



Fire Gateway Review

Version 1.11

Date of Issue: 26 September 2008



Parity: recognising the potential in staff,
in technology and in the organisation



Contact

Your point of contact at Parity is:

Patrick Cooper

Parity Solutions Ltd
Wimbledon Bridge House
1 Hartfield Road
Wimbledon
SW19 3RU

Telephone: (0845) 873 0825

Mobile: (07720) 298 861

Email: p.cooper@parity.net

Contents

Executive Overview	1
Context.....	3
Perception	4
Benefits Realisation	5
Shared Services	5
Issues.....	6
Portal	6
Ownership	8
Levels of Participation.....	9
Support.....	9
Operations.....	10
Funding	10
Governance.....	12
Next.....	14
Development Opportunities	14
Constraints	17

Appendices

Executive Overview



This paper reviews the Fire Gateway (“the Gateway”), and makes some recommendations as to how it should approach the future.

On balance, we would assert that the Gateway has been a success, and that issues with it tend to be problems of perception. We believe that the Gateway should be retained and developed further: it is a valuable asset and worthy of continued support and investment.

Our key recommendations are:

- ☞ A clear definition of Gateway ownership is required. This is to clarify who “owns” the Gateway and its intellectual property, the **fire.gov.uk** domain, and who is responsible for its performance, etc.
- ☞ The governance structure should be reformulated: the existing Steering Group should retain its strategic and overall financial responsibility, but also assume an active role for change management and marketing.
- ☞ A *Community of Practice*¹ should be constituted to be the design authority of the Gateway, and to assume working group responsibility for its functional direction.

Once these items have been addressed the Steering Group will have to assure itself that the Gateway will be funded on an ongoing basis. Central government monies, which have been used in the past, will be withdrawn at the end of the current financial year, so there is real urgency on this matter.

- ☞ The operational status quo should be maintained during the financial year 2009-10, until the future funding model is agreed. This steady state period will provide an opportunity to generate comprehensive, fully-costed models for the future running of the Gateway. The models to be constructed should consider operating the gateway under different scenarios including: the existing model, by way of an FRS consortium, by way of some “lead” FRS.

We would assert that, in addition to economies of scale, there are beneficial network effects to be had in using the Gateway. This means that the greatest value of the Gateway will only be realised when all fire services and greater numbers of other stakeholders are active users of the platform. It falls to the Steering Group to generate/renew enthusiasm in this regard.

¹ See Appendix A for the description of the *Community of Practice* approach.

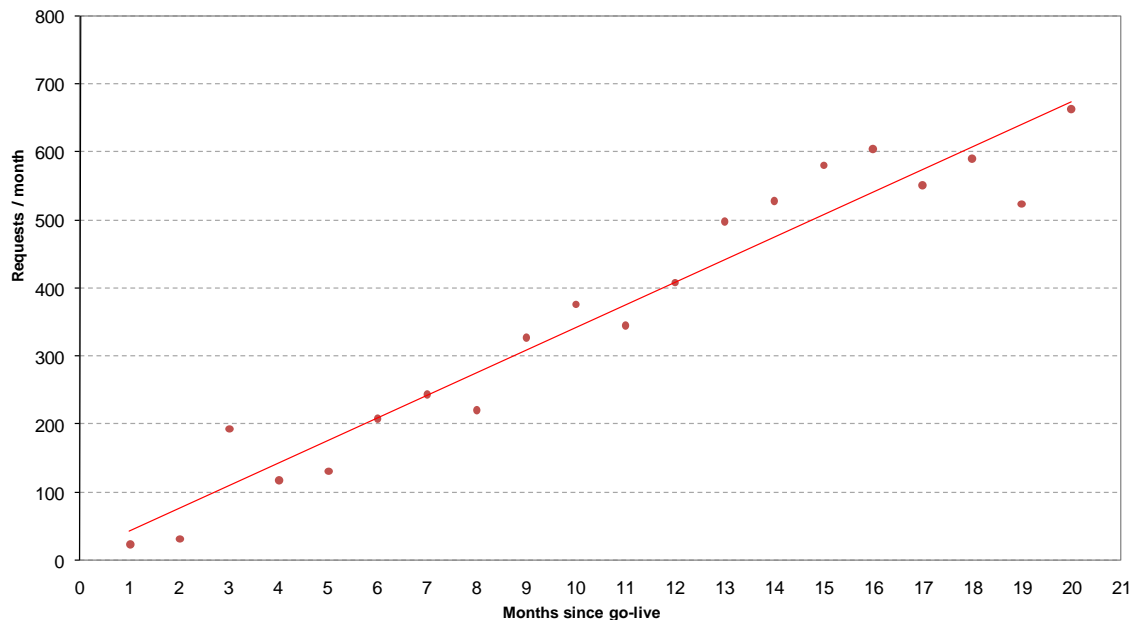
- ☞ All fire services need to be “sold” on the advantages of using the Gateway, and their interest in and commitment to such use should be sought or rejuvenated.

Finally, it would appear that the code base of the Fire Gateway has not been formally archived in order that it always be (independently) available to CFOA/the FRS community.

- ☞ All code and documents associated with the Fire Gateway should be put into escrow with some agency of CFOA’s choosing.

Context

On balance, the Gateway is performing to specification, and appears to be a success. As an indicator of this, we refer to the number of requests made via the Gateway for home safety visits, and these are shown in the graph, below.



This is obviously a simplistic device with which to evaluate progress, but it's reassuring to see that the is attracting increasing levels of traffic, and it's managing this without benefit of advertising or as part of some larger publicity campaign.

The original specification for the Fire Gateway had four streams²:

- Community
- Business
- Recruitment
- Portal and Central Infrastructure.

Broadly speaking, however, it would seem that progress has been achieved in each of these streams, and that the Gateway is well-placed for ongoing pursuit of these.

- Community engagement is indicated from the increasing use of forms for requesting FRS community visits, FRS home visits, Regulatory Reform Order, etc.
- Business success is difficult to prove, per se, but can be inferred on a statistical basis. In the submission made to the British Computer Society Awards of 2007,

² *Streams* are described in a bit more detail in Appendix B.

when the Fire Gateway was nominated in the Project Excellence category, it was estimated that in addition to the probable reduction in personal injuries and loss of life, use of the Gateway had prevented more than 30 workplace fires, prevented more than 18 firms from going out of business, and saved businesses more than £1 million in fire-related costs.

- Infrastructural success is indicated by projects such as those undertaken in London.

Part of the original business case envisioned an FRS using the transactional capability of the forms sitting on the Gateway as a "service" directly embedded in local FRS websites (e.g. personalised to the "look and feel" of the individual FRS) and utilising the Gateway infrastructure to pass secure requests back to that FRS. London Fire Brigade, in association with the Fire Service College and its suppliers, is currently working on this capability in the development of its new website.

- Recruitment utilisation is less successful than was originally expected, but more than 2,200 firefighter self-selection questionnaires have been submitted, which is worthy of note.

Perception

Even though the Gateway has performed to specification, it would appear that stakeholder expectations may not have been set properly or synchronised adequately. While there was no evidence obtained to suggest that anybody is against the Gateway per se, within some quarters there is a prevailing sense of antipathy regarding it.

The case to prove the technical advantages of the Gateway can be readily made by focusing on details relating to hardware and software. Correcting misperceptions, however, will have to focus upon matters of opinion and bias, which can't be addressed by enumerating technical specifications. The viability of the Gateway platform has been proven, but the implicit value in its operation has not been universally recognised.

The Gateway was created using funds from central government and was delivered in the context of the eGovernment initiative. Whilst the genesis of the "e-fire project" came about through a CFOA sponsored initiative, the method of its arrival meant that no individual fire service really had to make its own independent decision to invest in the project. As such, there was not necessarily any meaningful a priori commitment to the concept, no need to really monitor how the Gateway developed, and no impetus to recognise and extract value from the deliverable.

While the underlying principle of a central Fire and Rescue Services gateway on the Internet is a good thing, it does not appear to be a universally held opinion.

Remedying this will require significant effort, probably from CFOA in the first instance, and possibly from the Steering Group in a supporting/reinforcing capacity.

Benefits Realisation

It would be useful to recollect the benefits originally envisaged for the Fire Gateway, and these are set out below. All of these have all been obtained to at least some degree.

- Reduction in deaths, injuries, property loss and damage to the environment.
- Provision of high quality, and consistent information and on-line services.
- The capture of risk information which will allow the Fire and Rescue Services to assess risks and deploy resources more efficiently.
- Reduction in costs and time by reducing data redundancy, duplication and improving accuracy.
- Provision of a common platform for future electronic services. The central infrastructure will provide a range of services to those Fire and Rescue Services that have limited internet presence.
- Improvement in the fairness and transparency on fire-fighter recruitment.

Shared Services³

The Fire Gateway is solid evidence of the fire services' commitment to the government's shared services agenda. Significantly, not only does it link central government to local councils, but it also delivers services across the local government level.

³ See Appendix C for background information on *shared services*.

Issues

The future of the Fire Gateway will not be secured by trying to force people to use it. On the other hand, the existing and potential functionality of the Gateway should be able to induce participation. Fortunately, the case that can be made for the active use of the Gateway is a strong one. It is supported by:

- The provision of a secure environment for collaboration.
- The opportunity to make use of a unique and intuitive top level domain (**fire.gov.uk**).
- The Gateway, or its equivalent, is a component necessary for the delivery of shared services.
- A fire service's use of the Gateway will "tick a box" when it is assessed against Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and their derivatives.

One of the key attributes of the Gateway is its provision for secure collaboration. This functionality is quite valuable, and despite some suggestions to the contrary, it's not likely that individual fire services' web sites provide anything comparable... and certainly not for the per-organisation cost made available via the Gateway.

As the rest of this paper makes clear, there is a very real value embedded within the existing Gateway. The monetary investment in the project was around £6 million, and this would have been supported by various internal contributions such as management time and effort. It would be a shame for this value to go unrecognised and not be leveraged to full effect. It would be a far greater shame, however, were any individual fire services to withdraw their participation from the Gateway.

Investment in the Gateway has produced an asset, and it would be wrong to regard the money spent thus far simply as a sunk cost. As an asset, the Fire Gateway should be maintained, and investment in it should continue. The effort associated with getting the Gateway into its current operational situation should not be underestimated or undervalued. In the current economic climate, replication of the Gateway's functionality will almost certainly be beyond the fiscal capability of any individual fire service.

Portal

In contemplating the future of the Gateway a number of fundamental principles should be kept in mind:

- While every fire and rescue service is established on the Internet, they do not all benefit from having a transactional capability.

- Online communities are built around a common point of access.

The Fire Gateway ticks these boxes. The Gateway has been established on a sound, modern technical platform (i.e. SharePoint) that is well-suited to the extension and further development of a universally-shared fire and rescue portal.

The architecture for the Gateway (illustrated to the right) remains sound.

The general approach was to use the Gateway to provide universal access to FRS-related services, but to recognise that there are different classes of users.

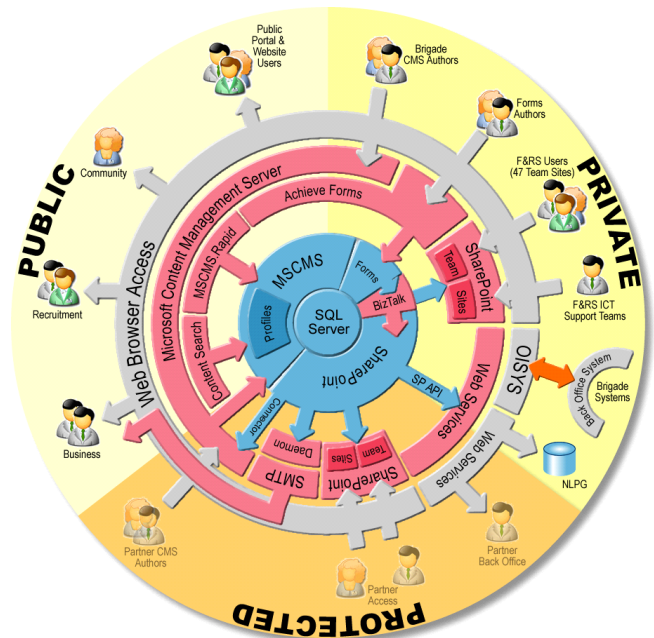
The Public should be able to access information, engage with their community on FRS matters, and transact with their local fire service (e.g. request a home visit).

Partners to the fire services

should be able to converse with them, share information with them, and have a secure means of transacting business with them (e.g. placing orders, managing workflows).

Finally, the Gateway delivers a secure and pre-vetted environment in which the different fire services can communicate and deal with each other. This would be for sharing of information, data, practices, technology (e.g. electronic forms), and so forth. It would also establish a unified presence for all of the FRSs so that all might derive community benefits, such as scale economies when placing orders for goods and services.

The public visitation pattern and use of forms is on the increase. The protected part of the infrastructure has already found a new application by way of *New Dimensions*⁴. The private area of the Gateway is finding increasing application in some jurisdictions such as London and Manchester where those FRSs are adding new capabilities that build upon the core infrastructure.



⁴ The *New Dimension* programme aims to enable the coordinated response of English and Welsh FRSes to major and catastrophic incidents, thereby reducing their consequential physical, environmental, and financial effects.

The *workflow* and *forms engines* at the centre of the Gateway are “big ticket” enterprise propositions, and only a handful of the fire services would have the potential to implement them autonomously. The workflow engine enables the automation and monitoring of transactions on the Internet: An activity can be started electronically and then managed and monitored all the way through to its ultimate completion/resolution. It can automate the involvement of all parties relevant to a workflow transaction, ensure that steps are followed in the right order, and report on the current status of all work flowing through the system. The forms engine generates electronic forms that get filled in by a user, and the information is automatically extracted from the form and injected into whichever system(s) have a requirement to use that data. The data entered into forms can be validated as its entered, the form itself can be checked automatically for completeness, and can be forwarded electronically to wherever it’s needed obviating the fairly common need to rekey data as it moves between disparate applications.

The e-government and shared services agendas are implicitly predicated on utilisation of workflow and forms engines. When combined, these technologies facilitate the efficiencies and savings these government initiatives call for.

The Gateway platform delivers, therefore, a significant set of capabilities within a secure operational environment, and offers significant value on a per fire service basis. Any FRS stands to benefit from using web-based transactions, and these are available cost-effectively via the Gateway: the substantial fixed costs and platform overheads have now been paid for, all that an FRS need to do is meet the marginal/variable costs to bring these capabilities to life.

The potential to expose transactional and workflow functionality to its universe of users is becoming recognised and used around the Gateway’s stakeholder “ring”.

Ownership

It would be useful to formally define “ownership” of the Gateway. Effectively, some individual should be identified as the *Senior Business User* (SBU) so that there is a clear initial point of contact for the handling of Gateway business issues. This notion of a Senior Business User is a common one within the context of IT projects, and particularly within the PRINCE2 project methodology.

Essentially, the Fire Gateway SBU would be some senior business user who has some stake attached to the successful ongoing operation of the Gateway and is able to assert and maintain a representation of FRS interests in respect of the Gateway. The role is significant, and the SBU will have to be able to devote enough time to the robust oversight of the system.

This User would assume responsibility for the Gateway service, its associated intellectual property, and even the **fire.gov.uk** URL (which is quite valuable in its own right).

Levels of Participation

It's possible that the current model defining three tiers of participation (Silver, Gold, and Platinum) may be working against the notion that all fire services are equivalent "shareholders" in the Gateway.

All fire services are expected to contribute equally, and all are eligible to move up the participation hierarchy. In practice, however, those who do achieve Gold and Platinum accreditation will have been able to do this because that they can afford to do so. This could leave some services with the impression that they are being left to suffer from inevitable functional disadvantage even though they're being required to pay the same dues as everybody else.

☞ Some consideration should be given to discarding participation tiers.

All FRSs have the same, shared potential to make use of the Gateway and its associated technologies. On the other hand, not all FRSs benefit from the same opportunities to actually do so. The suggestion is not to adjust the uniform subscription levels, but rather to reflect the financial equality with an equality of membership. This would not impede any FRS seeking to make enhanced use of the Gateway as it would still have to bear its own marginal development costs. On the other hand, there may be some marketing benefit to be had in that smaller FRSs won't be relegated to some inferior membership tier.

Note that this suggestion has neither technical nor financial implications, but is made with a view to the marketing benefit to be had by re-affirming the equality of FRSs.

Support

The existing support model sees the Gateway run by the FSC. The FSC, in turn, retains a small (two-person) firm on a service contract basis to manage the application layer of the Gateway.

This is an appropriate approach to take for the moment, given that various aspects of the Gateway's future remain undefined. This support arrangement will need to be revisited, however, should usage levels increase – it may become appropriate to arrange for deeper operational cover with a bigger firm, or perhaps to decide to make use of internal resources instead.

Operations

Eduserv manages the lower layers (hardware, operating system, connectivity) of the platform.

The existing platform configuration was sized towards supporting peak levels of usage (i.e. as opposed to average loads), and as such the it gives no cause for concern at present.

An assessment of alternative hosting arrangements is currently under way in any event

Funding

Until now, core operations of the Gateway have been funded by central government. This situation is due to change in April 2009, and it is in this context that options for the future need to be considered.

New Dimensions is hosted within the Gateway infrastructure, and it's a very appropriate residence for it. Use of the Gateway for this makes perfect sense, and there's a benefit from not having to bear the substantial overheads that would be required to replicate the Gateway's underlying infrastructure.

On the other hand, *New Dimensions* is a distinct application, and brought with it the requirement for a whole new level of funding. We would suggest that funding for the ongoing support and maintenance of *New Dimensions* be ring-fenced, and considered separately from the costs associated with maintaining the core Fire Gateway. This would be common practice for all other comparable systems. It seems appropriate and fair that the marginal operational costs associated with these ancillary applications be covered by the project sponsors i.e. not from the annual contributions from the various fire services.

If external users, such as Communities and Local Government (CLG) for example, want to use the Fire Gateway platform then their ability to do so should be predicated on their full-funding of the endeavour. Full-funding would include not only development and commissioning costs, but also all hardware and (operating) software upgrades that arise, along with funding for the ongoing operation of the new application. Comparably, if an organisation withdraws funding for an application, then that application needs to be closed down and withdrawn from the system.

The generally accepted cost of supporting the Gateway is currently at a historically established £6,100 per fire service per annum (which not all fire services are meeting). An accurate accounting of costs, which would incorporate FSC internal time charges for example, could see this figure rise to around twice that amount. Even

£12,000 to £15,000 per annum, however, remains a reasonable amount to pay for the platform that is being delivered to each fire service. When one considers the quality of the core deliverable, which is a resilient, securely hosted, extensible, collaborative environment, with embedded transactional capabilities, it is seen to be good value... but only if it's utilised!

It's been roughly estimated that expected real annual running cost of the Gateway is between £400k and £500k per annum, which makes for an annual per brigade charge of between £8,900 pounds and £11,100. The fact is, however, a per service contribution in the range of £12,000 to £15,000 per annum should be enough to maintain a reasonable status quo, but will not provide for much more than this. It will cover maintenance, installation of (minor) upgrades, and minor enhancements and extensions to Gateway content.

It would be worthwhile to consider a charging regime that provides a little bit more than subsistence-level funding, starting at around £1,000 or more per month. This would keep the Gateway fully maintained, and would allow for some limited ability to make business as usual changes to the web site (changing or adding new links to other sites, changing or adding pictures, inserting extra web pages, etc.) It would also allow a more active management of the Gateway on behalf of the larger FRS community. Assuming that the Community of Practice (CoP) approach to Gateway management is adopted, then a bit of extra money would, for example, allow the CoP to establish and maintain active links across regional groups. CoP meetings could be held in differing regions, and all FRSs could be invited to attend, but with the hope that those local to a given meeting would be induced to attend. In addition, the CoP should also utilise the Gateway itself as a virtual forum for FRSs in terms of generating discussion on and developing future business functionality proposals for use of the Gateway.

It has been suggested, but not investigated, that a significant number of fire services withhold their contributions for the running of the Gateway. Obviously this is worrying. The general approach to the Gateway needs to move away from a sometimes grudging participation at the lowest possible cost, to a universal commitment to invest in it.

Other Ancillary Services

While *New Dimension*, for example, is being supported at rigorous security and operational levels, such levels are not necessarily warranted for other applications being served via the Gateway e.g. booking school visits by the local fire station.

By segmenting operations appropriately it will be easier to determine elemental operating costs, and will enable them to be assigned more accurately. *New Dimensions* maintenance and operating costs might, for example, be better assigned

to Communities and Local Government.(The Steering Group would have to take a view on whether this is a viable proposition or not.)

The same approach, of apportioning costs to sponsoring organisations, would be taken for any other ancillary services that might follow *New Dimensions* onto the Gateway platform.

Sponsorship

The fire and rescue services are not motivated to generate a profit. Yet, there are many profit-seeking firms that sell to them. As there are only a limited number of fire services, the provision of a direct, privileged conduit to them is a very valuable proposition – and taking financial advantage of this should, in our view, be considered and actively explored.

It is understood that the use of web site advertising may not be palatable to some. The fact remains, however, that the revenue generated from online advertising could subsidise the operation and development of the Gateway and reduce the contributions required from each of the fire services.

Some mention has been made, for example, of the Fire Protection Association being a prospective advertiser; there are sure to be others.

The value of this advertising channel will be maximised when all services participate in the Gateway, which provides another compelling reason to foster universal participation in it.

Governance

The existing *Recommended Specific Membership for Full Steering Group* (see below) could see as many as twenty two or more persons in attendance at a meeting. This seems heavy.

It is recommended that the day-to-day oversight of the Gateway be undertaken by a small Gateway Working Group.

The creation and membership of this body would need to be decided by the Steering Group, but the mooted *Communities of Practice* model looks ready-made for such a role. This group would marshal requests and requirements from the various fire services, propose ways to accommodate them, and then seek Steering Group approval to proceed with the work.

Recommended Specific Memberships for Full Steering Group

Local Government Association Elected Members:

- 3 Local Government Association
- LGA Fire Programme Manager (Officer)

Fire Service College:

- FSC Lead Officer
- Fire Gateway Development Manager
- Fire Gateway Communications Officer
- Finance Officer
- Legal Advisor

Chief Fire Officers' Association:

- Strategic Planner
- ICT Technical Representative

Members from other Organisations:

- Communities & Local Government
- Practitioners' Forum
- Business & Community Safety Forum

Attendees as and when required:

- Fire Gateway Operational staff
- Representatives of supplier organisations
- Subject area specialists
- Financial advisors
- Legal advisors

Next

As things stand now, it would be ill-advised to contemplate any material changes to the Gateway. The system is stable, operational procedures around the existing installation are well-established, and there is funding to approximately see out the rest of the year. Any changes to the system would destabilise the operational and financial equilibrium that exists.

Development Opportunities

Phase 1 was to:

deliver the national portal and central infrastructure, together with a number of business processes... defined within the Community, Business and Recruitment streams.

Later phases called for:

the portal [to] be used as the platform for further business application integration with Fire and Local Authorities. This may take the form of data and application integration or the development of new common business processes that are provided within the portal.

The portal will also be platform for the provision of a number of national business intelligence applications.

These original, longer term intentions remain the appropriate direction for development of the Gateway. Once a *Community of Practice* working group is in place, there will be a forum for the sharing of best practices, and this will suit the drive towards common business processes and will nurture the creation of national business intelligence applications.

Tactical Improvements

There are a number of fairly straightforward improvements that could be made to the Fire Gateway in the short term.

For example, content has not been (substantially) refreshed since the Gateway was launched, so this would be a reasonable thing to undertake.

It would be useful to customers and engagement with the various fire services if there was a link to each fire service from the **www.fire.gov.uk** home page. Similarly, a

reciprocal link from each fire service home page to the Fire Gateway would be appropriate.

These simple changes would leverage the Gateway as a common point of access to each fire service, would reinforce the notion that there are many fire services working together to protect the nation. It would also be representing each fire service equivalently.

- ☞ CFOA should consider endorsing this idea, and recommend to each FRS that the links to the Gateway appear on each of their home pages.

Strategic Extensions

Going beyond the short term, there are certainly a number of more significant extensions that might be considered for the Gateway.

Keeping in mind the later phase objectives for the Gateway mentioned above, we note that initiatives such as *FiReControl*, *FireLink*, and *FireBuy* all have their own autonomous existences on the Internet. These systems, like *New Dimensions*, could all fit quite comfortably within the Gateway architecture, and strong cases could be made for doing so. For instance, once *FiReControl* is in a steady-state of operations, the Gateway could provide a secure repository for FRSs to access on-line materials (standard operating procedures, interface definitions, change control requests, etc.). We would expect there to be some financial savings in such a consolidation, and the exercise would demonstrate how central government and fire and rescue services were sharing services with each other to the net benefit of taxpayers.

While the Gateway will readily support RSS⁵ feeds, this is only of use if there's a flow of content. At present, there is not, so this is an enhancement that should be pursued later.

Complementary Applications

There may be some usefulness in using the Gateway platform to provide less obvious services.

⁵ RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication". It is a way to actively push information out to interested users, without them having to visit a web site just to check if there's something new. RSS is already fairly pervasive, and is supported by various free and commercial software packages (e.g. Outlook 2007).

For example, it might be beneficial provide web support to the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund. This would certainly draw traffic to the site, and it would raise the site's profile and enhance its reputation across all services.

These other services would, of course, be granted area(s) on the Gateway subject to agreeing commercial terms. It seems likely, however, that there would be a number of organisations like the Benevolent Fund who would derive mutual benefit from becoming Fire Gateway "partners".

Knowledge Management

The professional users of the Gateway represent a very special and knowledgeable association of personnel.

Early plans for the Fire Gateway called for it to be used for *knowledge management* e.g. it would be an ideal place to seek out subject experts from across the country.

The Gateway has been delivered and is now in solid operational use. It would certainly make sense given the maturity of the platform that this early knowledge requirement objective be revisited. This would be a useful facility for all FRSs regardless of their size.

Constraints

Time constraints imposed for the production of this report meant that it was not possible to talk to a large number of Gateway stakeholders. We are grateful, however, for the time granted and insights given by:

- Chris Carlton
Business Solutions Group Manager
London Fire Brigade
- Jon Chapman
Chief Information Officer
Fire Service College
- Damian Parkinson
Head of Information Technology
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Some of the recommendations in the report are necessarily predicated on what is essentially *hearsay* evidence. Despite this, we believe that the recommendations are sound, but they would of course benefit from being confirmed via more extensive research.

Should further investigations be required, we would recommend that they include:

- Use of an online survey tool to solicit views from stakeholders. This would hopefully generate data from a statistically significant number of active users... and, by corollary, highlight problem cohorts or inactive potential users.
- A deeper review of the Gateway's finances, to generate an accurate cost model and in particular costs associated with a maintaining the operational status quo during the financial year 2009-10.
- CFOA should be represented in any negotiations between the Fire Service College and the prime contractor in reviewing the on-going contractual framework for running the Gateway, including arrangements to maintain the operational status quo during the financial year 2009-10.
- Input from a broader audience, beyond the fire and rescue services, such as from central government and identifiable members of the public. Data from this new audience would have to be collected via interview in the case of civil servants, and possibly via online questionnaires in the case of citizens.
- More detailed analysis/consideration of web site activity statistics (use by internals, use by externals, CPU and network utilisations, etc.).

Appendix A - Community of Practice

This appendix is based upon a set of previously issued notes by Chris Carlton, Business Solutions Group Manager, London Fire Brigade. It discusses, at high level, the benefits of the Community of Practice approach.

The CFOA ICT Management Group has been thinking for some time about establishing ten *Communities of Practice* (CoP), each specialising in a particular aspect of ICT and each with a nominated leader. The leaders would come together regularly and each would tackle a task per year.

“Ordinary” members of the group could belong to as many groups as they want to, but they would all be expected to belong to at least one. The groups could meet as regularly as they deemed appropriate, and could coordinate activities in a secure manner using the Fire Gateway.

This approach would reduce the number of people expected to visit CFOA HQ in Tamworth, and would enable people to work in those areas in which they are most expert while benefitting from the guidance of colleagues in other areas.

National initiatives (FireCon, FireLink, FireBuy, New Dimensions, etc.) would have a network within which people could work, develop best practice, and share information and advice more easily. The CFOA Board would be able to obtain assistance and guidance directly via the appropriate CoP leader.

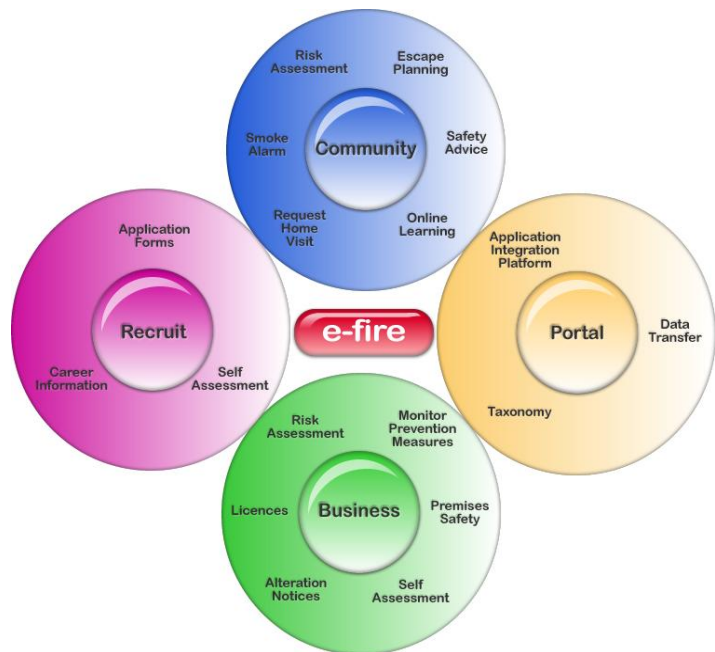
The CoP approach, in making use of the Gateway, would make greater use of its latent potential, extracting value from the investment already made.

Appendix B - “Streams”

This appendix is an excerpt from Version 1.0 of the e-fire Project (Phase 1) tender that was made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 05 April 2005.

Phase 1 of the [e-fire] project is to deliver the national portal and central infrastructure, together with a number of business processes (use cases) defined within the Community, Business and Recruitment streams.

The **Community** stream will provide citizens with a range of tools which will allow them to conduct home fire risk assessments, construct home fire escape plans, request free smoke alarms, access targeted fire safety information, book home visits or junior fire setter advisor fire safety. It will also be the source of educational information and online learning for school children.



The **Business** stream will similarly provide a range of tools which will enable premises operators to conduct online self-assessment for business premises, submit and renew applications for licences and submit alteration notices.

The **Recruitment** stream will provide a self-assessment questionnaire for prospective applicants, and a one stop shop for relevant career information.

The **Portal and Central Infrastructure** stream will provide the means by which these business processes will be supported on-line.

Beyond Phase 1, it is envisaged that the portal will be used as the platform for further business application integration with Fire and Local Authorities. This may take the form of data and application integration or the development of new common business processes that are provided within the portal.

The portal will also be platform for the provision of a number of national business intelligence applications.

Appendix C - Shared Services

This appendix is an extract from “Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology”. It gives a very good overview of shared services and the role they play in the Cabinet Office’s strategy for transformation and efficiency.

The full document is available at <http://www.cio.gov.uk/documents/pdf/transgov/transgov-strategy.pdf>.

“...This is a time to push forward, faster and on all fronts: open up the system, break down its monoliths, put the parent and pupil and patient and law-abiding citizen at the centre of it. We have made great progress. Let us learn the lessons of it not so as to rest on present achievements but to take them to a new and higher level in the future...”

The Prime Minister’s speech to National Policy Forum 9 July 2005

Introduction

1. The Prime Minister commissioned this strategy to seize the opportunity provided by technology to transform the business of government. Technology has a major part to play in the solutions to each of three major challenges which globalisation is setting modern governments – economic productivity, social justice and public service reform. Only a strategic view will enable the United Kingdom to use technology decisively and effectively across government to meet its national objectives.
2. In particular, the strategy was directed to provide overall technology leadership in three key areas:
 - (1) The transformation of public services for the benefit of citizens, businesses, taxpayers and front-line staff.
 - (2) The efficiency of the corporate services and infrastructure of government organisations, thus freeing resources for the front-line.
 - (3) The steps necessary to achieve the effective delivery of technology for government.
3. This document focuses upon the core themes which each public sector organisation needs to develop into actions for its area of responsibility, and on the supporting actions to be taken across government as a whole. Alongside this document will be a series of short descriptions of how these principles will change public services in key delivery areas. It is also supported by more detailed working papers and recommendations.

Vision

4. Twenty First Century Government is enabled by technology – policy is inspired by it, business change is delivered by it, customer and corporate services are dependent on it, and democratic engagement is exploring it. Moreover modern

governments with serious transformational intent see technology as a strategic asset and not just a tactical tool. Technology alone does not transform government, but government cannot transform to meet modern citizens' expectations without it.

5. So this strategy's vision is about better using technology to deliver public services and policy outcomes that have an impact on citizens' daily lives: through greater choice and personalisation, delivering better public services, such as health, education and pensions; benefiting communities by reducing burdens on front line staff and giving them the tools to help break cycles of crime and deprivation; and improving the economy through better regulation and leaner government.
6. In addition, in announcing the Comprehensive Spending Review, HM Treasury set out a range of challenges to Britain that will require innovative policy responses and co-ordination of activity across departmental boundaries. Technology will be at the heart of meeting this agenda. Indeed, this strategy envisages:
 - Unlocking around £1.4 billion (10% of the current spend on technology) from the current annual spend on legacy systems which can be released to new technology enabled reforms in public services.
 - Providing practical steps to help secure the delivery of the substantial savings at the heart of the 2004 Efficiency Programme which were to be enabled by technology.
 - Creating a basis for the next round of efficiencies across the wider public sector which could result from fundamentally different ways of delivering public services.
7. The specific opportunities lie in improving transactional services (eg. tax and benefits), in helping front line public servants to be more effective (eg. doctors, nurses, police and teachers), in supporting effective policy outcomes (eg. in joined-up, multi-agency approaches to offender management and domestic violence), in reforming the corporate services and infrastructure which government uses behind the scenes, and in taking swifter advantage of the latest technologies developed for the wider market.
8. Overall this technology-enabled transformation will help ensure that:
 - Citizens and businesses have choice and personalisation in their interactions with government. Choice will come through new channels and more fundamentally through new opportunities for service competition.
 - Taxpayers benefit from efficiency gains.
 - Citizens, businesses and the voluntary and community sector benefit from the better regulation, reduced paperwork and lower costs from a leaner, modern, more effective public sector.
 - Public servants have better tools to undertake their jobs, and the opportunity to provide better service as a result.
 - Policy makers will be better able to achieve intended outcomes in practice.
 - Managers are able to free resources from back office to the front-line.
 - Citizens feel more engaged with the processes of democratic government.
9. However the vision is not just about transforming government through technology. It is also about making government transformational through the use of technology – creating and retaining the capacity and capability to innovate and use technology effectively as technology itself develops. This is the only way in which public services can keep up with a continually changing, globalised society.

Parity: recognising the potential in staff, in technology & in the organisation

Parity is a professional services company that works with organisations to achieve a step change in business performance, by ensuring the right people are in the right roles, using the right processes and technology, in the right way.

We help companies align people, processes and technology to enhance performance of both the individual and the organisation.

PARITY

www.parity.net

Parity, 1 Hartfield Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 3RU

Tel: 0208 543 5353, Fax: 0208 545 6456