



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

The Fire and Rescue National Framework

2006-08





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Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Telephone 020 7944 4400
Web site www.odpm.gov.uk

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Ministerial Foreword

Modernisation of the Fire and Rescue Service is now well underway and communities are already seeing the benefits of a more efficient and effective Service. Our challenging PSA targets are well on the way to being met, reflecting the excellent preventative work that the Service is undertaking. While we should be proud of these achievements there is no room for complacency. We must turn these early indications of reductions in deliberate fires and fire deaths into a clear trend and continue to make every effort to proactively protect the most vulnerable.

A modern Fire and Rescue Service must also deliver value for public money. Fire CPA outcomes, reported in 2005, established a firm basis for improvement and all Fire and Rescue Authorities are now focussed on securing those improvements. One concern arising from the CPA process was the lack of progress on delivering equality and diversity within the Service. With the right approach I believe that diversity will grow, increasingly reflecting the, age, genders, ethnicity, sexual orientations, abilities, disabilities, religions, and beliefs of the wider community, helping the Service to build on its position of respect and trust within the community with a greater understanding of the needs of all those we serve. The aims and objectives of the Fire and Rescue Service have been underpinned by a unifying creed. Its own *Core Values*. These clearly set out the expectations the Fire and Rescue Service has of the attitudes and behaviours of all staff. The public relies on the honesty and integrity of each of us who have chosen to provide a public service. Behaviours that contravene the Fire and Rescue Service Core Values risk serious consequences both for the individual and for the reputation of the Fire and Rescue Services.

This National Framework sets out a vision of the Fire and Rescue Service for the next two years. Our move to a two-year National Framework recognises the need for a consistent vision to support strategic planning processes and our confidence that the pace of change and modernisation will continue. We will consider the timescale for future National Framework documents with stakeholders and will aim to co-ordinate future editions of the Framework with Authorities' financial planning timetables and the continuing development of Integrated Risk Management Planning.

The National Framework reflects the responses we have received from stakeholders to the draft document and I thank all those who have given us their views. The Government's full response to the consultation will be published shortly on the ODPM website. The Framework also reflects the conclusion of a number of other consultation exercises which have helped shape relevant chapters within this document.

This National Framework looks ahead to the challenges and opportunities for the next two years. We have a new strategy for Children and Young People to support the excellent work in our communities, changes to the performance framework for the service following CPA and new recruitment arrangements. I look forward to continuing working with you on the challenges ahead.



Jim Fitzpatrick MP.

Minister for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Introduction

1 The Government is responsible for setting clear priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire and Rescue National Framework does this by making clear:

- the Government's expectations for the Fire and Rescue Service;
- what Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to do; and
- what support Government will provide.

2 The Government's new fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for England came into effect on 1 April 2005¹. The target is:

By 2010, reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home by 20% and the number of deliberate fires by 10%.

3 The National Framework is a strategic plan outlining how the PSA and other objectives can be delivered. Its three principal objectives remain:

- to provide clarity about the outcomes and objectives the Government wants to be achieved;
- to set out what the Government expects Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards to do in order to meet these objectives; and
- to explain what the Government will do to support Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards to meet these objectives.

4 As we have made clear, this document is not a national blueprint. Giving Fire and Rescue Authorities the flexibility they need to meet the specific needs of their local

communities remains at the heart of the Government's approach. The Framework is designed to give authorities a firm foundation on which to build local solutions.

Summary

5 The Framework is divided into nine chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Fire prevention and risk management** – covers fire prevention measures and the development of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs).
- **Chapter 2 – Working together: the regional approach** – covers the functions on which Fire and Rescue Authorities should work together through Regional Management Boards (RMBs), and focus on regional control centres and procurement.
- **Chapter 3 – Effective response** – focuses on providing an effective response when incidents do occur.
- **Chapter 4 – Resilience and New Dimension** – sets out the strategy for responding to terrorist threats and other major natural or man-made disasters.
- **Chapter 5 – Fire and rescue staff** – deals with fair and effective management of Fire and Rescue Service staff, including equality and diversity issues.
- **Chapter 6 – Workforce development** – covers the Integrated Personal Development System and training provision.
- **Chapter 7 – Finance** – deals with the funding provided by central government and financial management issues.
- **Chapter 8 – Performance management** – covers progress following the

¹ See: www.hmtreasury.gov.uk

introduction of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA); improvement planning; Best Value; capturing and disseminating good practice; Local Area Agreements; and e-Government.

- **Chapter 9 – Research** – outlines the fire and rescue research strategy.

6 Each section addresses: the Government's objectives; what the Government will do to help; and action for Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

7 The Fire and Rescue Services Act represented a comprehensive reform of the statutory framework. In particular, it placed the prevention of fires at the heart of legislation, for example with the creation of new duties to promote fire safety; and gives Fire and Rescue Authorities powers to work with other partners in the community to deliver this duty. The Act gave statutory effect to other roles Fire and Rescue Authorities already undertake, such as attending to road traffic accidents and, by Order and subject to stakeholder consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny, their new responsibilities in relation to terrorist threats and other activities, such as responding to serious flooding. The Act also gives Fire and Rescue Authorities wide discretion to plan, equip and take action to meet local risks and priorities.

8 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 has given statutory effect to the National Framework and requires the Secretary of State to report against it. The relevant sections of the Act are as follows:

- Section 21 requires the Secretary of State to prepare and keep current a National

Framework setting out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities, with the aim of promoting public safety, and the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of authorities and their functions. He must consult representatives of the authorities and their employees before making significant revisions, and must give them effect by statutory instrument. For their part, Fire and Rescue Authorities must 'have regard' to the Framework when carrying out their functions.

- Section 22 provides the Secretary of State with the power to intervene if he considers a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework. While Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to make progress in all areas set out in the Framework, references to what authorities 'must' or 'should' do indicate those areas that Ministers consider most important, with 'must' being stronger. They are also highlighted in bold text. Any use of intervention powers will be in accordance with the principles of the Local Government Intervention Protocol (link at Annex A) as agreed with the Local Government Association (LGA) (see chapter 8). We envisage that these powers would only be used as a measure of last resort.
- Section 23 requires the Secretary of State to consult on and publish an intervention protocol. This requirement has been fulfilled by consultation on the application of the Local Government Intervention Protocol to these powers.
- Section 24 explicitly extends the Audit Commission's powers to inspect – contained within the Local Government Act 1999 – to include performance expectations in the Framework that might not be covered by the Best Value inspection powers in the 1999 Act. These

expectations were taken into account by the Audit Commission during the Fire CPA process.

- Section 25 requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament on the extent to which Fire and Rescue Authorities are acting in accordance with the Framework, and any steps taken by him to ensure that they do.

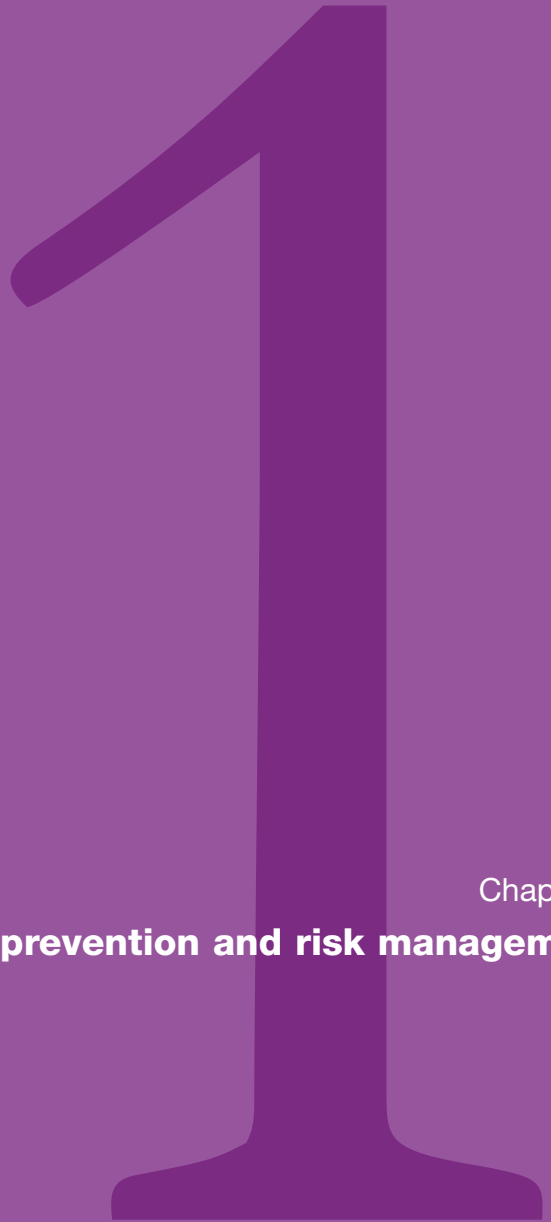
Future Frameworks

9 In future, we aim to publish National Frameworks in the Autumn. We are likely to consult on the next National Framework in Summer 2007. In the future National Frameworks are likely to have a two-year lifespan or longer. Where significant changes to the Framework are necessary during the life of the document, stakeholders will be fully consulted and amendments to the Framework will be published by Fire and Rescue Service Circular and laid in Parliament for approval. We will inform stakeholders of any amendments and cross-refer them to relevant paragraph of the National Framework.

10 The National Framework continues to draw together, in one place, existing priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities. As a result we do not consider that it will place extra burdens on business, charities, the voluntary sector or public sector, and therefore no Regulatory Impact Assessment has been produced.

Devolved Administrations

11 The National Framework does not cover Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, where the Fire and Rescue Service is fully devolved. The Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Executive are each responsible for their own framework documents.



Chapter 1

Fire prevention and risk management

Integrated Risk Management Plans

1.1 Since April 2003 every Fire and Rescue Authority has been required to produce a local IRMP that sets out the authority's strategy, in collaboration with other agencies, for:

- reducing the number and severity of fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents occurring in the area for which it is responsible;
- reducing the severity of injuries in fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents;
- reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
- safeguarding the environment and heritage (both built and natural); and
- providing value for money.

1.2 An IRMP will set out an authority's assessment of local risk to life and, in line with this analysis, how it is going to deploy its resources to tackle these risks and improve the safety of all sections of society. The IRMP will identify the ways in which the authority can work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and other agencies to deliver improved public safety. It will also set out the targets an authority has set itself and the standards it will apply to meet the specific pattern of local risk. This will be done in the context of its statutory duty to secure continuous improvement and should achieve Best Value for its local council taxpayers.

1.3 The IRMP is expected to be a strategic, forward looking document with the approach and detail of business and change management plans. Annual action plans, which may be produced separately or integrated with the main plan, will set out what the authority plans to do in the year ahead.

Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that their IRMPs are both accessible – to the public, business and other stakeholders – and easy to understand.

Authorities are required to keep their IRMPs under review, and revise them on a regular basis when new evidence or analytical tools become available. (Further guidance on the operational aspects of IRMPs is included in Chapter 3.)

1.4 In summary, Fire and Rescue Authorities must each have in place and maintain an IRMP which reflects local need and which sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. They should also:

- **produce annual action plans on which they have fully consulted their local communities, allowing twelve weeks for the consultation;**
- **have regard to central government guidance in producing their plans; and**
- **make efficient and effective use of resources to implement the IRMP and the action plan, including using more efficient working practices where appropriate.**

1.5 ODPM has issued a series of guidance notes to provide advice and assistance to Fire and Rescue Authorities on developing IRMPs. That guidance explains what needs to be done to produce an IRMP and what it might contain. Furthermore, ODPM through its Implementation Support Teams (IST) is providing advice, guidance and encouragement to Fire and Rescue Authority members and Principal Officers in the development of the IRMP and subsequent action plans.

1.6 ODPM also recognises the need to remain fully engaged with stakeholders on IRMP and, therefore, has invited a number of

key representatives from the fire industry to participate in an IRMP Steering Group. The IRMP Steering Group will provide a forum for stakeholders. Its terms of reference are to:

- Consider the general process of IRMP implementation by Fire and Rescue Authorities in England so as to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed and that a robust risk analysis has taken place. The Steering Group will not make judgements nor question the decisions taken by Fire and Rescue Authorities as a result of IRMPs.
- Act as a source of expertise on all issues of process raised by the public, business or other stakeholders in respect of IRMPs; identify the need for further advice and guidance to be issued; consider what action may need to be taken to ensure that efficiency and value for money remain a key issue in the IRMP process; act as facilitator for improving the standard of the overall IRMP process by initiating specific pieces of work from Steering Group members or through a third party.
- Provide a focal point for institutional framework bodies such as the Practitioners' Forum, the Business & Community Safety Forum and the Central Local Partnership to raise issues of process relating to IRMP.
- Consider how the impact of IRMPs can be assessed and, therefore, the extent to which they are contributing to the successful delivery of the PSA3 target.

1.7 Fire and Rescue Authorities will, of course, wish to co-ordinate the planning of IRMP action plans with the budget setting process. ODPM Circular 09/2004 emphasises the importance of alignment of business and financial planning with Best Value Performance Plans (BVPP) and IRMPs and, where possible, integration of the relevant plans. The IRMP Steering Group will consider

whether further guidance is needed on this issue in the light of Fire CPA outcomes.

1.8 Most Fire and Rescue Authorities have made significant progress and they are now able to base their action plans and key decisions on sound, nationally validated evidence. Nearly all are now using the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit. We have offered an FSEC health-check for authorities to assist with quality control and assurance. Authorities are encouraged to continue to make use of this. The risk-based approach contained within the FSEC methodology will form the basis of risk-based mobilising with the new national network of control centres and the health check will provide both Fire and Rescue Authorities and ODPM with assurance that risk assessments and mobilising policies are soundly based. The further development of FSEC is part of the new initiatives being taken forward under the IRMP Steering Group, outlined above (paragraph 1.6).

1.9 The FiReControl Project (see Chapter 2) will lead to the creation of nine control centres for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. The technical systems provided in the new centres will enable them to service the mobilising policies of all the authorities in their area, however much they may vary, so there will not be a technically driven requirement to standardise mobilising policies. However, we welcome the initiative taken by some authorities to re-examine their mobilising and resourcing policies in a regional context.

Fire Prevention

1.10 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 created a new statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote fire safety. This places fire prevention at the heart of Fire and Rescue Service activity. To support fire

prevention work, including community fire safety, arson reduction and work with children and young people, the Government has made available funds totalling £11.4m for the period 2006 to 2008. This single grant to all Fire and Rescue Authorities replaces the grants paid to some authorities under the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund and the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund in 2003-6, and provides revenue funding to complement the capital grants paid under the Home Fire Risk Check initiative in 2004-8. The grant is designed to support the achievement of the national Public Service Agreement targets on accidental fire deaths in the home and on arson reduction, with a particular focus on reducing inequality in the impact of fire and meeting the floor target.

1.11 Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to focus resources on projects delivering effective risk reduction through working with vulnerable groups. The projects funded will form a targeted programme of work designed to deliver reductions in fires, deaths and injuries among vulnerable groups with appropriate monitoring, review and evaluation, appropriate support, materials and vehicles. Subject to the local priorities identified in IRMPs, this may include the areas covered by the draft Strategy for Children and Young People (see paragraphs 1.21 – 1.22 below).

1.12 Government will provide support to Fire and Rescue Authorities through a centrally funded good practice programme. This will draw on the emerging lessons from the fire prevention projects funded and will be available to all Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Community Fire Safety

1.13 Research shows that those most at risk from fire in the home are the elderly. Half of all those who die in accidental domestic fires are over 60. Those in the lower

socioeconomic groups, ethnic minorities, and families with young children – who are often concentrated in deprived neighbourhoods – are also particularly at risk. For a variety of reasons these groups may be particularly hard to reach with fire safety advice and unable or unwilling to take action in response.

1.14 Vulnerable people can only be identified and targeted successfully based on a good knowledge of their characteristics and needs, and good use of face to face contact, local community groups and local media, for example through community advocates. Firefighters, whether wholetime, part-time or on the retained duty system, non-operational staff and volunteers all have a part to play. Fire safety can also be improved by making fire stations open to the community or shared with partner organisations.

Fire and Rescue Authorities should consider community fire safety, including the priority vulnerable groups in their area, in preparing their IRMPs and in deciding the balance of funding and resources.

1.15 Most Fire and Rescue Authorities already have links with some local agencies and partnerships. Increasingly, authorities are also members of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Partner organisations may for example be able to identify and refer vulnerable households, share data on local needs, and carry out simple fire safety checks with appropriate training. Where Fire and Rescue Authorities will demonstrably add value, they are encouraged to actively seek to work jointly with local partners in health, social services, housing, education, the voluntary sector and other emergency services to reduce risk to the vulnerable groups in line with their IRMPs, for example through Local Area Agreements (see paragraph 8.17).

1.16 To assist the further development of local initiatives the Government established

the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund totalling £4.5million for the period 2003-06. It targeted resources at areas with the worst problems, on the basis of fatality rates from accidental domestic fires per 100,000 population. Evaluation is in progress and will be completed by the end of 2006.

1.17 The National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC), was established in 1998 to sponsor national fire safety publicity and education campaigns. It also provides good practice and an educational resource to Fire and Rescue Authorities in their community fire safety work, through a suite of tools in the NCFSC toolbox².

1.18 Since 1987 the National Community Fire Safety Centre has conducted television campaigns promoting aspects of fire safety in the home, with a particular focus on promoting smoke alarms. Ownership has increased from 9% in 1987 to the current level of 80%. The NCFSC will continue to run media campaigns to promote the importance of having a working smoke alarm installed in dwellings to under-pin local initiatives.

1.19 Most Fire and Rescue Authorities already install free smoke alarms, but smoke alarm ownership is still far from universal and needless deaths and injuries are still occurring as a result. The Government has therefore provided £25 million capital funding for 2004-08 to support a significant expansion of activity. All Fire and Rescue Authorities will receive funding to install free smoke alarms with 10-year batteries in association with a programme of Home Fire Risk Checks. Automated fire suppression systems may also

be installed where justified by a risk assessment, for those who can be protected in no other way.

1.20 Fire and Rescue Authorities will be expected to target their programme on the most vulnerable households in line with their IRMPs – particularly the elderly, but also deprived households and areas, young families and Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The capital grants have therefore been allocated on the basis of regional smoke alarm ownership, and within each region on the basis of the Fire Index³, weighted by population.

Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People

1.21 The Strategy is a four year high level national strategy covering the period spring 2006 to spring 2010. It aims to deliver effective reduction of fire risk and fire crime involving children and young people, building on the existing strengths of the Service in fire safety education, youth diversion and work with young firesetters. This work can contribute to fire prevention through reducing firesetting and hoax calls, and increasing awareness of fire safety. It can also help to tackle crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, as well as improving school attendance and employment chances for young people.

1.22 It will be for authorities to decide what type and extent of work with children and young people will contribute most effectively to risk reduction in their areas, in accordance

² See: www.firesafetytoolbox.org.uk

³ The Fire Index, used in the calculation of the FSS allocation, is the unweighted sum of six standardised indicators measuring various aspects of poverty and social exclusion. For more information see: www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0405/datadefs.pdf

with the local priorities identified in their IRMPs. Good practice in planning, undertaking and evaluating work with young firesetters and youth diversion schemes is identified in recent ODPM research and guidance.⁴

Fire and Rescue Authorities should have regard to the strategy in all work with children and young people which they undertake.

Arson Reduction

1.23 Arson is the largest single cause of fires attended by Fire and Rescue Authorities. Deliberate fires are a very significant problem in many areas, especially fires involving stolen or abandoned vehicles, which form two-thirds of the deliberate fires recorded nationally. Arson puts lives at risk, damages property and strains the resources of Fire and Rescue Authorities and other public services. It can also have a very negative effect on the local environment.

1.24 Arson is often part of a complex pattern which includes crime, fear of crime, antisocial behaviour and poor quality public space. Low-level disorder and thoughtless actions affect the quality of life of others, by creating fear or degrading the environment. All these issues can only be dealt with successfully if Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Police and other local partners work together, for example in Arson Task Forces, which bring together Police and Fire and Rescue personnel, and operate car clearance schemes which aim to remove abandoned vehicles as quickly as possible.

Fire and Rescue Authorities should consider arson reduction and their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership strategies in preparing their IRMPs and deciding the balance of funding and resources.

1.25 This work forms part of the national strategy on nuisance vehicles, Cleaner Safer Greener Communities: Removing Nuisance Vehicles⁵, which includes advice on good practice sources of support. The Government has introduced new powers for local authorities to tackle nuisance vehicles under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

1.26 The Police Reform Act 2002 places a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities, working with the Police and local authorities in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, to identify crime and disorder problems in their area and to develop and implement a strategy to tackle them. Fire and Rescue Authorities can also work through LSPs.

1.27 Fire and Rescue Authorities should work with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships⁶ and other partnerships with external agencies where they will add value in tackling arson.

This will help to find local solutions to local problems – for example, deliberate firesetting, hoax calls and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

1.28 The Government supports arson reduction through the Arson Control Forum, which was established in 2001 to lead work in this area. It advises on research into arson issues, sponsors local arson reduction

⁴ *Evaluation of interventions with arsonists and young firesetters* (ODPM, March 2005), *Effectiveness of youth diversion and training schemes* (ODPM, forthcoming) *Youth training and diversion: a good practice guide* (ODPM, forthcoming)

⁵ See: www.cleanersaferegreener.gov.uk

⁶ Established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

initiatives and promotes good practice through guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities and other partners.

1.29 Local arson reduction projects sponsored by the Arson Control Forum received £2.25 million in 2001-03. Evaluation of these projects has shown a significant impact with levels of arson around 30% below comparable areas where no project has been undertaken. The projects have shown what can be achieved by a dedicated multi-agency approach with strong local support – for every £1 funding, other partners have contributed an additional £4. Cost effectiveness is high – it is estimated that for every pound spent, £16 has been saved in costs of fire to the economy⁷.

1.30 The Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund provided a total of £11.3 million to assist the further development of local arson reduction work in 2003-06. Sixty-six projects made successful bids including 24 car clearance schemes and 29 Arson Task Forces. Evaluation of these projects is in progress and will be completed in mid-2006.

Building Regulations

1.31 The objectives of the fire safety aspects (Part B) of the Building Regulations 2000 as amended are to ensure that reasonable provision is made for the health and safety of people, including firefighters, in and around buildings.

1.32 The regulations apply whenever “building work” is undertaken in England and Wales, typically the erection, extension or alteration of a building. While the regulations do not cover property protection, or the

condition of the majority of the existing building stock, they do provide a mechanism for the progressive “designing in” of fire safety to the built environment. The regulations set out functional performance-based requirements in terms of what is reasonable, adequate or appropriate. To support this regulatory system, we publish detailed guidance in the form of Approved Document B⁸. The current substantive version of this was published in 2000, although subsequent amendments arising out of European harmonisation were published in a supplement in 2002, and came into force on 1 March 2003.

1.33 Early in 2004, the Government began a fundamental review of Part B and supporting Approved Document B. This review is considering fire safety in all types of buildings, including residential premises, schools and warehouses and draws on the findings of recent research and experience. As part of the broad review, we are targeting the provision of fire safety measures in those new and altered premises where people are considered to be most vulnerable. We are keen to improve fire safety by all reasonable means and we are therefore considering the role that sprinklers can play as part of a package of measures that can be provided in buildings. ODPM published a consultation paper on proposed changes, supported by a draft Regulatory Impact Assessment in July 2005. It is expected to publish a final revised version of Part B and Approved Document B towards the end of 2006, to come into force in 2007.

1.34 The process of designing fire safety into buildings relies upon maintaining and developing close co-operation between Fire and Rescue Authorities and their stakeholders, such as building control bodies.

⁷ *Evaluation of Arson Control Forum New Projects Initiative*, ODPM, January 2005

⁸ A consolidated version of the Approved Document can be found at: www.odpm.gov.uk/approveddocuments

Authorities should continue to give advice to these bodies on whether the measures proposed appear adequate to provide reasonable levels of fire safety. ODPM publishes guidance on the level of consultation that should exist between Fire and Rescue Authorities and Building Control Bodies⁹. We are currently reviewing this important document. Following consultation with stakeholders, we aim to publish a revised version to coincide with implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order.

Regulatory Reform Order

1.35 The Government's reform of general fire safety legislation is the biggest reform of fire safety legislation in 30 years. Responsibility for fire safety in non-domestic premises will rest with the person responsible for the premises. That person will be required to assess the risk in respect of both the place and activities in it, implement such general fire safety measures as are reasonable and necessary to reduce risks that are found and protect all persons using the premises from risks that remain. There will no longer be a requirement to obtain a fire certificate. Enforcement will principally be by Fire and Rescue Authorities though other authorities may enforce the requirements in certain specified situations, for example the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for the nuclear industry. There will be guidance for businesses and enforcers before the Order comes into force.

1.36 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) received Parliamentary and Ministerial approval on 7 June 2005. The substantive provisions of the RRO (which will come into force on 1st October 2006 subject

to parliamentary approval) introduce for the first time a general duty of fire safety care for those responsible for non-domestic premises. It requires fire risk assessment and the carrying out of preventative and protective fire safety measures by the person responsible for the premises being used. Stakeholders have worked with ODPM to develop guidance for businesses and enforcers for when the RRO comes into force.

1.37 The Order complements the change in emphasis of the role of Fire and Rescue Authorities to one of prevention. Authorities will be responsible for ensuring public safety by monitoring compliance with the law and, where necessary, enforcing the requirements of the new legislation. An authority's strategy for the enforcement of fire safety legislation is a key part of its overall strategy for the protection of its community.

Authorities must therefore have a fire safety inspection programme and this must form part of its IRMP, as set out in IRMP Guidance Note 4, which gives advice on risk-based enforcement. Fire and Rescue Authorities should – in drawing up their enforcement programmes – prioritise inspection of places that, in the case of fire, pose a significant risk to life.

Crown Premises

1.38 Crown Fire Inspectors enforce fire safety legislation in Crown Premises and provide fire safety advice and guidance. The Government will support and promote the focus on prevention by continuing to encourage safe behaviour in Crown Premises. The 'Revitalising Health and Safety' Strategy Statement¹⁰ published in June 2000 said:

⁹ Building Regulations and Fire Safety – Procedural Guidance (ODPM February 2001)
See: www.odpm.gov.uk/buildingregsfiresafety

¹⁰ See: www.hse.gov.uk/revitalising/strategy.pdf

'The Government will seek a legislative opportunity, when Parliamentary time allows, removing Crown immunity from statutory health and safety enforcement'. ODPM is working with the Department for Work and Pensions and the HSE to explore the best way to achieve this through jointly addressing health and safety and fire safety legislation. In the meantime, the Government remains committed to ensuring full compliance with the requirements of health and safety law and best practice.

1.39 Crown Fire Inspectors work closely with local Fire and Rescue Authorities, since both parties are interested in the risk posed by premises. To inform their risk prioritisation, Crown Fire Inspectors benefit from intelligence gathered by Fire and Rescue Authorities whilst responding to emergency incidents. Fire and Rescue Authorities need to gain information to inform their local risk management plans and to inform the intervention strategies of firefighters.

1.40 Fire and Rescue Authorities should be aware of the contribution Crown Inspectors can make in achieving the aims and objectives of their IRMPs, consult Crown Inspectors on their IRMPs, and work closely with them where appropriate.

Road Traffic Collision Reduction

1.41 The number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads remains a significant social problem. It can only be successfully tackled using a multi-agency approach, bringing together government departments and, at a local level, the key service delivery agencies and interest groups. Road accidents form a significant part of the work of many Fire and Rescue Authorities, and overall more people are rescued from cars than from fires. Depending on local circumstances, authorities may wish to participate in local partnerships aimed at road

traffic accident reduction, and build on the established "five Es" approach to:

- Engineer out the problems;
- Enforce against poor driver behaviour;
- Educate the community in road safety and promote good driver behaviour;
- provide casualty centred Emergency response; and
- Evaluate the impact of reduction initiatives.

However it will be for authorities to decide what type and extent of work on road safety will contribute most effectively to the reduction of road accidents requiring their attendance, in accordance with the local priorities identified in their IRMPs.

1.42 Partnerships may include Police, local authority engineering departments, local authority road safety units, the Highways Agency, road safety camera partnerships, and the Health Service, as well as the Fire and Rescue Service. These partnerships may stand alone or be facilitated through local community safety partnerships such as LSPs and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

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Chapter 2
Working together: the regional approach

2.1 Chapter 1 of the Framework highlights the importance of developing local solutions to meet local needs. This is a fundamental part of the Government's approach. It is why we have devolved more responsibility for planning to local Fire and Rescue Authorities, for example, by withdrawing 'one size fits all' national standards of fire cover in favour of local Integrated Risk Management Plans. But as we set out in the White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service*, the Government believes in a regional approach where that is what is needed.

2.2 There are some challenges, both organisational and operational, for which Fire and Rescue Authorities working in isolation do not have the capacity to provide the most efficient, effective and economical response. On the organisational side, the challenges include providing specialist services, such as training and procurement, where collaboration will yield efficiency improvements. From an operational perspective, they include resilience issues such as responding to terrorist incidents.

2.3 London has its own Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEP), which is overseen by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Elsewhere, regional functions are carried out by Regional Management Boards.

2.4 It is important that Regional Management Boards now deliver improvement in the Fire and Rescue Service.

They must have:

- clear aims and objectives; and
- delegated powers that are appropriate to those aims and objectives.

2.5 Regional Management Boards should be able to demonstrate continuing and measurable progress towards meeting

the requirements in each of the key areas listed at paragraph 2.7 of this document; and that they have the capacity – in terms of both resources and expertise – to deliver in those key areas. Fire and Rescue Authorities should report in their Annual Efficiency Statements (see chapter 7) on the extent to which they are making efficiency savings through regional collaboration.

2.6 The Government will ask for further reports on progress in each region as appropriate. Only if the needs of public safety require urgent action – or evidence from Fire Comprehensive Performance Assessment demonstrates a failure to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness – will the Government consider the use of its statutory powers to combine Fire and Rescue Authorities. Such combinations could be along sub-regional lines.

The functions of Regional Management Boards

2.7 There are six key areas of work that should be dealt with through Regional Management Boards. **They should:**

- integrate common and specialist services, e.g. fire investigation (see Chapter 3);
- put in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies (see Chapter 4);
- introduce regional personnel and human resource functions (see Chapter 5);
- develop a regional approach to training (see Chapter 6).

They must:

- **establish regional control centres as an operational priority (see below); and**
- **introduce regional procurement within the context of the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service: 2005-2008 (see below).**

FiReControl

2.8 The Government is progressing with its plan to deliver a national network of nine Fire and Rescue control centres using the new national radio network, Firelink (see paragraph 4.27). ODPM has signed agreements to lease appropriate accommodation for 8 new centres, to be built to ODPM specifications by private developers. LFEPA has agreed that London will form part of the network before the Olympics in 2012, and it is likely that this will entail moving their present control centre from its current site. Negotiations with three private sector companies bidding to be the prime contractor for supply of technology/infrastructure services are expected to conclude in spring 2006.

2.9 The new control centres will be built to the same timetable and under the same programme as the Firelink radio project to maximise financial and operating efficiency.

2.10 The successful operation of a national network of control centres requires a number of national functions to be established, owned and discharged by one or more bodies above the control centre level. This will enable the new control centres to function effectively as a national network. Work is in hand to define and cost those functions and recommend arrangements for discharging them. Staff in the new control centres will be trained to national standards in nationally agreed roles,

and ODPM is working on the implementation of this strategy in partnership with the Employers' Organisation.

2.11 The Government consulted on the two options of a lead authority or a local authority company as suitable management vehicles for the new centres. It concluded that a local authority company is the model it wishes Regional Management Boards to adopt because this reduces the exposure to risk of individual authorities and minimises administrative and operational risks to national resilience. It also provides greater transparency and accountability in terms of the governance structures and requires all authorities to take ownership and responsibility for the control centres in their region.

2.12 Regional Management Boards have therefore been asked to establish local authority companies which will be responsible and accountable through their constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities for the control centres in their regions.

2.13 Against the background above, **Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, must:**

- **Work closely with the Government to ensure that the phased transition from existing control rooms to the new control centres is integrated with the roll-out of Firelink and delivered by the end of 2009/10;**
- **ensure that the local authority companies who will run the control centres on behalf of Fire and Rescue Authorities are established by 1 August 2006 in the South West, East Midlands and North East; by 1 January 2007 in the West Midlands, North West and South East; and by 1 May 2007 in Yorkshire and Humberside and the East of England;**

- ensure that the new control centres comply with national guidance to be issued on staff roles, training and mobilising procedures (including fallback and recovery) and resilience;
- ensure that they observe national guidance on operating and mobilising procedures and associated systems. This requirement does not extend to standards and levels of resource deployment to emergency incidents, which are a matter for local Fire & Rescue Authorities to determine through IRMPs;
- ensure that they establish the necessary interfaces with the national network and constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities; and
- ensure that the control centres observe convergence and resilience requirements to be issued and that the staff maintain data for which they are responsible according to standards that will be defined.

2.14 Guidance on funding under the ‘new burdens’ principle (see paragraph 7.29) was issued on 23 December 2005 in Fire Service Circular 63/2005. This provided more detail on exactly what work needs to be done, which costs will be met by ODPM and which should be met by Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Procurement

2.15 Procurement is a function currently discharged principally at local and in some areas regional level. This has meant that the Fire and Rescue Service has not achieved maximum efficiency in some of its purchasing. On 2 November 2005 the Government published the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2005-2008. The strategy sets out arrangements for

specialised central and regional purchasing. It will make possible the development of the sort of procurement expertise that individual Fire and Rescue Authorities find it hard to acquire or afford, and will lead to benefits from combined authority purchasing.

2.16 The strategy sets out:

- the details of the national arrangements for specialist Fire and Rescue Service procurement as part of the national procurement strategy through creation of a new national procurement institution, (“FiReBuy Ltd”); and
- the role of Regional Management Boards as part of the strategy, including call-off contract management, regional procurement expertise and staff training, in conjunction with the regional centres of procurement excellence.

2.17 FiReBuy Limited has been established as a company limited by guarantee. The guarantors as it moves into its early operational phase are expected to be each of the Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in England and the Secretary of State. In addition to having limited company status, it is expected that FiReBuy Ltd will also be established as a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB), since under the European System of Accounts it is expected to be classified as a central government body.

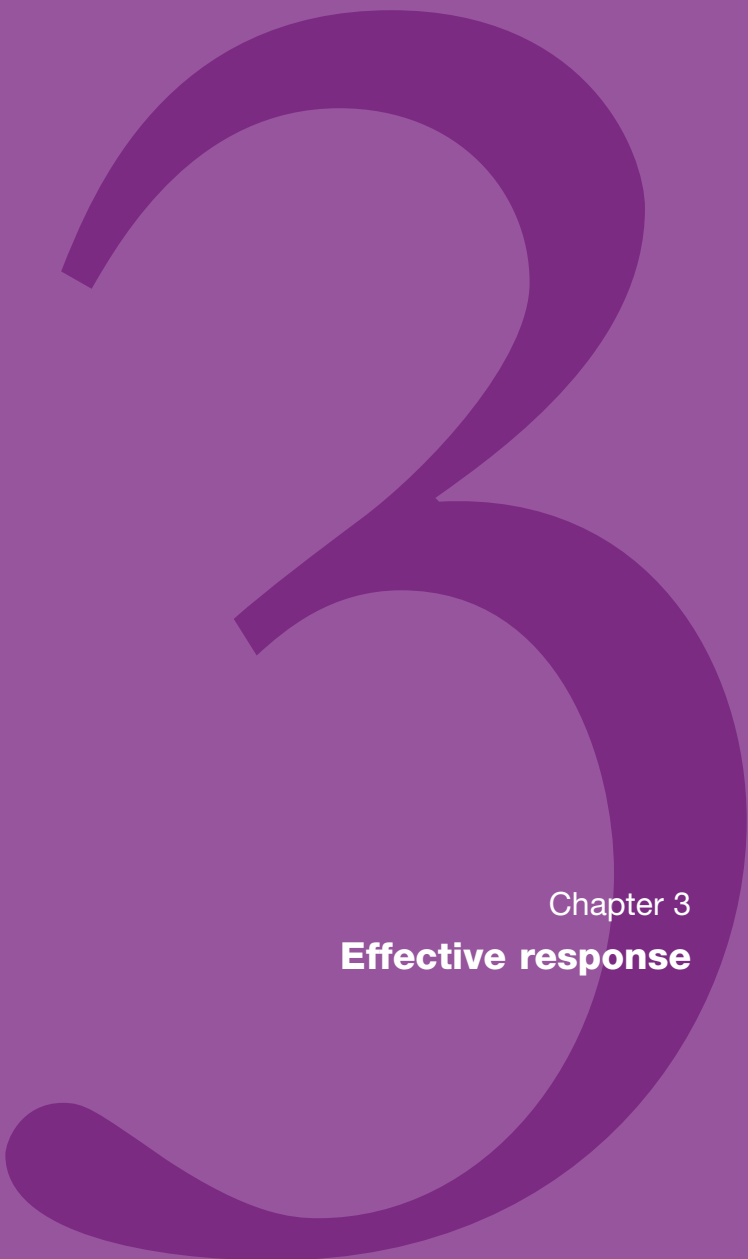
2.18 The Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) will deliver a range of clothing that is fit for purpose and has been adapted to accommodate equality and diversity issues for a modernised Fire and Rescue Service. It is an example of how service-wide collaboration can ensure better value and performance for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other clothing. The testing regime for the PPE offered by tenderers is a world first. No individual Fire and Rescue Authority would have the

resources to be able to carry out such tests to ensure garment performance. The testing regime will ensure that key features which reflect equal opportunities concerns will be present in options provided by all tenderers and will be standard to all Fire and Rescue Service clothing supplied.

2.19 The ICP will also seek views on a national identity for the Fire and Rescue Service through a large scale collaborative procurement initiative which will provide clothing in a standard colour throughout England. This will not affect individual Fire and Rescue Service's ability to badge their clothing to maintain local identity. The ICP project will continue to be taken forward by FiReBuy Ltd.

2.20 A procurement process to achieve a national framework contract for pumping appliances to BS:EN Standards by the end of January 2007 has commenced and is on target. In addition national framework contracts are already being utilised by Fire and Rescue Authorities for the purchase of smoke alarms and portable radios. These two contracts are already providing procurement benefits and efficiencies for Fire and Rescue Authorities.

2.21 Fire and Rescue Authorities must support the arrangements set out in the Strategy and procure through FiReBuy Ltd where directed.



Chapter 3

Effective response

3.1 The Fire and Rescue Service deserves its reputation for providing an effective and professional response to fires and other incidents.

3.2 Although working to prevent fires is a core objective for Fire and Rescue Authorities, the need for an effective response to incidents that do occur is not diminished. Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to ensure that their standards of emergency response are appropriate to all the needs of the communities they serve, including the capacity to respond to challenges such as potential terrorist incidents in accordance with the national New Dimension programme and associated legislation.

3.3 Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure an effective and efficient response is available to meet the range of incidents which they may reasonably expect to encounter, working together as appropriate. This includes ensuring that:

- effective command and control systems are in place, and that they maintain compatibility with the programme to deliver Regional Control Centres;
- arrangements are in place for critical risk information to be readily available at the scene of the incident. (ODPM recognise the value of critical incident data and are developing systems to achieve this and part of the FiReControl project.)
- all staff are developed to be competent in their role.
- staff are familiar with the principal risks likely to be met in the particular work areas.
- the right equipment is available.

Management of Health and Safety

3.4 Health and safety legislation applies to Fire and Rescue Authorities. There is a need to care for the safety and health of all staff, and of others at risk from operations, particularly when dealing with emergency incidents. It is important, therefore, that good practice is shared between Fire and Rescue Authorities, managers and front-line staff and that account is taken of national guidance published by the HSE and ODPM.

3.5 Fire and Rescue Authority managers have generally maintained and often increased the operational effectiveness of fire crews by applying the principles and practices associated with health and safety legislation.

3.6 A national Fire and Rescue Health and Safety Group, on which all Practitioners' Forum organisations are represented (including the Health and Safety Executive) – meets quarterly and reports against an agreed business plan through the Practitioners' Forum. This group co-ordinates the generation of national health and safety guidance and good practice¹¹ especially in respect of generic risks and the identification of common solutions to emerging challenges. An additional group has been established to revise guidance on dynamic and generic risk assessment; and improve the quality of accident and injury data and its collection arrangements. This work will be piloted later in 2006.

¹¹ Further information on existing guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities is available through ODPM's Fire Information Service on 020 7944 5450, or fis@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

Utilisation of Resources

3.7 The Government believes that there is scope to improve the efficiency of Fire and Rescue Authorities in responding to incidents while maintaining the highest standards.

3.8 Traditionally, pumping appliances, with predetermined numbers of firefighters and officers, provided the initial response to emergency incidents. Occasionally specialist vehicles such as water carriers or aerial appliances supplemented the response.

3.9 This overly prescriptive, blanket response sometimes over-provided, particularly where hoax calls, signals from automatic fire alarm systems and fires clearly defined as being of limited extent were concerned. It also resulted in fewer resources remaining available for incidents where the risk to life and injury is greatest – often in the home. The introduction of the IRMP approach enables Fire and Rescue Authorities to target their resources appropriately.

3.10 In April 2004, ODPM published a ‘Guide to Reducing the Number of False Alarms from Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems’¹², in conjunction with CFOA and the British Fire Protection Systems Association. CFOA also produced a ‘Model Agreement for Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems’¹³. These documents, together with the introduction of IRMPs and the use of modern intelligent information systems, allow risks to be assessed more effectively, providing the flexibility for more appropriate and better targeted response. **Fire and Rescue Authorities should:**

- **have regard to ODPM’s ‘Guide to Reducing the Number of False Alarms from Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems’;**

- **consider the adoption of the CFOA ‘Model Agreement for Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems’ published in 2004 following wide consultation with stakeholders;**
- **work with other Fire and Rescue Authorities and other emergency services where appropriate, and take steps to drive down the number of hoax calls and unwanted signals from automatic fire alarms; and**
- **log the callers and properties that create the greatest demand, assess the risks associated with them, and decide upon action to achieve improvement, which may include increased fire prevention work or a changed level of response.**

3.11 The principal aim of an emergency response is to reduce deaths and the number and severity of injuries. If outcomes can be improved by adapting services or working with other providers to improve life safety services these are encouraged. For example, some authorities are already using defibrillation equipment and others are engaged in co-responder schemes, which are saving the lives of people who have suffered cardiac arrest, including firefighters.

3.12 **Fire and Rescue Authorities should actively review the opportunities for improving community safety by implementing co-responder schemes in partnership with other agencies.**

¹² See: www.odpm.gov.uk/falsealarms

¹³ See: www.fire-uk.org/pubs/RMFA_CFOA_Policy_Final.pdf

Mutual Assistance

3.13 Fire and Rescue Authorities have for many years provided mutual support across borders for responses to emergencies through the shared availability of fire crews and appliances.

3.14 It is important that this good practice is universally applied. Local, regional and national boundaries should not stop Fire and Rescue Authorities from delivering the most speedy, effective and efficient response possible.

3.15 Authorities should, therefore, (bearing in mind the general requirements of paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3) design their IRMPs to ensure that, so far as practical, there is efficient and effective shared use of resources, particularly, for example: the services of principal, senior and specialist officers¹⁴; pumping and non-pumping appliances, such as those used for aerial access; equipment used in traffic accident response and the bulk supply of water; and specialist support services such as rope rescue teams.

3.16 Regional Management Boards provide an appropriate forum for promoting and improving collaboration.

Incident Management Protocols

3.17 Major fire-related incidents, terrorist attacks or large environmental disasters have no respect for authority boundaries. Nor can they be dealt with by one emergency service working in isolation. Increasingly, they demand co-ordinated planning, operational

co-operation and compatibility in response management between Fire and Rescue Authorities and other emergency and non-emergency responders, such as local authorities, the Environment Agency or the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

3.18 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (see Chapter 4) together confirm the broader role Fire and Rescue Authorities play in incidents other than fire.

3.19 Common policies, practices and procedures for the operational management and command of emergencies are essential.

To ensure a consistent operational approach the Service must adopt the principles and procedures detailed in the *Fire Service Manual Vol. 2: Fire Service Operations – Incident Command*¹⁵. This will help to ensure the adoption nationwide of common arrangements and the safe and effective management of operations.

CFOA and HMFSI will work together to maintain the Manual's currency in response to new threats and emerging issues. The Manual, together with the Cabinet Office 2005 publications, 'Emergency Response and Recovery' and 'Emergency Preparedness'¹⁶ provides the template for regular interservice training and exercising and will form an integral part of the training at the Fire Service College (see paragraph 6.12 – 6.18). The Fire Service College will also provide a centre of specialist expertise in urban search and rescue and related major emergency incident techniques.

¹⁴ The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 repeals ss30(3) and 30(6) of the Fire Services Act 1947 under which sole control of a fire was placed on the senior officer present from the Fire and Rescue Service of the area in which the fire originated. This should allow greater flexibility in the sharing of senior officers.

¹⁵ Fire Service Manual Vol.2: *Fire Service Operations – Incident Command* (ODPM 2002)

¹⁶ *Emergency Preparedness* (Cabinet Office, 29.07.05) and *Emergency Response and Recovery* (Cabinet Office 23.09.05)

Fire Investigation

3.20 Fire investigation can provide an invaluable insight into the behaviour of fire and of the people involved in fire incidents, providing essential evidence on ways to manage risk.

3.21 Few Fire and Rescue Authorities are able to deploy adequate resources, at all times, to ensure effective fire investigation. This activity is one of many that is intended to be delivered more effectively by Fire and Rescue Authorities working together through Regional Management Boards.

3.22 In the case of deliberate fires, the lead authority is the Police. In other cases, the lead authority will depend on the circumstances and the initial fire investigation results. A degree of flexibility is necessary to allow the leadership at various stages of the investigation process to be shared, with the most relevant agency assuming the lead role as required. Formal protocols and Memoranda of Understanding are essential foundations for ensuring that the needs of all partners are considered.

3.23 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides formal powers for Fire and Rescue Authorities to investigate the causes of fires and the reasons for fire spread. These powers are balanced by safeguards for the public and are for use in cases where permission for fire investigation cannot be obtained from, or is withheld by, the person responsible for the fire scene in question.

3.24 The Arson Control Forum, which brings together Police, fire and rescue practitioners, insurers and other stakeholders, is currently developing a model protocol for fire investigation, to be launched in early 2006. These are supported by new National Occupational Standards for fire investigation for Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Police

and the Forensic Science Service which were accredited for use in April 2005.

3.25 Using the model protocol and the supporting NOSs, Fire and Rescue Authorities should, through Regional Management Boards, ensure specialist fire investigation capacity is pooled to provide an effective and efficient regional capability.

Contingency planning for any future industrial action

3.26 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 imposes a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to put in place business continuity management arrangements to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. It cannot be assumed that the Armed Forces will be available to provide cover in the event of industrial action by firefighters. The Government will work with Fire and Rescue Authorities to examine how national contingency planning arrangements can be further improved. This will include linking any revised arrangements with improved regional resilience, the future role of the Armed Forces, raising public awareness and other elements which comprise emergency fire and rescue services.

3.27 Accordingly, Fire and Rescue Authorities will be expected to play an increasing role in contingency provision, including the supply of all appliances and equipment required and the effective deployment of available personnel. Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and after consultation, the Secretary of State has the power to direct the use of Fire and Rescue Authorities' facilities and property for the purposes of public safety.

Quality Assurance and Good Practice

3.28 The Audit Commission is responsible for the performance assessment of Fire and Rescue Authorities and has implemented the Fire Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework (see Chapter 8).

3.29 HMFSI has a process of ongoing liaison with each Fire and Rescue Authority with a senior member of HMFSI appointed to undertake this task on a regional basis. This will include issues related to operational management and assurance. Any relevant information from this process will be shared with the Audit Commission and ministers to complement the CPA process.

3.30 HMFSI and others will work in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Team in responding to the outcomes of CPA and supporting improvement planning and operational assurance by Fire and Rescue Authorities.

3.31 HMFSI will with stakeholders review all existing guidance relating to operational, technical and professional matters (see Annex F), and to disseminate good practice. This review will provide simplified and more easily accessible guidance from Summer 2007. Additionally to this, an operational performance assessment framework, currently under development between HMFSI and CFOA will result in a common, national standard for self, peer and external body assessment. This framework will be issued in two phases during 2006 to complement the Audit Commission directed service assessment which will take place in all Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2006 (see para 8.8).

4

Chapter 4

Resilience

4.1 Resilience is defined as the ability to manage disruptive challenges, such as terrorist attacks, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incidents or major flooding that can lead to or result in crisis.

4.2 The Government's aim in building resilience capacity is to ensure public safety by taking practical steps to reduce the likelihood of such incidents occurring and responding quickly and effectively when they do.

Statutory responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Authorities

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

4.3 Section 9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 enables the Secretary of State to place functions on Fire and Rescue Authorities regarding specific types of emergencies. These functions would be set out in an Order (an Emergencies Order) and be subject to Parliamentary approval.

4.4 An Emergencies Order would provide Fire and Rescue Authorities with a clear statutory role concerning specific emergencies, underpin the New Dimension programme and help improve the ability of Fire and Rescue Authorities to plan. This should improve further the country's resilience to terrorist attacks, natural disasters and major accidents.

4.5 Following consultation on a draft Emergencies Order we published a response outlining our plans in November 2005. We will ensure that any Emergencies Order would only come into effect once the capabilities provided by the New Dimension programme are fully operational in spring 2007.

4.6 It is likely that an Emergencies Order would make it a statutory duty for Fire and Rescue Authorities to make provision using New Dimension resources for the:

- decontamination of people following the release of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear substances;
- freeing of people from collapsed structures and non-road transport wreckages or debris;
- rescue of people trapped by flooding.

Fire and Rescue Authorities not hosting New Dimension resources would be expected to meet any statutory duty by participating in reinforcement schemes for mutual assistance. Fire and Rescue Authorities would not be expected to make any additional provision in terms of equipment, crewing or initial training beyond that provided by the New Dimension programme.

4.7 The Government will act in accordance with the 'new burdens' principle, and if needed will provide new resources having consulted CFOA and the LGA. (The 'new burdens' principle is explained more fully at paragraph 7.29.)

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

4.8 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 became law on 18 November 2004. In July the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and supporting statutory guidance, Emergency Preparedness, were published. Supplementary non-statutory guidance, Emergency Response and Recovery, was published in September. For the purposes of Fire and Rescue Authorities, Part 1 of the Act, which covers local arrangements for civil protection, came into force on the 14 November 2005. Part 2 of the Act, dealing

with emergency powers will only be used in the most serious emergencies and as a last resort.

4.9 Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, along with the accompanying regulations and guidance, establishes a new framework to reinforce cooperation between the emergency services, local authorities and other front line responders at the local level. This ensures that they can deal with the full range of emergencies from localised major incidents through to catastrophic events. Part 1 also creates a statutory duty on the part of local bodies including Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together to develop contingency plans.

As a consequence of this Act, Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards where appropriate, must work in co-operation with other emergency services, local authorities and front line responders at the local level to:

- **assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform emergency planning and business continuity planning;**
- **put in place emergency plans, supported by appropriate training, exercising, validation and revision processes;**
- **put in place business continuity plans, so that the authority can continue to function in an emergency;**
- **put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;**
- **share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination; and,**

- **co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.**

4.10 Participating in Regional Resilience Forums (see paragraph 4.16) will help Fire and Rescue Authorities to discharge their statutory duties under Part 1 of the Act.

4.11 Part 2 of the Act, Emergency Powers, gives the Secretary of State powers to make temporary legislation (in the form of emergency regulations) requiring Fire and Rescue Authorities, and other local responders, to act in order to deal with the most serious of emergencies. A range of safeguards exist against the possibility of misuse to ensure, amongst other things, compliance with Human Rights legislation and effective Parliamentary scrutiny.

4.12 The Civil Contingencies Act is largely organisational and is not considered to impose a new burden on Fire and Rescue Authorities. No additional direct funding for this work has therefore been provided to Fire and Rescue Authorities. But central Government has more than doubled its funding to local authorities for civil protection work to £40million: other responders are funded through other means.

4.13 Prior to the Civil Contingencies Act, metropolitan Fire and Civil Defence Authorities (FCDAs) (now metropolitan and county Fire and Rescue Authorities) used to receive Civil Defence Grant to carry out their function to co-ordinate local authorities' civil defence planning, training and exercising. Under the regime introduced under the Civil Contingencies Act, FCDAs no longer have any statutory responsibilities to co-ordinate local authorities' civil protection work. As a logical consequence, FCDAs no longer receive any direct funding for this work. However, where local authorities wish to enter into collaborative arrangements, they can transfer resources to the metropolitan county

Fire and Rescue Authority. The exception to this is the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) which continues to receive direct funding from central government in order to fund its responsibilities under the new legislation.

Regional Resilience

4.14 At a national level, clear co-ordination arrangements are in place to ensure successful emergency planning. The Home Secretary has overall responsibility for safety and security. The Cabinet Office co-ordinates the development of resilience policy and procedures across Government and seeks to identify and prevent potential disruptive challenges.

4.15 Fire and Rescue Authorities have a longstanding tradition of effective planning and response to non-fire incidents at the local level. However, the tragic events of 7 July 2005 and 11 September 2001 changed the frame of reference for dealing with terrorism. The response to terrorist attacks in the UK, or ones which involved a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) element, require more than local planning and response. Other events, such as widespread flooding or a major infectious disease outbreak, could also require regional co-ordination. That is why the Government has put in place regional resilience structures. Since April 2003, Regional Resilience Teams have been operational in each of the Government Offices in all nine English regions. The teams will provide support for the Regional Resilience Forums and Regional Civil Contingencies Committees in the event of regional response arrangements being called upon (see paragraphs 4.16 and 4.17 below). The teams will also work with the Devolved Administrations to ensure effective cross-border arrangements.

4.16 Regional Resilience Forums bring together central government agencies, the Armed Forces, and representatives of local responders, including the emergency services and local authorities. Each Forum has one representative from the Fire and Rescue Service. The Forums work to improve the co-ordination of planning at a regional level and improve communications between the centre and the region and between the region and local responders. Participation in the Regional Resilience Forums will help Regional Management Boards to put in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies (see paragraph 2.13).

4.17 In the event of a larger scale emergency a separate committee, the Regional Civil Contingencies Committee, could be formed to co-ordinate the regional response to an event which overwhelmed local responders or which had an impact over a wide area. The Civil Contingencies Act also enables Ministers to appoint a Regional Nominated Co-ordinator, if required, to help co-ordinate activities under any regulations made in response to an emergency.

4.18 These structures will provide the platform for coordinating both planning and response in relation to civil contingencies at a regional level. They will provide regional co-ordination and facilitation functions to a disruptive event, while – under direction – any response will remain, for the most part, with local responders.

Resilience Programmes

4.19 Firelink, FiReControl and New Dimension project teams are working co-operatively to improve the capacity of Fire and Rescue Authorities to prepare for and respond to catastrophic incidents. A fully complementary approach to the implementation of the projects has been developed, and they are now being managed

as a single programme overseen by a high level senior management board.

New Dimension

4.20 The New Dimension programme seeks to ensure that Fire and Rescue Authorities are sufficiently trained and equipped to deal safely and effectively with major CBRN and conventional terrorist incidents on a national scale. The Government has committed over £200 million to purchase equipment and fund training for England and Wales (although subsequently policy responsibility has devolved to Wales). In addition, Government has confirmed that up to £16 million will be available each year to meet the costs of crewing the capability.

4.21 Through a continued strong partnership working with both CFOA and the LGA, a substantial programme of delivery has taken place throughout 2004/5 and 2005/6 which has resulted in:

- 80 Incident Response Units equipped with mass decontamination facilities located in all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales;
- strategic location of 18 initial detection, identification and monitoring (DIM) teams;
- the continued enhancement of urban search and rescue capability as we work towards completing 19 fully equipped teams in England; and
- delivery of 34 high volume pumps, some of which have already seen action in response to the floods in Carlisle and the serious fire at the Buncefield Oil Depot in Hertfordshire.

4.22 There is still much to be achieved before the end of the programme's delivery phase in spring 2007. The equipment aspects of the programme are focusing on:

- completing the mass decontamination project by providing modules of equipment to provide back up to the existing Incident Response Unit provision;
- providing further equipment to the 18 DIM teams, to enable comprehensive regional coverage of DIM capability;
- ensuring that each of the urban search and rescue teams has its full complement of equipment and can provide world class capability within each region; and
- delivering the remaining high volume pumps across the regions.

4.23 The roll out of equipment is accompanied by substantial training. Government is fully funding this initial training. Any ongoing costs for training across the capabilities will be met in line with new burdens principles.

4.24 Allied to the equipment aspects of the programme, three additional strands of work are continuing. First, we are looking at the means by which equipment will be supplied and refreshed as a result of responding to incidents through our operational logistics work. This also includes consideration of accommodation requirements, with an ongoing programme of consultation with Fire and Rescue Authorities.

4.25 Secondly, command and control issues are being addressed through two closely related pieces of work: command support and co-ordination and mobilisation. It is this second piece of work that has seen the creation of an initial national co-ordination function and which is currently being enhanced to ensure that full co-ordination functions are embedded in the regional control rooms when they become available.

4.26 We are keen to promote a co-ordinated response from Fire and Rescue Authorities in the event of a major emergency.

That is why most Fire and Rescue Authorities participate in the Mutual Aid Agreement described in Fire Service Circular 8/2004. This enables individual authorities to ask for assistance from another authority in the event of a major incident. We are reviewing mutual assistance arrangements with CFOA in light of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and expect guidance on this matter to be published in spring 2006.

4.27 Finally, the Government recognises that in the long term, New Dimension capability will need to be managed, maintained, supported, and updated throughout its life cycle. The New Dimension programme will ensure that the relevant management structures and support capabilities are in place to maintain every aspect of this equipment, at an appropriate level of operational effectiveness and readiness for the indefinite future. The option for long-term management will be developed in partnership with CFOA.

Firelink

4.28 As explained in Fire Service Circular 7/2002, ODPM is funding the procurement of a new national radio system for Fire and Rescue Authorities (the Firelink radio project) in order to increase resilience and provide interoperability within the Service and with other emergency services. It will replace the radio systems currently owned and managed by authorities. It is planned that the new radio system will complete roll-out by 2009.

4.29 Government has already confirmed through this same Circular that it will review the revenue consequences of this investment in the context of future local government finance settlements. This is subject to current discussion with Fire and Rescue Authorities.

4.30 Fire and Rescue Authorities have a central role to play in the successful roll-out of

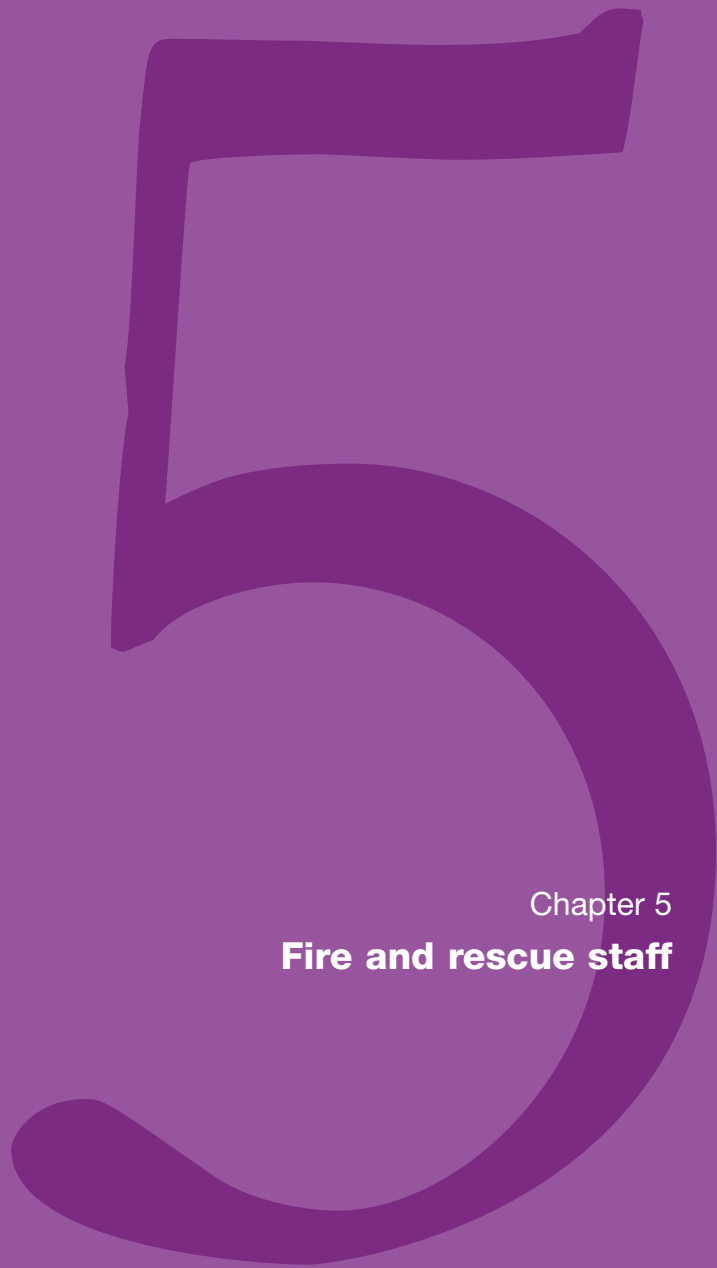
Firelink. In England Firelink Regional Roll-out Boards will be formed. These will be a partnership between Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Firelink project and the contractor. The function of the Boards will be to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of the Firelink solution in the applicable Fire and Rescue Authority region within contractually agreed timescales.

4.31 The functions of the Regional Roll-out Boards are to:

- engage Fire and Rescue Authorities in the smooth, effective and co-ordinated rollout of Firelink;
- oversee the implementation of the Firelink Solution in the applicable Fire and Rescue Authority area in accordance with contract terms; and,
- maximise the strength of the ODPM's contractual positions, and support the fulfilment of and compliance with ODPM obligations.

4.32 We will continue to manage the dependencies between Firelink and FiReControl (see paragraph 2.9) so that schedules are aligned and project delivery is achieved within a co-ordinated overall programme.

4.33 While the Firelink project is being developed, we recognise that it is essential to safeguard the performance of existing radio systems. For this reason ODPM is funding measures to sustain those items within existing systems which have a high risk of failure. This will ensure that they remain operationally effective until replaced by Firelink.



Chapter 5

Fire and rescue staff

5.1 Fire and Rescue Authorities' most important resource is their staff. It is essential that people from all backgrounds and with many different skills and specialisms are:

- encouraged to join the Service;
- are used as effectively as possible; and
- are offered a rewarding and flexible career.

Fire and Rescue Authorities comprise operational staff who spend most of their career in an active role of prevention and intervention and Fire and Rescue Service staff in a variety of other roles e.g. managerial, administrative, technical whose contribution is equally important and who keep every Fire and Rescue Authority functioning.

5.2 A statement of Core Values has been developed for the Fire and Rescue Service by a stakeholder group led and facilitated by CFOA. The Core Values, (see page 89), set out clearly the principles which the Service considers are fundamental to the development of an organisation which values and supports all members of its workforce and provides an effective service to the whole community. The Core Values have been developed to apply to both the Fire and Rescue Service as an organisation and to all members of staff. They provide a clear statement of the expectation of the Fire and Rescue Service with regard to the attitudes and behaviours of all staff whatever their role within the organisation.

5.3 All staff within the Fire and Rescue Service and those applying to join need to be made aware that active membership of extremist groups could challenge their ability to discharge their duties impartially in a work environment where they serve the whole community. Affiliation to such organisations is contrary to the ideals promoted by the Core Values and in conflict with Fire and Rescue Authorities' legal duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The public

relies on the honesty and integrity of all Fire and Rescue Service staff. Behaviours that contravene the Fire and Rescue Service Core Values risk serious consequences both for the individual and for the reputation of the Service.

5.4 The abolition of the restrictive provisions of the Appointments and Promotion Regulations and the introduction of the common framework of IPDS (see Chapter 6) means that movement within the workforce can be far more flexible than in the past. For example, there may be opportunities to move into an operational role from another area of the organisation and from operations to an administrative or technical role. It is important that Fire and Rescue Authorities treat their workforce as a unified whole, including developing and recognising specialist skills. There should be no artificial barriers to staff from different backgrounds reaching the most senior levels in the organisation.

5.5 Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that all members of staff are treated fairly and afforded equality of opportunity. Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that all staff are developed in a way which takes account of the differing needs of the individual, in order to deliver the Authority's aims and objectives effectively. It is not about providing more training and development, but about ensuring that development opportunities are better tailored to the needs of each member of the workforce than they have been in the past.

5.6 The business needs of each Fire and Rescue Authority will be driven by the requirements of their IRMP. This will set out when and where people and resources are needed, how they are to be deployed and what competencies staff will require to fulfill the needs of the IRMP. As a result, Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to ensure that their HR strategy effectively and efficiently

reflects the needs set out in the IRMP, and makes full use of the advantages conferred by flexible shift patterns and working practices.

5.7 The move away from ‘one size fits all’ shift patterns, and from standard nine to five hours for those who work in, for instance, administrative jobs, will help to open up opportunities for people from a wider range of backgrounds and with caring and other commitments. It should also mean a more flexible and rewarding career for all staff. The Government amended the Fire-fighters’ Pension Scheme to allow part-time service as a regular (wholetime duty system) fire-fighter to count towards pension entitlement. This has facilitated the development of part-time working arrangements and Fire and Rescue Authorities are encouraged to extend the practice. All other staff have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme which already makes provision for flexible working including on a part-time basis.

Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that there is as much opportunity as is reasonably possible for people to work flexibly, for example on a part-time basis, using flexi-time or working as part of a job share partnership.

5.8 The Government particularly values the contribution of staff on the retained duty system, which provides the backbone of many Fire and Rescue Authorities across the country. It is important that full use is made of their valuable skills and that more is done to overcome the recruitment and retention challenges. Recommendations on tackling these issues were made by the Retained Review Team to the Practitioners’ Forum in September 2004. The Review Team’s report and recommendations were published in February 2005. A task group, set up jointly by the Practitioners’ Forum and the Business and Community Safety Forum, will facilitate the delivery of the Retained Review Team’s

recommendations through an implementation plan to be published in Spring 2006.

5.9 Whilst the retained duty system task group will look at the Retained Review recommendations from a national perspective, Fire and Rescue Authorities will themselves wish to tackle the recruitment and retention challenges they face in respect of the retained duty system by taking practical steps to effectively and efficiently implement the recommendations at a local level.

5.10 The introduction of IPDS (see Chapter 6) offers an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of all staff, including those on the retained duty system. Flexible working arrangements, job sharing, part-time service as well as the nature of working on the retained duty system may mean that some people may not have the same opportunities for development in the workplace as those working full time on the wholetime duty system. As set out in the Learning and Development Strategy, use of flexible means of developing people, such as e-learning or distance learning, and the delivery of development opportunities during weekends and evenings will become increasingly important elements in meeting the needs of many members of staff, particularly those on the retained duty system.

5.11 The Government is working with stakeholders, including the retained duty system task group and retained duty system staff, to encourage more people to apply to join the retained duty system, and to make the positive changes necessary to encourage existing staff to stay working in Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Government is also working with the business community to:

- highlight the benefits of having in their workforce the skills which staff on the retained duty system can bring;

- encourage support for the release of employees for the retained duty system; and
- tackle the barriers to releasing employees for their fire and rescue duties whilst respecting the needs of primary employers.

5.10 Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that they:

- **make full and efficient use of staff on the retained duty system in line with the needs in their IRMPs;**
- **give staff on the retained duty system access to development opportunities comparable to those for wholetime duty system and other staff; and**
- **break down artificial barriers between staff on the retained duty system and other staff, including where appropriate exploring options such as mixed crewing and providing wholetime duty system staff with the opportunity to undertake additional service on the retained duty system.**

Human Resources Management

5.11 The modernisation programme places additional demands on the Human Resources (HR) function within Fire and Rescue Authorities. The introduction of Regional Management Boards offers Fire and Rescue Authorities the potential to consolidate expertise in this area, and thereby provide a more efficient and effective service. Equally, the development by CFOA of the UK Fire and Rescue Service HR Strategy framework will

provide greater support and structure to this central role.

5.12 Central government will work with Fire and Rescue Authorities, CFOA, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and other appropriate professional bodies to stimulate the development of a skilled, professional and strategic HR function by:

- encouraging more HR staff to undertake professional and vocational qualifications and, through networking meetings, seminars and professional support, to develop their workforce planning skills and their capacity to help modernise the current management culture; and
- facilitating the sharing of best practice among HR staff through the regular meetings of the Fire and Rescue Service HR Practitioners' Network and through seminars covering key HR and employment law issues.

5.13 Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should:

- **draw up a regional HR strategy by Autumn 2006, encompassing recruitment, learning and development (see Chapter 6), occupational health, health and safety, medical advice services, sickness/ill health management, discipline, mobility and a regional equalities strategy¹⁷;**
- **identify and implement the most efficient and effective means for the region to deliver these services, including through lead authorities or outsourcing where appropriate.**

¹⁷ It is acknowledged that in some areas RMBs have already made significant advances in their regional planning process and have developed separate regional strategies for issues such as equality and diversity outside their HR Strategy. In many cases this is an effective way of ensuring equality and diversity issues receive the necessary high profile in order to ensure they are mainstreamed. Whether these issues are considered as part of a unified HR Strategy as described above or are the subject of separate regional strategies it is important to ensure that the implications of the various strategies have been evaluated and are compatible.

- ensure regional HR strategies are compatible with local IRMPs. (It is for each Regional Management Board to decide which issues, in addition to those set out above, are best dealt with in the regional strategy and those which fall within IRMPs and are best dealt with locally, and to ensure that there is a good fit.)
- ensure that they undertake appropriate Equality Impact Assessment of all their policies, plans, procedures or practices in accordance with legislative requirements.

Improving opportunities

5.14 The Fire and Rescue Service workforce does not currently reflect the communities it serves. In 2004, only 2.5% of operational staff were women and 2.7% of all staff were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

5.15 Raising the profile of working in the Fire and Rescue Service as a career option for women and those from minority ethnic backgrounds should help improve this position. So will making the Service more accessible to those with caring and other responsibilities by introducing more flexible patterns of working. But these measures will not of themselves be sufficient.

5.16 To help Fire and Rescue Authorities improve their performance the race and gender employment targets agreed and set in 1999 (for minority ethnic staff) and 2000 (for women) have been reviewed. The existing strategies were designed at a time when the key concerns focused on race and gender and the Government is aware that other issues, surrounding in particular sexual orientation, disability, religion and age have not previously been given a sufficiently high profile and need now to be addressed. A new strategy will be published in 2006 following

consultation with stakeholders. The strategy will continue to encourage greater diversity amongst applicants and appointees and promote equality of opportunity in career progression; it will aim to improve diversity at all levels of the organisation and reduce the number of staff from under-represented groups leaving the service prior to retirement. Fire and Rescue Authorities will, as at present, be monitored on their performance against the requirements of the strategy.

5.17 Achieving greater diversity within the service is clearly the responsibility of Fire and Rescue Authorities. However, ODPM supports this aim and will work with partners under the leadership of the Diversity Happens! Programme Board to achieve the necessary cultural change to create an organisation which values diversity and is inclusive and supportive of all. This will result in a series of actions for Fire and Rescue Authorities which will comprise the national performance expectations in this area. Among the key areas which will be addressed are:

- The Fire and Rescue Service “Business Case” for Diversity
- The implementation of the new equality employment targets
- Equality training and the role of equality advisers including good practice dissemination
- Peer review on equality issues between Fire and Rescue Authorities and other organisations e.g. public, private and voluntary sector organisations; and
- Benchmarking of Fire and Rescue Authorities’ achievement on equality and diversity issues against the Local Government Equality Standard

5.18 To assess their current performance with regard to equality and diversity issues Fire and Rescue Authorities are encouraged to:

- undertake a cultural audit involving both staff and their local community; and
- to undertake a review of their plans, policies, practices and procedures to ensure they are compatible with good practice and are supportive of the aim to become an organisation which values and promotes equality and diversity.

5.19 Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should produce a regional equalities strategy (see paragraph 5.15).

Recruitment

5.20 Fire and Rescue Authorities now have the freedom to recruit directly to any level within their organisation in order to meet the provisions of their IRMP and to broaden the diversity of skills and experience within their workforce. In doing so Fire and Rescue Authorities are already required to have regard to the principles of IPDS including the Personal Qualities and Attributes Framework (see Chapter 6). It is also essential that Fire and Rescue Authorities comply with appropriate employment legislation, including equalities legislation and that they apply identified good practice.

5.21 In recruiting staff Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure they comply with the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 Section 36(1)(a-h), by carrying out Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure checks on those who will be working with children and vulnerable adults.

5.22 In partnership with stakeholders Government has developed role relevant selection tools to be used by Fire and Rescue Authorities to identify applicants with the potential to become firefighters. The tools were developed with the aim of ensuring national consistency in the methodology and standards applied to the selection of these staff.

5.23 In September 2005, Government issued a consultation on arrangements for the recruitment of firefighters and the progression of operational and control managers in the Service. That consultation presented a number of options and questions including the extent to which the Service should use national processes to assess staff for recruitment and progression. The consultation received a good rate of response and the clear balance of opinion was that national processes offered the greatest benefits to the Service. This Framework therefore makes clear Government's expectation that Fire and Rescue Authorities will now use the new national processes in place of their existing firefighter selection processes. It is expected that all FRAs will have these national processes in place by April 2007 at the latest (see para 6.7) – however, Authorities are strongly encouraged to begin using these processes as soon as possible, both to introduce greater consistency of approach across the country and to ensure that the tests can undergo a rigorous validation process using data collected from the performance of real candidates.

5.24 The Practitioners' Forum made it clear at its meeting on 13th December 2005 that there should be national standards for the fire-fighter selection tests which would apply across all duty systems. In order to ensure the tests are effective and the standards set are appropriate the Practitioners' Forum has asked that there be an 18 month review period for the tests.

5.25 Whilst, overall, respondees to the consultation were in favour of national processes, some did express concerns about a number of detailed issues. In order to address these concerns, to comply with the wishes of the Practitioners' Forum and in line with best practice the selection process will be monitored and reviewed as part of the ongoing validation process mentioned above.

Improvements to the process will be made where necessary.

5.26 Detailed guidance on the new selection process is available on the ODPM website at www.odpm.gov.uk. Authorities will be supported in using the new processes and will be required to collect data on the process which must be submitted to ODPM.

Discipline

5.27 With the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985 were automatically abolished. Staff who were formally charged under the 1985 Discipline Regulations before 1st October 2004 retain the right of appeal to the Secretary of State on awards of dismissal, the requirement to resign or reduction in rank.

5.28 To comply with the provisions of the Employment Act 2002 (Disputes Resolution) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 /752) and in line with the provisions of the sixth edition of the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service (the Grey Book) Fire and Rescue Authorities must either:

- have developed and implemented disciplinary procedures which are based on Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) best practice guidance¹⁸; or
- have introduced for use within their authority the model disciplinary procedure as set out in the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades Scheme of Conditions of Service (the Grey Book).

5.29 Fire and Rescue Authorities need to give consideration to the cost, best practice

and efficiency benefits of developing disciplinary procedures, dealing with disciplinary issues and providing effective management training through a regional HR function.

Sickness Management/ Ill Health Retirement

5.30 Fire and Rescue Authorities should take effective steps to improve sickness management and reduce ill health retirements.

5.31 The national Fire and Rescue Service targets for sickness were to reduce sick absence in the service from 9.2 shifts per person in 1998/99 to an average of 6.5 shifts per person for fire-fighters and from 13.4 to 5.4 shifts per person for fire control staff by March 2005. The figures for 2003/04 were 10.4 shifts per person for fire-fighters and 13.2 for control room staff. These figures indicate very little movement since the previous year and unless there is significant improvement it seems unlikely that the Service will have met the target set for 2005.

5.32 The Health and Safety Executive in partnership with ODPM will be undertaking a study of sickness absence in the Fire and Rescue Service to identify, where possible, the main underlying causes of sickness absence in the Service. The programme of research is due to commence in Spring 2006 and Fire and Rescue Service stakeholders will be invited to take part. The research will be carried out in two phases. The first phase will essentially be fact finding and analysis. The phase 1 report which will identify areas of good practice is due to be delivered in Spring 2007. The findings will be used as the basis for further constructive action under the second phase of the programme: developing

¹⁸ See: www.acas.org.uk/publications

best practice in the reduction and management of sickness absence and setting appropriate sickness absence targets. Fire and Rescue Authorities will be encouraged to take a proactive role in both parts of the research programme, however their involvement will be particularly crucial to the success of the second phase.

5.33 Whilst the study will help to identify areas of good practice in the reduction and management of sickness absence Fire and Rescue Authorities' are advised that it is their responsibility to implement process and procedures which effectively tackle ill health absence issues.

5.34 The target for ill health retirements is to reduce them to 6.9 retirements per thousand employees within all Fire and Rescue Authorities by March 2005. There continues to be a year-on-year reduction in the number of ill health retirements, but it is unlikely that this target will be met.

5.35 The focus to date with regard to sickness absence and ill-health retirement has been on uniformed staff. However, in future, ODPM will look at sickness figures across the whole Fire and Rescue Service workforce to help the Service identify areas where sickness management provisions need to improve or where good practice can be identified and shared.

5.36 In 2004 the Government amended the Firefighters' Pension Scheme to enable Fire and Rescue Authorities to continue to draw on the experience of trained firefighters who may no longer be fit to undertake firefighting duties, rather than retiring them with an ill health pension and this together with a requirement to use independent medical assessment – whose opinion is binding – before approving applications for early retirement on ill health grounds, has helped authorities bring levels of ill-health retirements down.

5.37 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

- **ensure that their occupational health arrangements including the provision of occupational health advice are efficient and effective,**
- **ensure that full consideration is given to the health and fitness of all staff and that they are assigned to appropriate roles;**
- **introduce and administer effective absence management processes and procedures to facilitate the achievement of Government targets on the reduction of sickness absence and ill health retirements, and**
- **consider the cost and organisational benefits of operating their occupational health arrangements on a regional basis;**

Pensions

5.38 Following consultation on a new firefighters' pension scheme for new entrants to the Service and for amendments to the existing scheme, the Government published its decisions on the new arrangements on 8 September (see www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_fire/documents/page/odpm_fire) Implementation of the proposals is now being discussed in detail by the Fire-fighters' Pension Committee which includes representatives from both employers and employees. The new pension arrangements will reflect: the changes in the nature of fire fighting duties under modernisation proposals; the changes in the regulatory and tax framework for pensions generally; and equality and diversity issues. A new pension scheme will come into operation during 2006-7 for new entrants to the Fire and Rescue Service. The Government is also making changes to the financial arrangements for funding fire-fighters' pensions (see paragraph 7.9).



Chapter 6

Workforce development

The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)

6.1 The current role of the Fire and Rescue Service puts a premium on flexibility, personal skills and competence. This is true for all staff within the modernising Fire and Rescue Service, whatever aspect of the service they deliver.

6.2 The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) for people and organisational management has, since 2001, provided a fresh approach to workforce development for Fire and Rescue Authorities. Brought in as part of the June 2003 pay and modernisation agreement for most operational staff, IPDS introduces a competence-based approach, and its system of development specifically targets the needs of the individual. People are now able to join the Service at any level and progress according to their ability. IPDS allows staff with high potential to undertake an appropriate programme of tailored development and Government is currently consulting about a new approach to leadership learning and development including a High-Potential Management Development scheme.

6.3 CFOA has been taking forward work to establish whether there is a need to identify suitable National Occupational Standards for wider application within the Service.

6.4 The IPDS Project within the Modernisation Programme finished in 2005 and leaves behind a largely complete system. This includes: role maps and National Occupational Standards which set out what is expected of people; guidance on how people should be developed to achieve and maintain competence in their job; guidance on assessing people in the workplace (which can

usefully include Vocational Qualifications); guidance on keeping records about personal development; and the assessment processes set out in paragraphs 5.18 and 6.5. It should be remembered that IPDS, which has been designed to drive down risk, is an integrated system which should be applied in its entirety as set out in IPDS documents issued by ODPM¹⁹ and by the NJC. Following the closure of the Project, national IPDS information, guidance and expertise continues to be available through the Fire Service College. The intention in the longer term is that IPDS expertise should form part of the work of the proposed Fire and Rescue Service Centre of Excellence.

6.5 The demands of the resilience agenda and emerging European training and development legislation underlines the need for coherent developmental standards and consistent processes. A number of the components of IPDS provide the foundation for this.

6.6 In partnership with stakeholders, the Government has developed and published a Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs) Framework²⁰ against which staff are now assessed when going through Assessment Development Centres. In September 2005, Government issued a consultation about new arrangements for the recruitment of fire-fighters and the progression of operational and control managers in the Service. That consultation presented a number of options and questions including the extent to which the Service should use national processes to assess staff for recruitment and progression. The consultation received a good rate of response and the clear balance of opinion was that national processes offered the greatest benefits to the Service. This Framework therefore makes clear

¹⁹ Guidance on IPDS is set out in the following Fire Service Circulars: 9/2002; 10/2003; 11/2003; 14/2003; 20/2003; 9/2004; 38/2004; 51/2004; 20/2005; 34/2005 and 6/2006.

²⁰ FSCs 51/2004; 34/2005 and 6/2006.

Government's expectation that Fire and Rescue Authorities will now use the new national processes and will have these in place by April 2007 at the latest. Authorities are strongly encouraged to begin using these processes as soon as possible. Whilst, overall, respondees were in favour of national processes, some did express concerns about a number of detailed issues. Over the next year or so, Government will monitor the new processes and make improvements where necessary and it will ensure that Authorities are supported in using the new processes.

6.7 In adopting and implementing IPDS, Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

- **ensure that the development of its staff underpins and supports the delivery of its IRMP;**
- **put in place systems and train managers to ensure that staff are assessed fairly against national standards, with overall performance regularly reviewed, and workplace assessments carried out and recorded consistently;**
- **consider how collaborative working may maximise the benefit from available resources for IPDS;**
- **support the use of any pay flexibilities currently available with robust evidence, for example on recruitment and retention needs and through job evaluation exercises;**
- **communicate all changes to staff effectively; and**
- **from September 2007, use national processes for the progression of operational and control staff;**

National Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Strategy for England

6.8 IPDS requires people to demonstrate competence in their role and, in many cases, this means ensuring that people's existing knowledge, skills and understanding has been developed to required standards. To meet these more diverse needs, Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to look to a range of sources to help staff attain and maintain competence. This may include some outside the traditional fire and rescue institutions (such as Further Education and management colleges) and e-learning.

6.9 To support Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Fire Service College, in consultation with ODPM, CFOA, LGA and other stakeholders, has drawn up a Learning and Development Strategy (LDS) for the Fire and Rescue Service in England. The aim of this high level strategy is to provide the framework for Fire and Rescue Service learning and development over the next ten years. It is intended to apply to all Fire and Rescue Authority employees and will ensure the Fire and Rescue Service operates within the Government's wider skills development framework. The LDS focuses on how learning and development should be delivered, what the outcomes and benefits should be and the appropriate milestones and targets towards achieving these. It recognises the value of partnership working, particularly in learning delivery at regional and sub-regional levels, and the potential of Regional Management Boards to co-ordinate and monitor learning and development across their regions. The Strategy encourages Fire and Rescue Authorities to invite an elected member to take on responsibility for overseeing learning and development.

6.10 It is important for the aims and objectives of the LDS to be matched with the facilities currently available for the training and development of Fire and Rescue Service staff. This will help Fire and Rescue Authorities make an informed judgement about where their staff learning and development needs can most effectively be met.

6.11 The Government believes that it is important that the most efficient and effective use is made of local training facilities, and that there may be scope for some facilities to be shared at a regional level.

Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards should:

- **seek to ensure that learning and development is carried out in ways that reflect the principles set out in the LDS;**
- **support and monitor the delivery of learning and development in accordance with the key elements of the LDS;**
- **ensure that learning and development forms part of regional HR strategies (see Chapter 5); and**
- **from September 2007, use national processes for the recruitment of fire-fighters and the progression of operational and control staff;**

The Fire Service College

6.12 The Fire Service College will continue to provide a national and international facility for operational incident management training, centred on its unique facilities. The College recognises the need for learning and development to be delivered more flexibly in order to meet the requirements for national, regional and local learning whilst maintaining consistent national standards. It is reviewing its programme of training courses and

products in order to better meet the changing learning needs of the Fire and Rescue Service. The College is also developing a Managed Learning Environment to support distance learning across the Fire and Rescue Service.

6.13 The College is developing its role as a centre of learning and development excellence for the Fire and Rescue Service. It is leading work with stakeholders to develop an enhanced National Qualifications Framework and to increase the take-up of opportunities for Fire and Rescue Service staff to gain vocational and other qualifications. The College is exploring opportunities to form partnerships and co-location with key fire and rescue organisations and is working on options for partnership with the private sector in developing the use of the site and facilities. The College plays a key role in the support framework for IPDS (see paragraph 6.4 above).

6.14 A financial review of the College in 2005 concluded that it should no longer operate as an independent trading fund. From 2007/8 the College will operate as an “on vote” executive agency. The College will continue to charge for its products under both financial models.

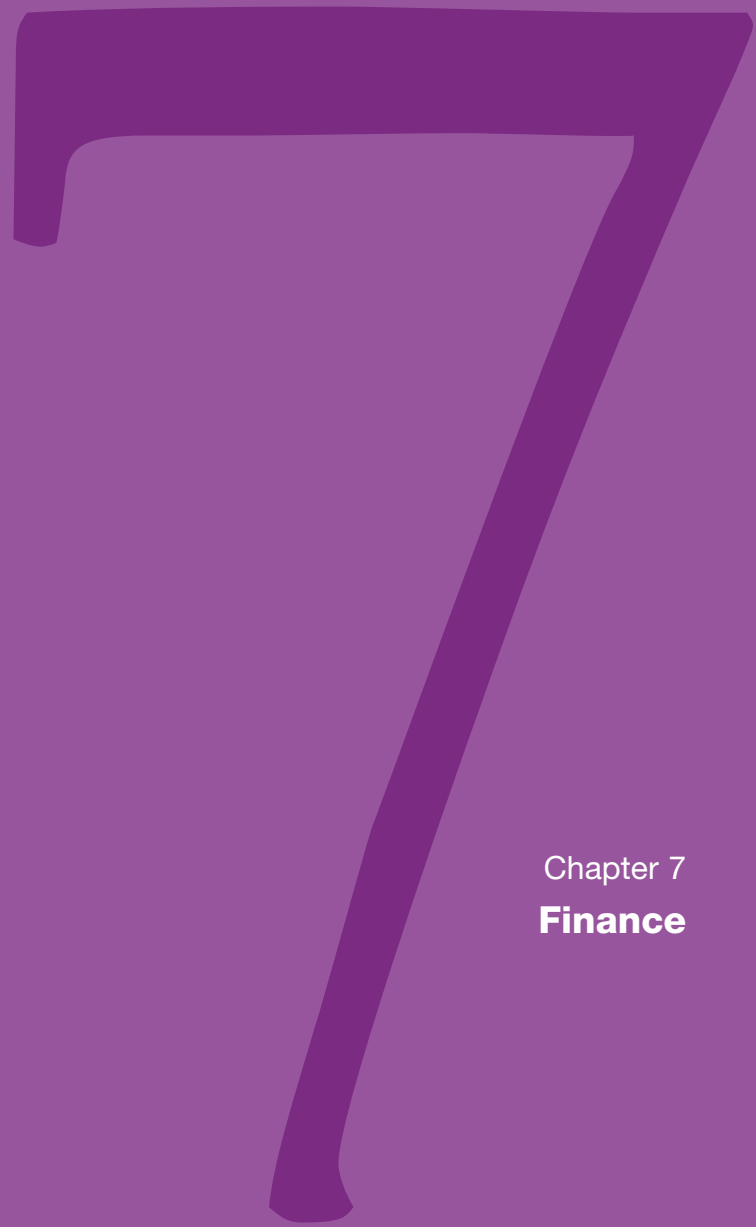
Leadership

6.16 Government issued a consultation paper in December 2005 recommending a new approach to leadership within the Fire and Rescue Service. The consultation paper reflects the work of two Task and Finish Groups, each representing key stakeholders, established by the IPDS Project Board in 2004.

6.17 The consultation paper proposed the introduction of:

- a transformational leadership model the principles of which are applicable to all levels of the Service where leadership is required;
- a framework for leadership learning and development providing a structured approach that ensures the development of current and future leaders and managers;
- a Strategic Leadership Development Programme providing managed programmes of learning and development for individuals identified as having the potential to reach and succeed at the strategic manager levels; and
- a High Potential Management Development scheme providing accelerated progression through a managed programme of learning and development for individuals identified as having the potential to reach and succeed at middle manager levels.

6.18 The consultation ends on 13 March 2006. Responses to the consultation will then be considered and a Fire Service Circular issued to set out the approach Government endorses to Fire and Rescue Authorities.



Chapter 7
Finance

Revenue Support

7.1 The Local Government Settlement for 2006/07 and 2007/08 was announced on 31 January 2006. Fire and Rescue Authorities received average grant increases of 1.96% in 2006/7 and 3.14% in 2007/8 and no Authority received less than 1.5% in 2006/7 and 2.7% in 2007/8. The Government continues to recognise that the modernisation programme and the associated agreement on pay and terms and conditions, has and will have significant financial ramifications. There are increased costs to fund the pay award and potentially some aspects of the modernisation agenda, for example the increased emphasis on prevention. However, substantial savings are also available, for example through better targeting of resources to match risks, regional collaboration and more efficient working practices, which might include the use of overtime, alternative duty systems, part time working, greater use of non-uniformed staff, revised crewing levels and officer cover arrangements. The Independent Review of the Fire and Rescue Service²¹ said 'We are confident that, within the foreseeable future, benefits will more than exceed additional costs, including those of the pay increases we propose'.²²

Fire and Rescue Authorities should develop fully the opportunities for efficiency improvements, including through collaboration, consistent with their duties under Best Value and the Government's objectives to reduce accidental deaths from fire in the home and deliberate fires.

7.2 Sir Peter Gershon's efficiency review that formed part of SR04 aims to 'ensure that

frontline staff get the resources they need to do their job even better, and that the bureaucracy that can get in their way is removed'.²³ The aim is to ensure that maximum use is made of increased investment. The principles apply equally to central government and Fire and Rescue Authorities. Local Government as a whole has been set a target of achieving £6.45 billion in efficiency gains by 2007/08. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a part to play in helping Local Government to meet that target. ODPM has assumed within its own efficiency target that English Fire and Rescue Authorities together will achieve £105m gross efficiency savings in 2007/08. This would amount to a gross efficiency saving equivalent to around 5.67% of total 2004/05 expenditure. This will need to be achieved by the end of financial year 2007/08. More detail is given in ODPM's Efficiency Technical Note For Local Government²⁴ and Fire Service Circulars 8/2005, 30/2005 and 48/2005.

7.3 All English Fire and Rescue Authorities should report their efficiency gains through Annual Efficiency Statements (AES) as described in Fire Service Circular 48/2005.

The first AESs were received in November 2005 reporting those countable efficiency gains achieved in 2004/05 and those planned efficiency gains to the end of 2005/06. The future timetable is as follows:

Date 18 April 2006

Fire and Rescue Authorities submit the forward part of the AES, looking ahead to the year 2006/07

²¹ The Independent Review of the Fire Service, *The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives* (2002). See www.irfs.org.uk

²² *Ibid*, chapter 12 – *Implementing Reform*, paragraph 12.22

²³ Releasing Resources to the Frontline – Efficiency Review, Budget 2003 Review (HMT 2003).

²⁴ http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/532/EfficiencytechnicalnoteforlocalgovernmentPDF336Kb_id1135532.pdf

Date 16 June 2006

Fire and Rescue Authorities submit the backward part of the AES, setting out efficiency gains achieved in 2005/06

Date 17 November 2006

Fire and Rescue Authorities that do not have 'Excellent' CPA status are required to provide a mid-year update to ODPM.

Those with 'Excellent' status are invited to do so.

Date 12 April 2007

Fire and Rescue Authorities submit the forward part of the AES for the year 2007/08

Date 14 June 2007

Fire and Rescue Authorities submit the backward part of the AES for the year 2006/07

Date 17 November 2007

Fire and Rescue Authorities that do not have 'Excellent' CPA status are required to provide a mid-year update to ODPM.

Those with 'Excellent' status are invited to do so.

Date 12 June 2008

Fire and Rescue Authorities submit the backward part of the AES for the year 2007/08

7.4 A lot of activity is already taking place in Fire and Rescue Authorities aimed at increasing efficiency, some of it pre-dating the efficiency target. This is in areas such as shift patterns, crewing arrangements, appropriate use of overtime, reducing sickness and other absences, minimising ill-health retirements, collaboration, partnerships, procurement, risk management, driving down false automatic fire alarm activation, better use of retained fire-fighters, civilianisation and Capital

Investment. Different Fire and Rescue Authorities face different challenges and have adopted a wide variety of approaches to achieving efficiency in these and other areas. Details of the approaches taken in achieving efficiency savings were included in the AESs submitted in November 2005. The ODPM has joined forces with CFOA and the LGA in bringing together notable practice from across the Service into case studies that will be disseminated to all Fire and Rescue Authorities. The intended purpose of making these case studies widely available is to ensure that all Fire and Rescue Authorities know how other Fire and Rescue Authorities are approaching achieving efficiency gains.

Fire and Rescue Authorities should consider actively for themselves whether any of the approaches identified in the case studies guidance will assist them in delivering greater efficiencies.

It is hoped that this guidance will grow in coverage and depth over time. The more experience that can be shared, the easier it should be for the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole to increase efficiency and meet the target.

7.5 The Government has long recognised that there may be a lag between costs and savings of Fire and Rescue Service modernisation. That is why, at the LGA's request, we paid £30 million transitional funding to English and Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2004/05. Originally the Government planned to recoup the transitional funding before the end of 2005/6 but later agreed to the LGA's request to defer this until 2006/7. This was on the basis that there have been delays in the pay and modernisation process and that, amongst other things, recouping it in 2005/6 could have meant that we were seeking to recoup the transitional funding less than a year after it had been distributed to authorities. The LGA and Fire and Rescue Authorities provided

evidence to support their case, including on efficiencies to be delivered for 2006/7. Following further representations we have smoothed the impact of recovering this money by deferring recoupment of half (£14m) of the transitional funding from FRAs until 2007/08 so that half will be recouped in 2006/07 and half in 2007/08. We have also decided that the 50% recouped from FRAs in 2006/07 should be fed back into the wider provisional local government finance settlement.

Council Tax

7.6 In common with the rest of local government, Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that they do not place unreasonable burdens on their council taxpayers. The Government used its reserve capping powers against fourteen authorities, including five Fire and Rescue Authorities, in 2004/05. No Fire and Rescue Authorities were capped in 2005/06 when the average council tax precept increase for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England in 2005/06 was 4.4%, with none setting increases higher than 5%.

7.7 The Government expects all Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure they do not set excessive increases in 2006/07 and 2007/08. The Government made clear in its General Election manifesto that it would not hesitate to use its capping powers to protect council taxpayers from excessive rises in future years.

Three Year Settlements

7.8 Spending Review 2004 announced that the Government would be introducing three year revenue and capital settlements for Local, Police and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The purpose of this change is to maximise the benefits of three year spending plans for central government departments by

cascading them down to the maximum extent possible. A consultation paper on this subject was issued by the ODPM in December 2004 with the analysis of responses issued in June 2005. The Government's proposals were issued on 19 July 2005.

Pensions finance

7.9 On 29 November 2005 Phil Woolas and Hazel Blears jointly announced their intention to introduce new financial arrangements for police and firefighter pensions after considering responses to the consultations which took place earlier this year. It is proposed that the new arrangements, subject to Parliamentary approval, will be introduced on 1 April 2006.

7.10 The proposal is that from 1 April 2006 instead of meeting the full cost of pension outgo from their operational budgets Fire and Rescue Authorities will pay an employer contribution out of operational resources in order to cover the accruing liability to pay pensions in the future. This employer contribution and employee contributions will be paid into a pension account held by the Fire and Rescue Authority, from which pensions outgo will be met. ODPM will 'top up' the pension account or recover any surplus. The intention is that new arrangements will:

- counter the yearly volatility in pensions expenditure which has fed into council tax precept increases; and
- increase transparency in Fire and Rescue Authorities' budgets, in that they will more accurately reflect the cost of providing the frontline service.

7.11 For the remaining two years of this spending review period, the new top-up grant required to meet any gap in Fire and Rescue Authorities' pension accounts will be financed

by top-slicing Formula Grant. This should be cost neutral because the underlying cost-driver to the public purse – the bill for pensions outgo – will be unaffected.

Distribution

7.12 Changes have been made to the fire and rescue formula to take into account the move to three-year settlements, new financial arrangements for fire-fighters' pensions, changes to indicators caused by the elimination of national standards of fire cover and changes to fire safety law. Changes have also been made to the formula to recognise the increasing role of community fire safety work to authorities by increasing the fixed percentage element from 3% to 6%. The indicator used to distribute this has also been updated and widened to include the population of those over 65. Following consultation with local government, Ministers have decided not to include an additional element for sparsity in light of other changes to the formula. These changes to the formula will come into effect for the 2006/07 Local Government Finance Settlement.

Local Prudential Borrowing Regime

7.13 The Local Government Act 2003 replaced the existing system of basic and supplementary credit approvals for local authorities with a new local prudential regime. From 1 April 2004, Local Authorities, including Fire and Rescue Authorities, have been free to borrow for investment without Government consent, provided they can afford to service the debt.

Supported Capital Expenditure

7.14 ODPM Fire Circular 58/2005 informed English Fire and Rescue Authorities of the amounts of supported capital expenditure which each will receive in 2006/07 and 2007/08 alongside the two-year Local Government Finance Settlement. The total supported capital expenditure for each year is £57.98 million. ODPM are currently considering what support there might be for reviewing the basis for the distribution of supported capital expenditure to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

7.15 Eight schemes have successfully signed following the inception of PFI for the Fire and Rescue Service in 1998, all of which are now fully operational. A further two are in the procurement or pre-procurement stage. ODPM Fire Service Circular 31/2005 invited Fire and Rescue Authorities in England to submit indicative bids for a share of up to £150 million of notional credit approvals (NCAs) as part of the fifth round of projects to be supported under PFI. Bids were received on 7 October and duly evaluated against the following broad criteria where indicative bids should:

- be consistent with the National Fire and Rescue Framework and hence the National Procurement Strategy, and with the relevant Fire and Rescue Authority or Authorities' Integrated Risk Management Plan(s). They should help to increase the safety of Fire and Rescue Service staff and members of the public
- increase the efficiency of the Fire and Rescue Service
- demonstrate that PFI is the sensible procurement route and that they have considered the alternatives. Authorities will be aware of the need to complete the

Stage 2 HMT Value for Money model and compare this with the Stage 1 model as part of the Outline Business Case approval process. This conforms to HM Treasury requirements for PFI projects.²⁵

Bids from Fire and Rescue Authorities also had to meet HM Treasury's minimum capital threshold of £20 million. The successful bids were announced on 30 November 2005. These were, Staffordshire, Gloucestershire, Merseyside, Lancashire and Cumbria. The latter three are going forward as a joint project.

7.16 The PFI programme has the potential to help Fire and Rescue Authorities with the provision of some of the capital assets necessary to meet the modernisation agenda. It is hoped to launch further bidding rounds for Fire and Rescue Authorities in succeeding years.

Other sources of funding

7.17 We have made £25 million available to Fire and Rescue Authorities in England for the period up to March 2008 to enable the Fire and Rescue Service to undertake Home Fire Risk Checks and to provide free smoke alarm installation for vulnerable, high risk households. We will continue to provide support for fire prevention work including community fire safety, working with young people and arson reduction. We have made a further £11.4 million available to Fire and Rescue Authorities in England for the period to March 2008 to support fire prevention work, including community fire safety, arson reduction and work with children and young people (see Chapter 1). This single grant to all Fire and Rescue Authorities replaces the grants paid to some Authorities under the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund and

the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund in 2003-06, and provides revenue funding to complement the capital grants paid to Fire and Rescue Authorities under the Home Fire Risk Check initiative.

7.18 For the New Dimension programme, Government has committed over £200m which includes funding for equipment and training as well as supporting the crewing needs resulting from this investment. New Dimension is due to complete its roll-out of capability by spring 2007. For the Firelink project, Government has committed to fund the procurement and capital costs of the new wide-area radio system for the Fire and Rescue Service.

7.19 An Emergencies Order underpinning the New Dimension programme is planned to be made in autumn 2006 or early in 2007. It would only take effect once the New Dimension capabilities are fully operational from spring 2007 (See Chapter 4). Whilst these are being rolled out, Fire and Rescue Authorities will not be expected to incur additional expenditure. Government will act in accordance with the 'new burdens principle' (explained more fully in paragraph 7.29). This would ensure that any new burden to Fire and Rescue Authorities arising from an Emergencies Order would be agreed after discussion between the Government, the LGA and CFOA.

7.20 The Government recognises that there will be net additional costs to Fire and Rescue Authorities during the transition from local control rooms to the national network of control centres. Central government will support these costs in line with the new burdens principle. Guidance on funding under the 'new burdens' principle (see paragraph 7.29) was issued on 23 December 2005 in Fire Service Circular 63/2005. This provided

²⁵ www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/key_documents/ppp_guidance_index.cfm

more detail on exactly what work needs to be done and which costs will be met by ODPM and which should be met by Fire and Rescue Authorities.

7.21 The Government also funds a wide range of work relevant to Fire and Rescue Authorities' role, particularly on prevention and community fire safety, for example on neighbourhood renewal such as the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund.

7.22 The HM Treasury/Cabinet Office Invest to Save Budget aims to 'Encourage innovation and partnership throughout the public sector, in order to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of public services'. Projects are appointed with a view to the resulting learning and benefits being able to be applied by others more widely. Criteria change from year to year and Fire and Rescue Authorities with an interest should refer to the Invest to Save Budget website.²⁶

7.23 Fire Service Circular 50/2005 highlights some further existing grants that Fire and Rescue Authorities may wish to apply for either directly or through their partners.

FiReBuy

7.24 ODPM has met the costs of establishing FiReBuy Ltd, this includes £800,000 spend on the Integrated Clothing Project that Fire and Rescue Authorities had expected to meet from their own budgets during 2005/06. In 2006/07 and 2007/08 ODPM will fund up to £1.8m, each year, for running FiReBuy Ltd. ODPM will work with Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2006 to identify a future funding mechanism including cost recovery.

Charging

7.25 The range of calls to which Fire and Rescue Authorities respond goes beyond dealing simply with fires. Responding to special service calls, ranging from road traffic collisions to stalled lifts and people locked out of their homes, accounts for almost half the calls which the Fire and Rescue Service attends.

7.26 Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 preserves a power to charge for responding to incidents other than fire calls and ensures that emergency medical assistance is free at the point of delivery. By "charge" we mean the recovery of up to the full costs incurred by the Fire and Rescue Authority in providing that service to distinguish it from "trading", which is considered in paragraph below. The first Order made under Section 19 came into effect on 1st October 2004 and specifies all services for which at least one English Fire and Rescue Authority was charging as at 1st April 2004. Any future proposals to extend charging would be subject to extensive consultation.

Fire and Rescue Authorities should consider very carefully whether the costs of providing the non-statutory services specified in the Order should fall on those who requested the service or on council tax payers.

7.27 A number of Fire and Rescue Authorities have become accustomed to recovering an element of profit when setting their fees for services such as training and safety consultancy. In normal circumstances we would consider that this commercially based activity should be permitted only as part of a flexibilities package following a favourable assessment under the CPA

²⁶ <http://www.isb.gov.uk/hmt.isb.application.2/index.asp>

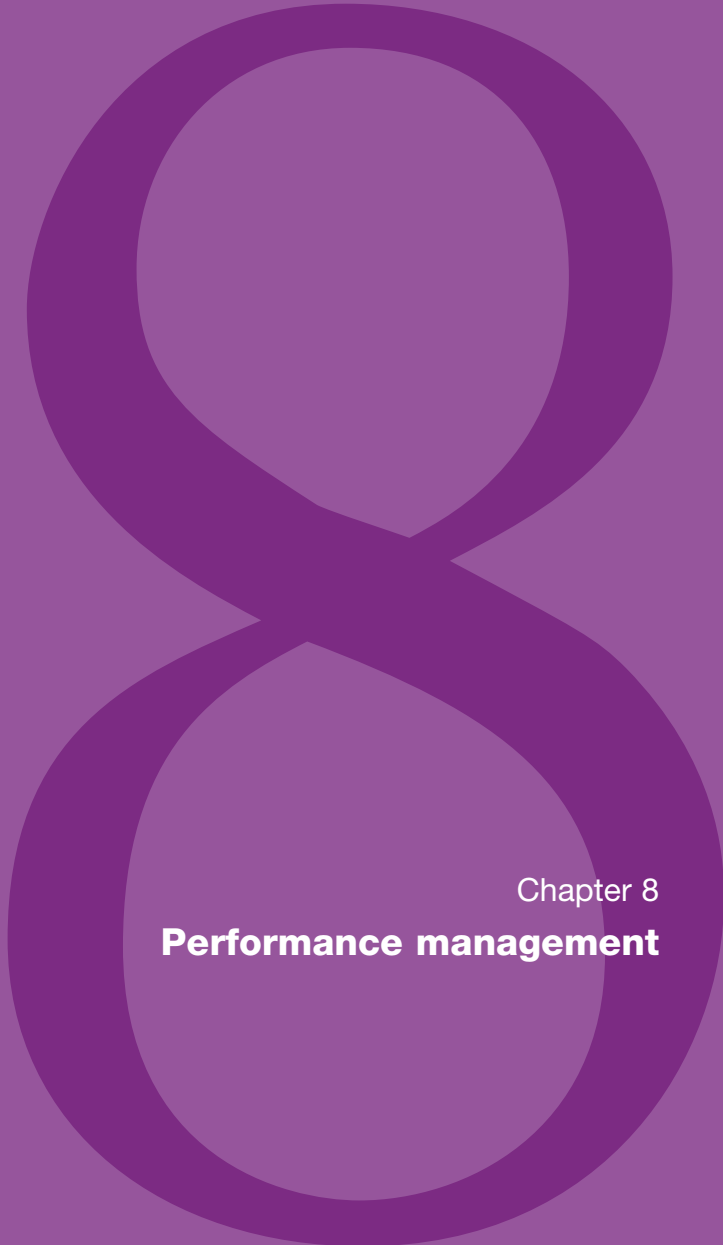
process. However, during our consultation on the Section 19 power, forceful representations were made that we should ensure that these income streams were not put at risk during 2005 by the new charging regime. For that reason we made a trading Order under section 95 of the Local Government Act 2003 to cover all services in which named English Fire and Rescue Authorities were trading on 1st April 2004. The Order was reviewed after the introduction of a CPA for Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2005.

Although this arrangement means that trading must be conducted through a company structure, with associated costs, authorities must price their services at market rates in the interests of fair competition.

7.28 ODPM expects to issue guidance on the charging and trading Orders in 2006.

‘New Burdens’ Principle

7.29 Where a central government department’s policies or initiatives increase the cost of providing local authority services, the ‘new burdens’ principle means that the Government will fund the additional expenditure, provided that the aggregate value of the burdens across all authorities in any financial year is greater than £100,000. A procedure has been agreed with the LGA for assessing new burdens costs.



Chapter 8

Performance management

8.1 People must have assurance that public services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

8.2 To this end, the Audit Commission carried out a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of each Fire and Rescue Authority during 2005. This exercise was fully funded by ODPM and the expectations set out in the National Framework were taken into account by the Audit Commission as part of this CPA process. Fire and Rescue Authorities received their CPA reports and categorisation in July 2005. A spread of results was achieved across all five categories from excellent to poor.

8.3 CPA has provided each authority with a robust baseline for improvement and ODPM has sought to co-ordinate the input of external stakeholders as each Fire and Rescue Authority has developed its improvement plan. Round-table discussions, which were aimed at supporting the improvement planning process and finalising improvement plans, will be completed in early 2006.

8.4 Those Fire and Rescue Authorities that were categorised as CPA weak or poor received further support through the ODPM Support Team. The Support Team's role was to work with and advise Fire and Rescue Authorities during their improvement planning process. The Support Team will compile a "stocktake" report for each authority summarising the progress made by Fire and Rescue Authorities towards robust improvement planning and indicating whether they consider any further action to be necessary – by either the authority, or ODPM – to deliver the improvement required. On the conclusion of the "stocktake" the Support Team may recommend appropriate ongoing monitoring arrangements to monitor progress in delivering improvement.

8.5 Those Fire and Rescue Authorities that were categorised as CPA excellent are currently negotiating their "bespoke" package of Freedoms and Flexibilities with ODPM. This "bespoke agreement" is aimed at enabling Fire and Rescue Authorities to undertake projects or develop initiatives to deliver further innovation which may generate new and transferable good practice.

8.6 To help Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their improvement plans, a range of support is available through the jointly funded ODPM/LGA Capacity Building Programme. ODPM has been working with the Performance Partnership²⁸ and with contractors on the Local Government Capacity Building Framework Contract in order to provide national capacity building programmes for local government in a range of areas, such as performance management and training for elected members. Fire and Rescue Authorities have direct access to these training programmes. In addition each region is in the process of establishing a regional improvement partnership, consisting either of local authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities or of Fire and Rescue Authorities separately. Funding will be channelled through these to directly support innovation and improvement. Business Change Managers (see paragraph 8.13) act as the link to ODPM Regional Directors of Practice in each Government Office. They facilitate access for Fire and Rescue Authorities to regional improvement partnerships, and the funding they provide.

8.7 The Audit Commission published their National Report "Learning from CPA for the Fire and Rescue Service" in January 2006. The report set out recommendations for Fire and Rescue Authorities, local authorities and the government on securing improvement in the Service. ODPM will be looking closely at

²⁸ The Improvement and Development Agency, the Local Government Employer's Organisation, the 4Ps and LACORs.

these recommendations and working with Fire and Rescue Authorities to secure their improvement on the key areas highlighted.

Next Steps for Performance Assessment

8.8 In consultation with stakeholders the Audit Commission is developing appropriate performance assessment processes to follow Fire CPA. These measures will be proportionate and will reflect the Commission's general approaches to assessing performance in local government, while measuring improvement from the CPA baseline and addressing the specific needs and issues relevant to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

8.9 The Audit Commission will be formally consulting on the detail of this work in Spring 2006 but it will encompass:

- **A Service Assessment** consistent with the Local Services Inspection Forum principles that will form part of the CPA for single tier and county councils from 2006 onwards. The methodology used will be applicable to all types of Fire and Rescue Authorities and will place emphasis on service delivery. It will include a self assessment of operational performance based on the Operational Assessment Toolkit which has been developed by ODPM and CFOA. The self assessments will be reviewed by operational assessment teams comprising of Fire and Rescue Service staff seconded to ODPM. A separate consultation on this element of the Service Assessment will be undertaken in early 2006. The other component of the Service Assessment will be a review of key performance indicators.
- **A Use of Resources Judgement** for all Fire and Rescue Authorities. This will assess the authority across a range of

financial issues and will provide a scored judgement on whether the Fire and Rescue Authority is providing value for money.

- An assessment of improvement, or deterioration, in performance measured through a scored **direction of travel assessment**. This will provide Fire and Rescue Authorities with a judgement about the progress they have made on implementing their improvement plans since Fire CPA in 2005. This will be reported, along with the use of resources judgement by March 2007.

8.10 The Audit Commission's assessment will give a strong and evidence based picture of the progress a Fire and Rescue Authority has made since CPA publication in July 2005.

Relationship Managers

The Commission has appointed Relationship Managers to all Fire and Rescue Authorities to establish an ongoing dialogue with all Fire and Rescue Authorities to inform their audit and inspection work. The role of the Relationship Manager is primarily one of co-ordination and close liaison with a wide range of players to ensure delivery of the following:

- The provision of a seamless local audit and inspection service
- The delivery of relevant and proportionate audit and inspection
- The promotion of service improvement and a user focus
- The improvement of information flows and dialogue between Audited and Inspected Bodies and the Audit Commission.

A key role of the Relationship Managers will be to forge effective linkages between its regional delivery activities and Audit Commission wide policy and strategy

development. ODPM's Business Change Managers and Relationship Managers will need to work closely at local level to avoid duplication. Business Change Managers remain the lead on supporting the improvement planning activities that Fire and Rescue Authorities undertake while Relationship Managers will assess the delivery of that improvement.

Timeframe

8.11 The Commission will need to confirm that significant improvement has been delivered before undertaking re-categorisation of Fire and Rescue Authorities. Further information about the follow-up to CPA and the timetable for future action will be consulted on by the Audit Commission in due course.

Promoting Good and Innovative Practice

8.12 A sound body of good practice is critical to improving performance to meet the challenges facing the Service. There is already a broad consensus on the need to identify, validate and disseminate good or innovative practice to Fire and Rescue Authorities in a systematic manner, particularly where it will assist in securing efficiency savings and on fire prevention, where the evidence base is currently limited. ODPM is working with the Audit Commission, CFOA, LGA, IDeA, the Fire Service College and other stakeholders to consider how best to facilitate this work within the resources which we are jointly able to make available in the short to medium term. CFOA, LGA and ODPM have joined forces to gather together a number of case studies from across the Service on initiatives aimed at increasing efficiency (see paragraph 7.4) and they will disseminate these to all Fire and Rescue Authorities in a series of guidance

notes and other means. These should help to further clarify where opportunities lie for Fire and Rescue Authorities to make efficiency savings.

Business Change Managers

8.13 ODPM has established a regional network of Business Change Managers, who are situated in the Government Offices. They:

- represent the interests of ODPM in each region by providing a resource for Fire and Rescue Authorities to aid the development of Regional Management Boards. This will include identifying and achieving business change benefits, both generally and in relation to the six key areas of work attributed to Regional Management Boards (see paragraph 2.7);
- support the CPA improvement planning roundtable meetings following the assessment process in each Fire and Rescue Authority. They will liaise with individual Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Audit Commission and other ODPM bodies. They will also act as the link between Fire and Rescue Authorities and ODPM Regional Directors of Practice and the ODPM/LGA Capacity Building Programme (see paragraph 8.6);
- work within the relevant Government Office to ensure that key stakeholders in the region support and understand the modernisation agenda by establishing links on crime and disorder reduction, neighbourhood renewal, social exclusion, resilience, local government performance improvement and housing.

Best Value and data collection

8.14 Best Value will remain the statutory basis on which Best Value Authorities undertake their improvement planning and

manage performance against service objectives. In line with developments elsewhere in local government, the emphasis will be on Fire and Rescue Authorities individually and through Regional Management Boards using Best Value as a flexible management tool to improve service delivery and provide high quality services and value for money for local people.

8.15 We have no plans to make changes to the current suite of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) (05/06) and these will continue to apply to Fire and Rescue Authorities for the foreseeable future. Performance Indicators have an important role in providing a broad diagnostic tool to enable performance to be tracked over time for both local performance management and independent performance assessment. The current set of BVPIs were developed and refined with the help of a working group with practitioner and wider stakeholder representation, piloting by volunteer authorities and a national consultation. These performance indicators are intended to reflect the performance expectations of the White Paper and the National Framework, and are expected to underpin performance assessment.

8.16 The provisions of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 require Fire and Rescue Authorities to have regard to the requirements of the National Framework in discharging their Best Value responsibilities.

Local Area Agreements

8.17 Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area. Many central programmes can be pooled together within an LAA in pursuit of these agreed priorities, including the Home Fire Risk Check Initiative and fire prevention grant for 2007/08.

8.18 LAAs simplify the number of additional funding streams from central government going into an area, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances. LAAs set priorities and outcomes grouped in four blocks: children and young people, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities and older people and economic development and enterprise. Local areas are also encouraged to include cross-cutting priorities.

8.19 The first 20 LAAs came into effect in April 2005 and a further 66 LAAs will follow from April 2006. The remaining 63 top tier authorities will be expected to negotiate LAAs to come into effect in April 2007.

8.20 Fire and Rescue Authorities have the potential to make a strong contribution to the first three blocks and to cross cutting priorities, for example through fire safety education, youth diversion, car clear schemes, and targeted home fire risk checks for older people and other vulnerable groups. It should be possible to tap into a much wider range of partnerships and possibly funding to support such work and deliver the priorities identified in IRMPs through participation in an LAA.

8.21 With the introduction of LAAs Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) will cease to exist in their own right, although those already agreed, or being negotiated, will form a 'reward element' of the LAA. There is the opportunity for authorities to identify up to 12 priorities within the LAA which will qualify for a reward element. For these there must be robust indicators to demonstrate how they have delivered measurable stretched performance over the following three years in return for the payment of reward grant. Fire and Rescue Authorities will wish to engage in this process and consider what part they might play in informing and delivering these

priorities. Further details are given in the Local Area Agreements Guidance.

e-Government

8.22 For local government, a corporate BVPI (BVPI 157) measures progress against the original e-Government targets. But simply making services available is not enough. Time and money will be wasted if they are not offered in ways that enhance quality, convenience and availability.

8.23 Fire Service Circular 26-2005 acknowledged the unique situation of Fire and Rescue Authorities in regard to the e-Government agenda. It proposed that the expectations upon Fire and Rescue Authorities within Financial Year 2005/06 should be limited to ensuring that they are able to receive and act appropriately upon records received via the national fire portal. It remains the case that all Fire and Rescue Authorities should meet this requirement, although it should be noted that in the case of County Fire and Rescue Authorities, there may be further obligations arising from the governing Council's e-Services strategy.

E-Fire

8.24 ODPM has been progressing the e-fire project, in partnership with both Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority and CFOA. This will produce an internet 'portal' for the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, which will be known as the "Fire Gateway". The Gateway will provide a range of information and guidance to householders, carers, premises operators and potential applicants for employment within the Service. Users will also be able to make online requests for services to be delivered by their local Fire and Rescue Authority.

8.25 Following the award of the prime contract to Parity Solutions Ltd, the Gateway is under development and due to be brought into service in mid 2006. From the date of implementation, users of the portal anywhere in England could use it to raise a request for service. Fire and Rescue Authorities must therefore ensure that they are able to receive and appropriately act upon such requests for services relating to their area.

8.26 ODPM has made provision for the initial hosting of the Gateway's infrastructure. However, the successful operation of the system in the longer term requires the establishment of national functions to manage the system on a daily basis and to provide for its future development. Work is currently underway to define and cost the governance and delivery structures required.

8.27 The technical infrastructure of the Gateway has been designed to satisfy current requirements but also to provide for a number of future development scenarios supporting the modernisation agenda. To deliver the greatest medium to long term benefits from the currently-approved investment, it will be necessary to achieve the active partnership of both CFOA and the individual Fire and Rescue Authority themselves in identifying, specifying and delivering further functionality.

Information and Communications Technology Roadmap

8.28 In February 2005, the ODPM commissioned a consultancy exercise, based on the findings of the e-fire technical survey of Fire and Rescue Authorities, their ICT infrastructures and systems portfolios. The purpose of the exercise was

- a) to assess commonalities and trends between Fire and Rescue Authorities'

existing IT infrastructures, relating them to identifiable trends within the IT industry, as well as identifiable trends among broader user bases, such as other areas of the Public Sector and

- b) to develop options for ensuring that local Fire and Rescue Service have adequate and sustainable ICT structure.

8.29 The product of the consultancy exercise was a potential ICT development 'roadmap', highlighting areas where benefits could be gained through convergence on:

- key standards for data;
- the development and management of ICT infrastructures;
- the development of corporate skills bases; and
- the development of elements of shared infrastructure.

8.30 It is considered that the convergence illustrated within the Roadmap would provide:

- a key 'underpinning element' supporting the Fire and Rescue Service modernisation agenda;
- significant facilitation to the sharing of information and the development of interoperability; and
- a focal point for co-ordination between various national projects such as FiReControl, e-fire, MLE etc, maximising the benefits to be obtained from work in each of these areas.

Subject to a full consultation exercise and modelling of expected benefits in relation to the cost of achieving them, the Roadmap is proposed as a basis for development of ICT systems across the fire community in the strategic timeframe.



Chapter 9
Research

9.1 Research and other evidence can play a crucial role in:

- development of policy;
- understanding risk and developing strategies to deal with it;
- identifying and sharing best practice; and
- informing the development of equipment and techniques for dealing with incidents, such as improved personal protective equipment for firefighters.

9.2 ODPM and predecessor departments have for many years sponsored programmes of fire and rescue related research. ODPM currently runs programmes of research which relate to Fire and Rescue Authorities in two Directorates, and which are co-ordinated between the sponsoring Directorates:

Fire and Resilience Directorate Research

The Fire and Rescue programme is a wide ranging programme of work including research on:

- Risk Management, in particular the continued development of the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) methodology and the associated toolkit (see paragraph 1.8);
- Projects identified by the Building Disaster Assessment Group (BDAG) to ensure that fire and rescue service procedures and building design are compatible;
- Community Fire Safety, including an evaluation of the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund and lower cost domestic sprinklers (see paragraph 1.14);

- Fire prevention, including community fire safety, arson reduction and working with children and young people (see paragraphs 1.11, 1.19, 1.21);
- Research supporting human resources modernisation (e.g. Main Employment of Retained Duty Staff)
- Civil resilience issues, many of which are fire and rescue related (e.g. personal protective equipment).

Housing Directorate in the Planning Places and Communities Group Fire Research

Buildings Division have a research programme in support of Part B (Fire safety) of the Building Regulations and the accompanying technical guidance in Approved Document B. This has included many aspects of fire safety in all types of buildings across a wide range of issues such as the effectiveness of residential sprinklers to the use of lifts and escalators for means of escape and general building evacuation.

9.3 Further information can be found at the ODPM website²⁸ under 'Fire and Rescue', and at the Arson Control Forum website²⁹.

National Fire and Rescue Research Strategy

9.4 Fire and rescue related research is also sponsored by other Government Departments and members of the fire and rescue community, including Fire and Rescue Authorities, trade unions, manufacturers and suppliers, academia and insurers.

²⁸ www.odpm.gov.uk

²⁹ www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk

9.5 The Government believes that there is considerable scope to improve collaboration on fire and rescue research. It is working, in collaboration with the fire and rescue research community, to develop a comprehensive fire and rescue research strategy that will help underpin the modernisation agenda and the new challenges facing the Fire and Rescue Service. We envisage a strategy which embraces the whole cycle of risk identification, prevention, mitigation and emergency response, including:

- further statistical and other analyses to better identify the categories of people and properties most at risk;
- further work on prevention and community fire safety, in particular developing the evidence base on good practice and how preventative work can address fire risk in a cost effective manner;
- research on innovative approaches to fire safety in building design and construction; and work to explore further the role of active and passive fire protection measures in buildings;
- research on enhancing firefighting and other emergency responses, including the design and use of Fire and Rescue Service personal protective and other equipment, vehicles, and premises;
- research on the development of Fire and Rescue Service staff required for the delivery of the modernisation agenda; and
- support for underpinning fire science in academia.

9.6 The strategy will also examine the lessons to be drawn from international research.

9.7 ODPM consulted with stakeholders at the beginning of 2005, and the feedback for the potential for an Academy was positive – many stakeholders could see the merit of a

more collaborative approach. Since then, ODPM has published an initial national Fire and Rescue Research Strategy and is now entering a dialogue with key stakeholders to develop a community-led Fire Research Academy. The first stage of this dialogue with key stakeholders will attempt to establish a governance/funding model for the academy. If successful ODPM, in partnership with key stakeholders, will then seek to create the Fire Research Academy in line with the agreed model. Once established the Fire Research Academy itself will take forward its own development as well as the development of the national Fire and Rescue Research Strategy which it will keep under review. It is hoped that that the Academy will provide a means for greater collaboration within the fire and rescue research community and will enable a more strategic approach to fire and rescue related research amongst all stakeholders.

9.8 As well as advising on research, the Academy will also seek to improve communications between sponsors of research and all those that can benefit from it.

9.9 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

- **draw on the relevant research in exercising their functions, for example in formulating their Integrated Risk Management Plans, including strategies to efficiently and effectively prevent fires, mitigate their effects on people and buildings and deal effectively with incidents when they occur; and**
- **avoid duplication by drawing on others' work and sharing their own findings and plans, including through the Practitioners' Forum and the Fire Research Academy.**

Statistics

9.10 ODPM will continue to produce national quarterly and annual statistics on the incidence of fire that are analysed and published in accordance with strict National Statistics guidelines. In addition, ODPM collects and publishes data relating to operational and HR issues. These data sets are published in the annual Operational Statistics publication, as well as in support of relevant BVPIs, and have been used to inform CPA inspections.

9.11 A review of the fire incident report forms has been completed and concluded that detailed information should be collected on all incidents attended by the Fire and Rescue Service. A data definition group was established to advise on the amount of detail to be collected on these incidents in future. The conclusions from the group formed the basis for a wider consultation in 2005 on the content of the new incident recording system.

9.12 The review was the first stage of a larger project to upgrade the data collection process by capturing electronic information directly from Fire and Rescue Authorities. Following the consultation on the content of the new system, a contract is to be let for the implementation phase of the project. This project will improve data quality and result in more timely statistics, thereby allowing many Fire and Rescue Authorities to access their own validated data more quickly. This should mean significant advances in monitoring progress against targets and performance indicators. We aim to complete this work in 2006. We will provide as much warning as possible of any changes to the content or coverage of the information required, for both BVPIs and any other data used for monitoring purposes.

9.13 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

- continue the timely completion of statistical returns issued by ODPM;
- assist ODPM in establishing a fully electronic data collection system by contributing their knowledge of Fire and Rescue Service procedures and incident recording to the e-data collection project;
- explore how they might provide timely information on fires and incidents of special interest (FOSIs), in particular, details of fire related fatalities.



Annexes

Annex A

Protocol on Central Government Engagement in Poorly Performing Local Authorities

Preamble

1. This Protocol, revised on 19 February 2003, derives from the Framework for Partnership signed in November 1997 by the Deputy Prime Minister on behalf of the Government and the Chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA) on behalf of local authorities. The Framework provides for the Government and the LGA to discuss policy for the use of intervention powers, including how best to facilitate a role for the LGA in supporting local authorities.

2. The Protocol gives expression to the shared aim of central and local government to raise standards in public service, to support and assist local authorities in improving services, to provide a clear framework for engagement and intervention by central Government, where council performance is unacceptable, and an orderly process for resumption of service by local authorities as necessary following intervention.

Purpose

3. The Protocol sets out the general principles that will underpin the engagement of central Government with individual local authorities whose performance, including their capacity to improve, is categorised as poor or weak with little or no prospect for improvement. It also applies to other circumstances where Government takes the view that an authority's performance in a particular service area is sufficiently poor to justify Government engagement or intervention. The LGA may play an active role in assisting the Government in determining

the nature and extent of any engagement or intervention.

4. The term 'engagement' is used to refer to nonstatutory action taken with regard to an authority where there is a serious concern regarding a substantial failure that might lead to statutory action if satisfactory improvement is not achieved. The form of engagement will be determined by the nature of the problem but for example will usually, in the case of poor and weak authorities, involve the appointment of a lead official whose role will include assessing whether the council has – or is developing, possibly with external support – the capacity and commitment to deliver improvement. Since action in these circumstances is by agreement with the authority, there is a wide range of measures that might be taken in order to secure improvements.

5. The term 'intervention' is used to refer to action by the Secretary of State in exercise of his powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 and under other comparable legislation that applies to specific services or circumstances (see note on intervention powers below). The form of each intervention will depend, as in the case of engagement (paragraph 4), on the nature of the problem and also on the scope of the statutory powers (paragraph 25).

6. The term 'Secretary of State' is used throughout to mean the appropriate Secretary of State.

7. Local authorities have a responsibility to deliver to local people services to clear standards. Authorities should set those standards – covering both cost and quality – for all the services for which they are responsible. But in those areas, such as education and social services, where the Government has key responsibilities and commitments, the Government itself may set such standards. The best value duty in Part 1

of the Local Government Act 1999 requires local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which they deliver services and meet standards. Standards that should be met in specific services are set out in other comparable legislation.

Role of the LGA in helping authorities at risk of failure

8. Where evidence and experience show that a local authority is at risk of failing in its duty in respect of a service or services, there are several ways of achieving improvements. Councillors, officials and contractors all have a responsibility for delivering quality services and addressing shortcomings and failings. The LGA and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) are committed to work with local authorities to support improvement where problems exist. The LGA encourages its member authorities to give early warning of potential problems emerging from inspections, draft reports, complaints, reviews or other sources so that advice and support can be offered. Other authorities may offer support through networks, or the authority may be helped to identify and procure other external advice and assistance.

Principles governing engagement and intervention by the Secretary of State

9. When a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) has been completed, it is intended to provide a rounded view of the performance of the authority and an early warning of weaknesses that need to be addressed. It facilitates the adoption of timely remedial action by the authority. The CPA will also become the primary indicator of the need for central Government engagement with the authority as a whole, especially to secure improvements across a range of different services where it is judged that there is very limited internal capacity to improve.

Engagement and possibly intervention in respect of individual services can also be expected following, for example, a critical inspection report or poor performance information, and this will take account of an authority's corporate performance from an early stage. The provisions of this Protocol apply to both types of case.

10. The Secretary of State will exercise intervention powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 and other comparable legislation only when there is clear evidence that an authority is failing either to discharge its functions adequately or failing to meet its statutory obligations.

11. The Secretary of State will inform the authority of the reasons for intervention whenever using his powers under this legislation.

12. The form and extent of engagement and intervention will reflect the type and seriousness of failure and the need for effective improvement.

13. The authority will normally be given the opportunity to make the necessary improvements itself. In exceptional cases of serious corporate or service failure, when there is a serious risk of harm or financial loss, paragraph 26 of this Protocol will apply.

14. Authorities will provide accurate and timely responses to requests for information (as soon as possible, but normally within 10 working days), and co-operate with such action as the Secretary of State may direct in accordance with his powers and this protocol.

15. In cases where a function is exercised by the Secretary of State or a person acting on his behalf, both the Secretary of State and his nominee will be subject to the statutory duties that the authority would normally be subject to in respect of that function.

Process

Identification of problems

16. Non statutory engagement will only be embarked upon, and formal intervention powers will only be invoked, on the basis of clear evidence. Such evidence may emerge, for example, from:

- CPAs including the corporate assessment;
- audits of financial accounts;
- audits of local performance plans;
- audits of performance information;
- inspection reports, including those arising from inspections directed under Section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999;
- public interest reports;
- reports of inquiries, Ombudsman investigations or judicial findings; or
- concerns raised about serious danger or harm to the public.

Non statutory engagement in instances of corporate weakness

17. The CPA outcomes will be the usual means of deciding whether central Government engagement to tackle corporate weakness is necessary.

18. Authorities would be expected to draw up a recovery plan promptly when asked to do so by the Secretary of State. They will be encouraged to seek help in the development of their plans, and funding may be made available for this purpose. Recovery plans will need to consider alternative ways by which services might be improved and delivered, following the review principles outlined in Best Value guidance.

19. Poor and weak authorities will have priority in accessing assistance for capacity

building through national programmes. Support and guidance will be made available to assist local authorities to identify the most appropriate activity to address priorities identified in their recovery or improvement plans.

20. In addition to the support provided by the LGA, through the IDeA or by other means, the lead official (paragraph 4) will be able to identify other possible sources of support and guidance. The lead official will also advise whether partnership or improvement boards should form part of a wider support package. This will be the normal course of action where the CPA is the trigger.

21. However the need for engagement is identified, whether by CPA or other means, it will be necessary to determine as soon as possible whether action is needed:

- to tackle weaknesses within the political or managerial leadership (the corporate core);
- to address problems in single services alone; or
- to address problems simultaneously in both the corporate core and specific services.

It will be for the relevant Secretary of State to determine ultimately the appropriate course of action and form of engagement with the local authority. In all cases, such action will be co-ordinated and proportionate in line with the principles in paragraphs 9-15, and with any Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed between Departments as to the way in which their actions will be decided and exercised.

Exercise of statutory intervention powers

22. If the Secretary of State decides that the facts of the case mean that statutory intervention is likely to be necessary, he will

formally notify the authority and the LGA immediately of his decision to direct the authority under the powers contained in Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999, or in comparable legislation.

23. The authority will be given the opportunity to make representations about the direction proposed.

Nature of statutory intervention

24. In the case of the Local Government Act 1999, the Secretary of State may take such action he judges necessary to secure compliance by the authority with the requirements of Part 1. This may require, for example, directing the local authority to act within a specified period to:

- prepare or amend a recovery plan;
- make sure a function is carried out so as to achieve specified objectives or priorities;
- take consultancy advice;
- appoint interim management;
- enforce appropriate levels of delegation;
- secure the function from a specified provider or put the function out to tender;
- appoint a nominee to exercise certain specified functions of the authority;
- any other action that will secure the necessary improvements.

The Secretary of State may also direct a local inquiry to be held under Section 15(3) of the 1999 Act.

25. The Secretary of State may also take such action as is necessary to secure service improvements as granted to him under other legislation. Any such measures will need to be deployed consistent with this Protocol and any Memorandum of Understanding agreed between Departments.

Statutory intervention in cases of urgency

26. Although the above arrangements for engagement and intervention will be the norm, there may be exceptional cases where the severity or persistence of failure, or the continuing risk of harm or financial loss, show that urgent intervention is necessary. If these circumstances prevail, and an authority could reasonably be expected to be aware of these problems and has failed to take adequate action to address them, then the Secretary of State retains the discretion to abbreviate the procedures outlined above as he sees necessary. When exercising his powers in this way, the Secretary of State will notify the authority and the LGA immediately of the intervention that is necessary and the reasons for intervention, and will provide a full explanation of his reasons for curtailing the procedures.

Monitoring, review and exit strategies

27. The Government wishes to keep its involvement in the running of local government to a minimum. Where statutory powers have been used to remove powers from a local authority, the Secretary of State will aim to return control to it as soon as improvements are well established and the authority's political and managerial leadership has the capacity to sustain them. A small government team led by the lead official will normally undertake regular monitoring. The views of any partnership or improvement board will also be taken into account.

28. The test of success of recovery plans is the delivery of improvements against key performance outcomes. The audit and inspection process will be the principal means by which the Government will assess whether such outcomes have been achieved and whether these are sufficient to meet the criteria laid down in paragraph 29.

29. Where intervention is based on a direction that is not time-limited and leaves responsibility for the function with the local authority, the direction will normally be lifted when the Secretary of State is content that the objectives of the intervention have been met in terms of improved outcomes which can be sustained. He will seek to take into account any audit or inspection report which has been completed for this purpose. Lifting the direction will not nullify any contracts that resulted from it.

Media relations and exchange of information

30. Any announcements, publications or press releases issued in relation to any part of the procedures for intervention covered under this protocol will be subject to the agreement set out in the section titled ‘Public Announcements and Exchange of Information’ in the Schedule for Arrangements for the Conduct of Central Local Relations under the Framework for Central Local Partnership.

Roles and responsibilities in respect of local authority recovery

Lead official roles and responsibilities

- To provide Ministers with an assessment of an authority’s capacity and commitment to deliver improvement.
- To provide a single point of contact between local and central Government.
- To ensure that central Government activity in an authority is coherent and consistent.

Key activities

- To advise Ministers when requested on all aspects of the authority’s progress in

drawing up and implementing its recovery plan.

- To establish monitoring arrangements.
- To establish co-ordination arrangements within central Government.
- To advise on financial support from ODPM funds established to assist poor and weak authorities.
- To liaise with the Audit Commission relationship manager for that authority on all aspects of audit and inspection.

LGA roles and responsibilities

- To support local authorities through the improvement planning process.
- To oversee the management and allocation of capacity funding (jointly with ODPM).
- To monitor and review capacity building activity to ensure that it delivers improvement.

IDeA roles and responsibilities

- To manage and co-ordinate the recovery and improvement planning support activities commissioned by the Council, where engaged by an authority.

Key activities

- To undertake activities, including brokering support from a range of sources including peers, associates, partner authorities and external consultancies, as required to facilitate recovery.
- To contribute to capturing, mobilising and disseminating knowledge and learning about improvement for the benefit of the sector as a whole, in conjunction with ODPM, the Audit Commission, the LGA and others as appropriate.

Audit Commission, appointed auditors and inspectors

The Audit Commission and its appointed auditors will carry out their statutory responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1999. In carrying out their functions, the Commission and its appointed auditors will, so far as is consistent with those responsibilities, have regard to and seek to contribute to the key priorities for recovery of poorly performing authorities.

Roles and responsibilities

- To audit, inspect and assess the performance of authorities.
- To refer an authority to the Secretary of State if appropriate.
- In cases where the Government has appointed a lead official, the relationship manager will be expected to work closely with that lead official in ensuring that audit and inspection work complements the agreed recovery plan, in so far as it is consistent with statutory responsibilities.

Key activities

- To audit the Performance Plan.
- To agree a co-ordinated audit and inspection programme for each authority.
- The Commission, its appointed auditors, inspectors and other inspectorates may, so far as it is consistent with their statutory responsibilities, monitor and report on the outcomes following the implementation of any recovery plan.

Intervention powers

This note sets out the legislative powers that exist to enforce a local authority to take action to address poor performance.

The powers are:

- Local Government Act 1999, Part 1, Sections 15(5) and 15(6).
- Local Government Act 2000 – Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (England) Regulations 2000.
- Local Government Act 1972.

In most cases, to ensure consistency across Whitehall, we would promote the Local Government Act 1999 as the mechanism to enforce improvement.

In addition to the powers set out in the various Local Government Acts, there are service specific powers for statutory intervention.

These powers are:

Housing

- Right to Buy – Sections 164, 167, and 170 of the Housing Act 1985
- ‘Supporting People’ – Clause 64 of the Local Government Bill
- Large Scale Voluntary Transfers – Schedule 3A to the Housing Act 1985 as inserted by section 6 and Schedule 1 to the Housing and Planning Act 1986
- Asylum seekers – The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Environmental

- Statutory Nuisance – Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Paragraph 4 of Schedule 3 to the 1990 Act
- Local air quality management – Section 85 of the Environment Act 1995
- Industrial air pollution – Part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

- Waste management – Sections 49(3), 49 (4), and 57 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Paragraphs 2 and 4 of Schedule 2

Department for Work and Pensions

- Sections 139D to 139H and 140B of the Social Security Administration Act 1992

Building regulations

- Section 116 of the Building Act 1984

Planning

- Sections 38, 44, 77 and 100 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Fire

- Sections 2, 6, 12, 19, 21, 24, and 33 of the Fire Services Act 1947

Home office – Police

- Sections 40, 37, S 38, 39, 40,41,43, 46-49, 53, 57) of the Police Act 1996

Department for Education and Skills

- Sections 495, 496, 497, 499 and 507 of the Education Act 1996
- Sections 60, 61, 62, 63, 64 of the Education Act 2002
- Section 8 of the School Standards and Framework Act

Department of Health

- Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970
- Section 54 of the Children Act 1989
- Section 13 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001

Department of Culture, Media and Sport

- Sections 7 and 10 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

Annex B

Fire and Rescue Service Targets and ODPM Strategic Priorities

Fire Public Service Agreement

The fire PSA target covers England only. It fully incorporates previous targets relating to accidental fire-related deaths and deliberate fires and will come into effect on 1 April 2005.

By 2010, reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20% and the number of deliberate fires by 10%.

The PSA target covers one main and two sub-targets:

Main target: Accidental fire-related deaths in the home

To reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20%, averaged over the eleven-year period to 31 March 2010, equivalent to 280 fire-related deaths per annum, compared with the average recorded in the five-year period to 31 March 1999 of 350 fire-related deaths.

Sub-target 1: Floor Target

No local Fire and Rescue Authority having a fatality rate, from accidental fires in the home, more than 1.25 times the national average by 2010.

Sub-target 2: Deliberate fires

To achieve a 10% reduction in deliberate fires by 31 March 2010 to 94,000 from the 2001/02 baseline of 104,500.

Additional Targets for the Fire and Rescue Service

Efficiency Targets:

The Target

£105m gross cashable savings for the English fire and rescue service in 2007/08.

The Baseline

The baseline year is 2004/05. But efficiencies achieved in 2004/5 that continue through to the end of the SR04 period (2007/8) can be counted towards the target.

Equality and Diversity Targets:

To increase the percentage of women amongst uniformed operational staff to 15% by 2009.

To increase the percentage of minority ethnic representation within the fire service to 7% by 2009.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1

Delivering a better balance between housing supply and demand by supporting sustainable growth, reviving markets and tackling abandonment.

Priority 2

Ensuring people have decent places to live by improving the quality and sustainability of local environments and neighbourhoods, reviving brownfield land, and improving the quality of housing.

Priority 3

Tackling disadvantage by reviving the most deprived neighbourhoods, reducing social exclusion and supporting society's most vulnerable groups.

Priority 4

Delivering better public services, by devolving decision-making to the most effective level – regional, local or neighbourhood:

- Promoting high quality, customer-focused local services and ensuring adequate, stable resources are available to local government.
- Clarifying the roles and functions of local government, its relationship with central and regional government and the arrangements for neighbourhood engagement, in the context of a shared strategy for local government.

Priority 5

Promoting the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that all are able to reach their full potential, and developing an effective framework for regional governance taking account of the public's view of what is best for their area.

Annex C

Memorandum of Understanding between the ODPM and the Audit Commission concerning the Fire and Rescue Service in England

May 2004

Memorandum of Understanding

1. This document is a memorandum of understanding (MOU). It sets out certain standing arrangements to be followed by the Audit Commission, the Fire & Rescue Service Improvement Team (FRSIT) and HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI). It covers all aspects of performance management and assessment in the Fire & Rescue Service in England for which the signatory parties are responsible. Separate arrangements will be made for the rest of the UK.

2. It came into force on 31st December 2005 and will apply until 31st March 2007. It may be revised or revoked before that date.

3. Fire CPA was developed and the assessments were conducted by the Audit Commission in July 2005. This MOU assumes that a performance framework to follow-up Fire CPA will be developed by the Audit Commission in accordance with the principles set out in the draft National Framework 2006-08.

Responsibilities

ODPM

4. The ODPM will work closely with the Audit Commission and stakeholders as the Commission develops a performance framework to follow Fire CPA.

5. The ODPM has responsibility for setting national performance indicators for the Fire and Rescue Service.

6. Provision of Operational Assurance evidence which can be used as part of the Fire and Rescue Service block assessment to be carried out by the Audit Commission as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of County Councils in 2006-07.

FRSIT

7. The Fire & Rescue Service Improvement Team is part of the ODPM. The aims of FRSIT are:

- To act as a catalyst for change, promoting reform and working with all fire and rescue service institutions to ensure change happens, in particular, to ensure that the change of focus to prevention takes place. To monitor the overall rate of change to report to ministers and the wider public on that progress and thereby highlight any problems or concerns.
- To ensure that the overall strategic direction of all the institutions is focused on the programme of reform and change in a coherent way.

To fulfil its role, FRSIT will continue to co-ordinate work with Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) on their improvement plans following the publication of CPA outcomes and has put a Support Team in place to assist “weak” and “poor” authorities in developing robust improvement plans.

FRSIT has established a regional network of Business Change Managers in the Government Offices. The BCM's:

- Represent the interests of ODPM in each region,
- Provide a resource for Fire and Rescue Authorities to aid the development of Regional Management Boards.
- Act as the lead external body in supporting the improvement planning processes adopted by Fire and Rescue Authorities as a consequence of the CPA process.
- Act as the link between Fire and Rescue Authorities and ODPM Regional Directors of Practice and the ODPM/LGA Capacity Building Programme.
- Work within the government office to ensure that key stakeholders in the region understand and support the modernisation agenda.

HMFSI

8. The primary functions of HMFSI are to:

- Provide assurance and advice to the Deputy Prime Minister and the ODPM, in respect of professional and technical matters.
- Assist in identifying the Fire and Rescue Service leaders of the future.
- Generate, identify and promote good practice.
- Advise FRSIT in developing measures to support improvement in FRAs
- Develop and support professional and technical improvements in fire and rescue services operations.
- Contribute to the development of fire safety statute, standards and national guidance.

- Provide support for specific activities of other ODPM divisions related to improvements in service delivery.
- Provide the Audit Commission with an Operational Assessment of each Fire and Rescue Authority for use in the service block assessment being developed by the Audit Commission according to an agreed timetable.

Audit Commission

9. The Audit Commission has a function to inspect compliance by best value authorities with Part I of the Local Government Act 1999, principally in relation to the duty to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of functions, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Fire and Rescue Authorities are best value authorities under the Local Government Act 1999.

10. The Audit Commission may carry out studies, from time to time, in accordance with AC powers and strategy. Under section 33 of the Audit Commission Act the Commission carries out studies where it has identified a need and has consulted formally.

11. Under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1999, inspectors may require information from best value authorities for the purposes of undertaking an inspection. Auditors appointed by the Commission may require information, under section 6 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, for the purposes of undertaking an audit.

12. The Audit Commission can make a recommendation to the Secretary of State to give a direction (section 13(4) of the Local Government Act 1999 or under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act..

13. The Audit Commission has developed a process to follow Fire CPA. This will consist

of three main elements – a scored Use of Resources judgment which will assess Fire and Rescue Authorities principally on whether they have secured value for money and efficiencies; a scored direction of travel statement which will assess whether an authority is improving or not improving following the Fire and Rescue CPA and a service assessment that will judge the effectiveness of the fire and rescue authority in meeting their operational responsibilities

14. The Audit Commission will apply a recategorisation process for Fire and Rescue Authorities from 2007 where this is an indication of a significant improvement or regression in performance.

Appointment of Relationship Managers

15. The Commission will appoint Relationship Managers to all Fire and Rescue Authorities from December 2005 onwards. The Audit Commission will then have an ongoing dialogue with all authorities to inform its audit and inspection work. The role of a Relationship Manager is primarily one of co-ordination and close liaison with a wide range of players to ensure delivery of the following:

- The provision of a seamless local service
- The delivery of relevant and proportionate audit and inspection

- The promotion of service improvement and a user focus
- The improvement of information flows and dialogue between Audited and Inspected Bodies and the Audit Commission.

A key role of the Relationship Managers will be to forge effective linkages between regional delivery activities and Audit Commission wide policy and strategy development. ODPM's Business Change Managers and Relationship Managers will need to work closely at local level to avoid duplication. Business Change Managers remain the lead on supporting the improvement planning activities that Fire and Rescue Authorities undertake while Relationship Managers will assess the delivery of that improvement.

16. The Audit Commission continues to be responsible, under the Audit Commission Act 1998, for the appointment of external auditors to FRAs. See Appendix 2 for the role of the auditors.

Avoiding duplication

17. To avoid duplication of effort and ambiguity, it is helpful to understand the differences in the nature and scope of the remit of each party as regards each party's work concerning the Fire and Rescue Service. The table below gives a summary.

Activity	Responsibilities		
	FRSIT	HMFSI	Audit Commission
<i>Setting agenda for Modernisation</i>	Responsible for policy which will be expressed through National Framework.	Provides professional advice related to policy development.	Evidence from CPA may offer contributions to policy making, through identifying good practice and areas for service improvement.
<i>Inspection Policy</i>	Advises Ministers on policy. Performance expectations expressed through the National Framework.	Supports development of ODPM policy through Core Advisory Team.	Considers how best to undertake inspections of fire authorities in accordance with its statutory remit. The Audit Commission ensures that inspection policy is supported by appropriate information.
<i>Delivery of processes to follow CPA</i>	Advice to Ministers on policy. Provides advice, support and funding for design and delivery. Business Change Managers support the improvement planning processes adopted by Fire and Rescue Authorities.	Provides operational assessment for the service block assessment and advice and support on other issues.	Designs, leads and delivers. Produces reports. Appointed RMs assess the delivery of improvement and supports the delivery of the performance Framework.
<i>Best Value Review</i>	Determines policy.	Provides strategic support.	May consider the outcomes, as part of CPA or audit.
<i>Pursue and promote good practice in service delivery</i>	Agrees and promotes. BCMs lead/support and attend roundtable meetings with the aim of capturing FRA good practice and supporting improvement.	Identifies, agrees and promotes.	CPA or audit may identify good practice. RM's support improvement.
<i>National Studies</i>	Identifies need. Agrees and commissions activity.	Identifies need. Agrees and commissions activity.	May carry out studies.
<i>Professional support for FRAs</i>	Identifies need.	Identifies need. Helps respond to need in consultation with FRSIT.	Not applicable. Work through s35?

Activity	Responsibilities		
	FRSIT	HMFSI	Audit Commission
<i>Operational Service Delivery</i>	Requires assurance.	Provides operational assessment to the Audit Commission.	Service assessment makes a judgement about the effectiveness of the fire and rescue authority in meeting their operational responsibilities. Use of Resources work provides a judgement on management and Value for Money issues and Direction of Travel statements update progress made by Fire and Rescue Authorities on improvement since fire CPA
<i>Advice and Guidance to Ministers on Performance of Brigades</i>	Ministerial lead. Direct by report.	In liaison with FRSIT and the Audit Commission. Direct by report.	Reports in the public domain, from audit and a range of CPA follow-up assessment processes.
<i>Require Information from Authorities</i>	Using existing powers under the local government Act 1999 and new powers proposed in the Fire and Rescue Services Bill.	As for FRSIT.	Using existing powers.
<i>Failing Authorities and Intervention</i>	Advise Ministers on action required. Support Team work with authorities to secure improvement. BCMs link between FRAs and LG Capacity Building programme.	Provide professional support and guidance. Support agreed intervention strategy.	Assesses and reports. Audit teams support improvement planning as part of risk based audit and inspection. Can make recommendations to the Secretary of State.

Arrangements for co-operation

18. In order to minimise overlap, maximise value, and reduce the burden of inspection on FRAs, FRSIT, HMFSI and the Commission agree to the following standing procedures.

Communication

19. FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission shall meet regularly to share current thinking, review recent work done and consider plans.

20. There shall be a nominated communications officer in each of the three bodies, responsible for making sure the meeting agendas are up to date and comprehensive, and for dealing with any urgent communication outside the meetings.

21. The communications officers shall be responsible for identifying any potential overlap or omission and for making sure it is brought to the attention of the appropriate senior officers concerned, whether by means of the regular meetings or as may be required.

As set out above, at a regional/local level, Business Change Managers and Relationship Managers will establish effective liaison arrangements to co-ordinate their work with individual Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Shared planning and information exchange

22. FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission undertake to bring to the regular meetings sufficient information on their planning as will facilitate the avoidance of duplication.

23. In particular, FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission undertake to share:

- where practicable, information on FRA performance and plans for visiting FRAs, in order to develop a co-ordinated

scheme of site visits so that only a reasonable demand (consistent with good quality work) shall be placed on management and staff time, and proper advance notice can be given to management, to help them plan their time efficiently;

- plans for publications, to avoid any risk of duplication and to keep all parties well informed, in advance, of any reports or other material to be put in the public arena.

Terms of reference

24. FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission undertake to keep each other informed of new or revised terms of reference for any project or assignment in time for the other parties concerned to consider any implications and to express a view. Joint working and shared resources

25. To avoid difficulties arising as regards independence and statutory responsibilities, resources may be seconded from one body to another as required.

Reporting

26. It is important that reports produced by the Audit Commission and the ODPM reach their primary audiences in the Fire & Rescue Service as promptly as possible.

27. FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission undertake to:

- discuss in advance any good practice to be promoted to FRAs;
- share, at the earliest possible stage, any information which provides evidence that the operational capacity of any FRA could be compromised;
- share draft reports concerning CPA for the FRAs to the extent consistent with the different requirements and statutory

limitations placed upon them, provided such sharing does not cause undue delay.

Other parties

28. FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission will have appropriate regard to the work of the auditors appointed to each FRA, and will co-operate with the auditors, subject to responsibilities and statutory duties.

Appendix 1

Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission

The Audit Commission's appointed auditors can be an employee of the Commission or a private firm of accountants. Appointed auditors are statutorily independent of the Commission. In carrying out their statutory responsibilities they are required to comply with the Commission's Code of Audit Practice, which is approved by Parliament at five-yearly intervals.

The Code requires auditors to review and report on:

- The financial aspects of the audited body's corporate governance arrangements as they relate to:
 - The legality of transactions that might have significant financial consequences
 - The financial standing of the audited body
 - Systems of internal financial control
 - Standards of financial conduct, and the prevention of fraud and corruption
- The audited body's financial statements
- Aspects of the audited body's arrangements to manage its performance, as they relate to:
 - Economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources
 - The audited body's arrangements for preparing and publishing specified performance information
 - The audited body's compliance with statutory requirements in respect of the preparation and publication of its best value performance plan

Under the Code, appointed auditors are required to exercise their professional judgement independently and to comply with all current professional standards, both technical and ethical.

Auditors' work programmes are based on their assessment of the key business risks that apply to the audited body, which are relevant to their statutory responsibilities.

In planning and carrying out their work, appointed auditors are required to seek to co-operate with, and have regard to the work of, other auditors, inspectors and statutory review agencies, wherever appropriate. The results of audit work are summarised in an annual audit letter addressed to the fire authority, which the auditor has a statutory duty to publish. Auditors also have the power to issue a public interest report on any matter that comes to their attention in the course of the audit so that it can be considered by the body concerned or brought to the attention of the public.

Relationship Managers (Role)

Key Responsibilities

To provide the delivery of a seamless local Audit Commission service, whilst being both independent, robust, and focuses on users. Working across organisational boundaries to help achieve service improvement. Work closely with other Inspectorates and Regulators to accurately identify the key issues which are relevant to the audited and inspected body.

Ensuring that the Commission's annual audit and inspection programme meet all statutory requirements and promote the Commission's strategic objectives of service improvement and user focus.

Ensuring that the agreed programme is delivered to the right quality, on time and within budget. Ensuring that opportunities for cross-cutting work in a local context are identified and taken, and that this information is shared with others within the Commission.

Reporting the results of the work to the audited and inspected body and the public, securing action as appropriate

Managing Knowledge

To understand the key knowledge and information needs of operational service users, develop a strategy and work programme to enable client facing staff to meet their needs.

To effectively manage knowledge at the local level and other intellectual assets by facilitating, implementing and maintaining processes, standards and systems.

Ensuring knowledge and intelligence from local audits and inspections are used to support wider Commission policy development initiatives including work with others to bring together knowledge for our own benefit and that of clients.

Managing Relationships and Partnerships

Develop and sustain a wide network of key individuals and institutions concerned with the development and improvement of public services.

Build a professional relationship with top managers and members/non executives of the Audited and Inspected Bodies.

Annex D

Best Value Performance Indicators	
<i>BVPI 142</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) primary fires per 10,000 population; iii) accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings.
<i>BVPI 143</i>	<p>The number of –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) deaths; ii) injuries (excluding precautionary checks), arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population.
<i>BVPI 144</i>	The percentage of accidental fires in dwellings confined to room of origin.
<i>BVPI 146</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Number of calls to malicious false alarms not attended per 1,000 population; ii) Number of calls to malicious false alarms attended per 1,000 population.
<i>BVPI 149</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non-domestic ii) Number of those properties with more than 1 attendance; iii) The % of calls which are to a property with more than 1 attendance.
<i>BVPI 150</i>	Expenditure per head of population on the provision of fire and rescue services.
<i>BVPI 206</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Number of deliberate primary fires (excluding deliberate primary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population; ii) Number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population; iii) Number of deliberate secondary fires (excluding deliberate secondary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population; iv) Number of deliberate secondary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population.
<i>BVPI 207</i>	The number of fires in non-domestic premises per 1,000 non-domestic premises.
<i>BVPI 208</i>	The % of people in accidental dwelling fires who escape unharmed without FRA assistance at the fire.
<i>BVPI 209</i>	<p>The % of fires attended in dwellings where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) a smoke alarm had activated; ii) a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate; iii) no smoke alarm was fitted.

Corporate Health BVPIs	
<i>BVPI 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms. ii) The duty to promote race equality.
<i>BVPI 8</i>	% of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days.
<i>BVPI 11</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women. ii) The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities. iii) The percentage of top 5% of earners that are disabled.
<i>BVPI 12</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by whole time uniformed staff. ii) Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff.
<i>BVPI 15</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Wholetime firefighter ill-health retirements as a % of the total workforce. ii) Control and non-uniformed ill-health retirements as a % of the total workforce.
<i>BVPI 16</i>	The % of employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area.
<i>BVPI 17</i>	% of ethnic minority uniformed staff of ethnic minority population of working age in brigade area.
<i>BVPI 157</i>	The number of types of interactions that are enabled for e-delivery as a % of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for e-delivery.
<i>BVPI 210</i>	The % of women fire-fighters.

Annex E

List of Acronyms

ACAS	<i>Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service</i>
ADC	<i>ADC Assessment Development Centre</i>
BVPI	<i>Best Value Performance Indicator</i>
BVPP	<i>Best Value Performance Plan</i>
CBRN	<i>Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear</i>
CFOA	<i>Chief Fire Officers Association</i>
CPA	<i>Comprehensive Performance Assessment</i>
CPIG	<i>Crown Premises Inspection Group</i>
FFWG	<i>FiReContol Finance Working Group</i>
FRSIT	<i>Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Team</i>
FSEC	<i>Fire Service Emergency Cover</i>
GLA	<i>Greater London Authority</i>
HMFSI	<i>Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate</i>
HR	<i>Human Resources</i>
HSE	<i>Health and Safety Executive</i>
IdeA	<i>Improvement Development Agency</i>
IPDS	<i>Integrated Personal Development System</i>
IRMP	<i>Integrated Risk Management Plan</i>
IST	<i>Implementation Support Team</i>
LFEPA	<i>London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority</i>
LGA	<i>Local Government Association</i>
LPSA	<i>Local Public Service Agreement</i>
LSP	<i>Local Strategic Partnership</i>
NCFSC	<i>National Community Fire Safety Centre</i>
NWDS	<i>National Workforce Development Strategy</i>
ODPM	<i>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</i>
OJEU	<i>Official Journal of the European Union</i>
PFI	<i>Private Finance Initiative</i>
PSA	<i>Public Service Agreement</i>
RDS	<i>Retained Duty System</i>
SR	<i>Spending Review</i>

Annex F

Operational and Technical Guidance

The current sources for Operational and Technical Guidance are:

- Fire Service Manuals
- Technical Bulletins
- Dear Chief Fire Officer Letters
- Fire Service Circulars/Fire and Rescue Service Circulars
- Guide to Operational Risk Assessment
- Guides to Health and Safety Management
- Guides to Implementation of IRMP
- Guides to Implementation of IPDS
- HMFSI 'Expectations' Manual
- New Dimension – Training CD Roms, guidance documents and videos
- Community Fire Safety Toolbox and associated publications
- Dangerous Goods – Emergency Action Code List

It is anticipated that simplified, more easily accessible forms of guidance will be available from Summer 2007 – see paragraph 3.31. Requests for information or advice on any specific topic should be directed to the Fire Information Centre 020 7944 5715.

Annex G

Draft Fire and Rescue Service Core Values

OUR VALUES

We value...

- Service to the community
- People
- Diversity
- Improvement

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

We value service to the community by...

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Being answerable to those we serve
- Striving for excellence in all we do

PEOPLE

We value all our employees by practising and promoting...

- Fairness and respect
- Recognition of merit
- Honesty, integrity and mutual trust
- Personal development
- Co-operative and inclusive working

DIVERSITY

We value diversity in the service and the community by...

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect

- Providing varying solutions for different needs and expectations
- Promoting equal opportunities in employment and progression within the service
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination

IMPROVEMENT

We value improvement at all levels of the service by...

- Accepting responsibility for our performance
- Being open-minded
- Considering criticism thoughtfully
- Learning from our experience
- Consulting others

