Efficiency Challenge developed by Capital Ambition is a spend analysis based collaborative enquiry into efficiency opportunities. The challenge is peer led and offers the councils in London the opportunity to benchmark their spend performance against their peers. For more details: [Capital Ambition Benchmarking Costs](#)

Shaping the market for looked-after children - This project, led by Leicester City Council on behalf of the region's nine care authorities, is looking at the complex market around looked-after children. The project started with collation of spend data across the region to assist in the analysis of the current trends, operating models and opportunities for creating extra efficiencies. For more details: [Shaping the market for looked after children](#)

#### Adopting standard classifications

Sir Philip Green's Efficiency Review stressed the need to improve data quality and common standards. ProClass is local government's Procurement Classification Service and can significantly help councils to improve in this area.



They offer a significant user forum and resource site, free mapping downloads and advice on classification / coding issues. Capital Ambition has now mapped over 94% of its expenditure to ProClass. For more details: [ProClass](#). In addition, SpendPro is a spend analysis tool developed by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and the North West IEP and currently covers a collective spend of £2.4bn. For more details: [Spendpro](#)

#### Transform programme

For in depth spend analysis with follow up support to help councils and other public sector bodies achieve savings, IESE has launched the TRANSFORM programme in partnership with Spikes Cavell. For more details: [SE IEP example](#)

#### Identifying costs and improving transparency

Identifying costs and improving transparency - Working with IESE, the IEPs are helping local authorities to meet the new responsibility of publishing spend, contracts let and tenders over £500 by January 2011. This support is necessary as some councils lack the resources and skills to undertake such an endeavour and there are opportunities to aggregate spend. IESE and Spikes Cavell, have co-founded the Spotlight on Spend Service to do just this. For more details: [SE IEP example](#)

Guidance on best managing spend analysis as a building block for successful procurement is provided by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply For more details: [Spend Analysis](#)

# 4

## Aggregate spend through category management

Ensure that you aggregate all spend within the spend category together and contract for it on the most appropriate basis. Put in place mechanisms to prevent off-contract purchasing and track all off-contract purchasing.

Undertake thorough market research so that you get to know your particular market and what developments are happening within it. Influence the market to provide what it is you require if it is not already available.

The best approach to deliver the above is through Category Management: here, procurement spend is divided into different categories (eg. IT, social care, property) and actively managed by category expert procurement professionals who work with the operational departments to jointly deliver success.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Learning from the private sector

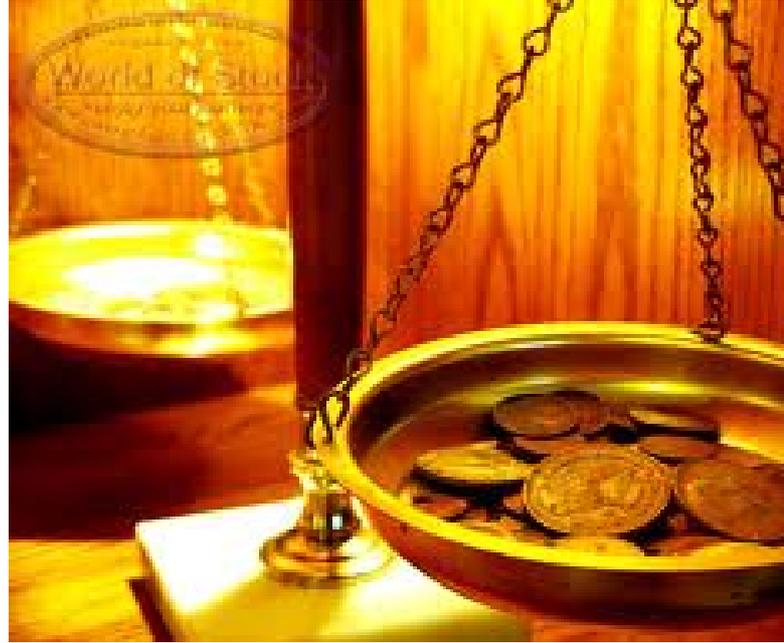
Leicestershire County Council was one of the first authorities to adopt the principles of category management from the private sector and to implement category management systematically across all of its purchasing activity, working with the East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

For more details: [LCC Category Management](#)

#### Collaborative approach

Another example is Improvement East which is working with Essex County Council to establish a collaborative approach to category management, across the public sector in Essex in 3 pilot categories: ICT, commercial fleet and passenger transport.

For more details: [IE IEP example](#)



### Sharing the lessons

A Guide to Category Management has been developed by the IEPs to help individual councils in developing their own category based approach to procurement spend.

For more details: [A Guide to Category Management](#)

### Central government category approach

OGC's Collaborative Procurement Category Teams help the public sector get better value from your spend on goods and services across a wide range of categories. Each category team has a pan-government strategy and is dedicated to finding better deals to help councils save money. For more details:

[OGC Procurement](#)

# 5

## Develop an asset reduction strategy

Start to develop a strategy to reduce unnecessary building and other related assets.

Carry out asset mapping, property data and spatial analysis to find out just how well your buildings are performing and utilised. From this develop short term plans to co-locate staff and release redundant space. Introduce flexible working to better use space and resource.

Use 'place thinking' to guide your longer term plans, by using a local demand led commissioning approach. Join together with other authorities and agencies and work together to consider the long term needs of your locality. Use this to jointly plan shared services, including sharing accommodation, management, assets, people and services. This is a long term plan but may also yield surprising short term savings opportunities for your authority.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Integrating county and district-level services

Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council are joining up their services in Havant. This is a new co-located model for the delivery of integrated services including access to education and social care, connexions and youth services, housing, community safety, voluntary organisations and health. For more details: [Havant Public Service Village example](#)

#### CLG Capital & Assets Pathfinder programme

The CLG Capital & Assets Pathfinder programme aims to help localities make more effective use of their public estate. The 11 pathfinders will test a customer-centric and place-based approach to asset management and capital investment. Central government is working with pathfinders to identify and remove barriers to taking forward opportunities to better use the existing asset base and improve new capital investment. For more details: [NIEP for the Built Environment Asset Management Community](#)



#### Making savings through flexible working

Lancashire County Council is delivering efficiency savings across back office services and improving public access to frontline services. The Council is expected to **save £1.6m** a year through a flexible working scheme that improves staff productivity and cuts carbon emissions by reducing travel time. The video of how they've done this can be found at: [LCC Video](#)

#### Transforming property asset management

Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands has conducted a major asset management study – The Way Forward – Transforming Property Asset Management, which has highlighted the potential to yield **£640m** over the next ten years across the region. For more details: [The Way Forward](#)

#### Asset management health check

The North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership has provided each local authority and fire and rescue service in the region with an asset management health check. The reports include recommendations for areas for improvement for each authority in the region. For more details: [NE IEP Health Check](#)

# 6

## Collaborate

Collaborating with others helps increase your own organisation's commercial leverage and saves time and effort through avoiding separate tender exercises. Critically, by creating long term competitive supplier relationships, it can also be used as a vehicle for influencing the market to provide local economic benefit, sustainable solutions and standardised specifications.

Use managed contract frameworks: This will often best provide the above benefits whilst promoting local control.

Use existing templates: originality is expensive. Link to existing standard procurement documentation rather than waste time and money creating your own.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Reduce insurance costs

A consortium approach to purchasing insurance, developed by the South West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, will enable all district councils and national parks across the region to collectively bring down the cost of insurance by 20%.

For more details: [SW Councils example](#)

#### Waste procurement

For examples of successful collaborative working on waste procurement visit the Waste Improvement Network, an online resource for officers and members run by Improvement and Efficiency South East on behalf of all the IEPs which offers a range of good practice case studies, as well as access to standard procurement documents relating to waste management: [Waste Improvement Network](#)

#### Using the Pro5 leverage

Pro5 represent five of the largest public sector professional buying organisations nationally. Collaborating together Pro5 use their extensive buying power to help local authorities get the best value solutions in key markets on commonly purchased goods and services. For more details: [Pro5](#)

#### Collaborative frameworks

Good deals for councils can also be found through the collaborative framework contracts let by Buying Solutions. For more details

[Buying Solutions.](#)



Within the field of construction procurement, the NIEP for the Built Environment has recently evidenced the benefits of collaborative procurement, based on recent specific examples across councils throughout England. For more details: [NIEP Benefits](#)

Many IEPs have adopted a procurement hub model enabling authorities and their partners to achieve economies of scale by collaborating to purchase goods and services. For instance, the West Midlands IEP procurement hub offers a wide range of 'best deals' that is currently securing savings of approximately £1m per month. For more details: [WM example](#). In addition, the North West IEP have developed a highly successful hub called "The Chest" producing savings on 409 deals to date. For more details: [The Chest](#)

The Pan Government Energy Project was cited in the recent Efficiency Review by Sir Philip Green as a strong example of successful collaborative procurement between central and local government. This project was led by OGC and the West Midlands IEP. For more details: [Over £100m saved in energy costs](#)

# 7

## Review costs and specifications

Using your category management approach, understand the cost drivers and pricing structures in each category market and use this to influence the prices that you receive back in bids. Get as much cost breakdown detail as you can – this gives you knowledge and power. Procurement arrangements should assume no price increases and should aim to include price decreases over the life of a contract as a reflection of continuous improvement. Any price increases should be through evidence, negotiation and agreement only.

Check that you are not specifying wants rather than needs. Check that you are not over- or under-specifying as this can add cost. Have you engaged stakeholders (customers) and the market (suppliers) in helping you decide what your specification should be? Check with other authorities and organisations (purchasers) how they have specified their requirements. Can you buy something completely different which still meets your requirements yet is more cost effective? Check that the specification is not bespoke and standardise wherever possible.

### Examples of best practice:

#### The care funding calculator

The care funding calculator developed jointly by Improvement and Efficiency South East, East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands and also promoted by Capital Ambition allows commissioners to establish a reasonable and transparent price for care as well as improving services by ensuring they are tailored to meet individuals' needs. The tool has saved **£11.2m** in London alone and could save **£200m** nationally. For more details: [Care Funding Calculator](#)

#### Fair pricing tool

The South West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership has developed a fair pricing tool for adult learning disability residential placements. The tool, utilised by care teams in local authorities, allows for the negotiation of learning disability specialist care home charges using a provider and placement database.



The project has achieved cashable benefits in excess of **£4.35m** to date with no detrimental impact on care quality. For more details: [SW IEP example](#)

#### SAVE Initiative

Improvement and Efficiency South East has implemented the SAVE initiative, a construction procurement project that promotes design commonality and exploits volume leverage across project programmes for key construction commodities, such as doors and light fittings. For more details: [SE IEP example](#)

#### Challenging the specification

Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands has piloted an alternative road resurfacing specification in partnership with their suppliers, which will result in improved reduction in CO2 emissions, whole life costs and potential aggregated procurement savings. For more details: [WM IEP example](#)

#### Central government help

OGC has produced summary guidance for all public sector organisations on specification writing. For more details [Specification Writing](#)

# 8

## Utilise technology

Reduce your transaction costs by reviewing processes and automating wherever possible. Use electronic tendering and contract management systems. Review suitability of electronic catalogues where appropriate. Consolidate invoicing if you cannot automate it. Don't allow checking and double checking of items such as invoices unless you can prove the benefits outweigh the costs. Use collaborative online tools such as web portals to accelerate your collaborative savings.

Use eAuctions, particularly for commodity procurement to produce significant savings.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Extending procurement cards

Manchester City Council leads on procurement for the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and runs the largest scale local authority purchasing scheme using procurement cards. Manchester has moved away from a traditional approach of using procurement cards for 'low value, high volume' purchasing to rolling out the use of the cards across a wider range of goods and services. For more details:

[NW IEP example](#)

#### Sharing the learning

P Cards are charge cards that can be used by officers to purchase goods or services on behalf of their authority. The Guide to P Cards provides an overview and recent examples of where authorities have adopted P Cards to lower transaction and commodity costs. For more details: [Guide to P Cards](#)

#### Unlocking staff efficiencies

Mid Sussex District Council made significant staff-time efficiencies from use of an e-tendering solution, plus approximately **£450,000 cashable saving** against previous contract pricing. For more details: [MSDC example](#)

#### Using web portals to lower transaction and contract costs

An example of using web portals to reduce transaction and contract costs is given by the South West IEP's eProcurement Portal 'Supplying the Southwest – A Gateway to Savings'. For more details: [SW eProcurement Portal](#)



Local Government Improvement and Development's Efficiency Exchange web portal enables councils to share information and learning about how to keep costs down in procurement and asset management. For more details: [IDeA](#)

#### eAuctions

With support from Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM), eAuction projects have saved authorities in the region over **£25m** on a range of categories including home to school transport, ICT and office supplies. Birmingham recently held 13 eAuctions releasing over **£5m efficiencies** and IEWM supported Worcestershire County Council to secure **£2.8m savings** from home to school transport, an initiative recognised at the Society of Procurement Officers (SOPO) awards. For more details: [WM IEP example](#)

A Guide to eAuctions has been prepared to help authorities new to this technology and approach in carrying out their own eAuction and provides practical examples and a process overview. For more details: [eAuction Guide](#)

## Develop a supplier management plan

Reduce the number of suppliers you deal with. This helps to aggregate and leverage spend, but also saves time and effort working with multiple suppliers and managing contract and supplier relationships. This does not need to adversely affect SMEs and local suppliers as you can use long term prime contractor arrangements that actively encourage the delivery of local economic benefits.

Put in place clear arrangements and accountabilities for on-going contract management. Measure and monitor key performance indicators and performance where it adds value. Focus supply chain development and supplier relationship development on key strategic suppliers only, using an account management approach similar to that used by sellers to manage relationships with key buyers. Identify in partnership with your suppliers where improvements can be made, where costs can be reduced, what you can each do differently to improve your processes for mutual benefit – then share that benefit.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Rationalising contracts

Brighton and Hove Council made savings through introduction of a vendor neutral arrangement for agency staff, **saving over £300k pa** and replacing spend on over 70 agencies with a single contract. For more details: [BHC example](#)

#### Promoting local economic benefit

The West Midlands Jobs and Skills Framework shows how to manage supplier relationships whilst actively promoting apprenticeships, skills and SMEs. For more details: [WM Framework](#)

In Yorkshire and Humber the YORbuild construction framework incorporates an Employment and Skills Strategy to support local employment and skills development. For more details: [YH example](#)



#### Building long term competitive relationships

Improvement and Efficiency South East has used managed framework contracts as a way of rationalising suppliers and improving supplier performance. Through building long term competitive relationships, supplier performance has been **increased by 16%** and contractual claims have been eradicated in a traditionally adversarial marketplace. For more details: [SE IEP example](#)

#### Supplier Development Project

Capital Ambition's Supplier Development Project is enabling authorities and selected strategic suppliers to work together to improve value from the £9bn London local government spends with third party suppliers. The project has the potential to deliver efficiencies of up to **£125m in cost reductions** and other benefits for local authorities with a similar saving for suppliers. For more details: [CA example](#)

#### Central government guidance

OGC provides summary guidance to all public sector organisations on effective contract management: For more details: [OGC Contract Management](#)

# 10

## Manage demand

The easiest way to save money is not to buy something in the first place, or at least to limit your demand. Put in place sensible and practical approval processes for key categories e.g. ICT, Consultancy. This may require changes to existing budget management responsibilities.

In the area of social care, the key potential cost efficiency lies in managing demand for residential care; in many cases better care outcomes can be achieved in addition to efficiencies through preventative strategies and non – residential care.

### Examples of best practice:

#### Reablement project

Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands has developed a social care reablement project to help equip people with the skills to help them live independently. This collaborative project aims to route 95% of all assessments through a Reablement Team, meaning that up to 60% of service recipients require no ongoing care or support. The potential efficiency gain is **£7m** during 2010/11. For more details: [WM Social Care](#)

#### Transforming community equipment services

The Capital Ambition funded project to transform community equipment services is a prime example of new ways of working between local authorities, PCTs and private sector retail. The programme's primary objective is to implement a retail solution for simple aids to daily living across London within two years, reducing authorities' stocking demands and unit costs and thereby releasing **cashable savings of £2.88m** per annum. For more details: [CA example](#)



#### Telecare Solutions

North Yorkshire County Council has seen reductions in demand for residential care through the introduction of Telecare solutions into people's own homes. For more details: [NYCC example](#)

#### Central government help

OGC has developed a guide to helping public sector organisations reduce external spend through improved demand management. For more details: [OGC Demand Management](#)

## Key Contacts



### Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (IEPs):

For key contacts in each of the IEPs and a link to their individual websites, please see: **[www.local.gov.uk/rieps](http://www.local.gov.uk/rieps)**



### NIEP for the Built Environment:

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