Case study

BARKERS
COMMERCIAL CONSULTANCY

ESSEX POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Driving ICT Procurement Success at Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Sector: Public Sector. Contract period: December'21 – May'22

When critical ICT projects stall due to limited procurement resources, delays can ripple across the organisation. Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority turned to Barkers to ensure these essential projects stayed on track and fully compliant.

Summary

Essex PFCC was undergoing a procurement transformation led by Barkers. Due to limited short-term procurement resources internally, Essex PFCC requested support specifically for the ICT category. The ICT team had several ongoing projects that required procurement involvement, without which they risked stalling. This six-month engagement supported the delivery of business-critical projects and prepared the team for the introduction of a permanent ICT Category Manager.

Business Challenge

Historically, ICT at Essex PFCC lacked dedicated procurement resource, and internal changes further reduced capacity. A large-scale project also diverted the usual procurement support away from day-to-day ICT needs.

Ongoing projects at varying stages required immediate support, including:

- A new Workforce Management System
- Replacement of the public-facing website
- A new Applicant Tracking System for HR
- Replacement of a Health and Safety System
- Standard extensions such as Microsoft Licenses

Without a dedicated ICT Category Manager, procurement pipelines were underdeveloped, and stakeholders often had to manage procurement themselves. Barkers' challenge was to ensure these projects progressed smoothly, while remaining fully compliant with public procurement regulations.

Our solution

Barkers embedded a dedicated resource into the Essex PFCC procurement team, driving the ongoing ICT projects as part of a broader strategic review of the procurement function.

A collaborative approach was taken: all relevant stakeholders and project managers were engaged in a scoping exercise to understand project status and requirements. Recommendations were made to streamline processes and maintain full compliance.

Methodologies implemented included:

- Project management
- Stakeholder and people management
- Data analytics and tender analysis
- Tender management

Each project was processed in line with internal and external procurement procedures, with full documentation and contractual reviews completed. Regular stakeholder engagement included weekly updates with senior ICT members and procurement team meetings with the Chief Finance Officer to maintain awareness and secure ongoing support.

The results

A dedicated ICT Category Manager has now joined the Essex PFCC team. Barkers successfully handed over multiple completed projects, including:

- Workforce Management Software: final contract terms ready for signing
- Public-facing website: a new supplier had begun implementation
- Health and Safety System: implementation underway with a new supplier
- Applicant Tracking System: evaluations complete, ready for selection and sign-off

The engagement also fostered a cultural shift within ICT, embedding procurement principles and encouraging collaboration. This partnership culture will continue to be developed by Essex PFCC in the future.