



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Creating sustainable communities

# *The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework*

2004/05

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First Edition

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## Ministerial Foreword

The Government has ambitious targets for the Fire and Rescue Service. Our overriding aim is to save lives and stop unnecessary injuries through more effective action to prevent fire and by ensuring that the Fire and Rescue Service is well prepared and equipped to respond to the many challenges it faces.

The National Framework sets out the strategy for meeting these objectives and delivering an improved service that achieves better value for money for the communities it serves.

I am very grateful for the many useful comments and suggestions we received on the draft version of the National Framework, which was published for consultation in December 2003. All of these views have been considered carefully, and many are reflected in this final version. We are also publishing today a response to the comments we received, which has been placed on the ODPM website.

The response to the draft National Framework was overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of those who responded supported the Government's objectives and the modernisation programme.

So the National Framework sets out a shared strategy. It recognises that the Government and authorities must work in partnership to achieve our shared goals. It provides the leadership from Government that the Fire and Rescue Service has been seeking. At the same time it recognises that it is the Fire and Rescue Authorities and their staff that deliver the service, and that the Government's key role is to provide them with the support and direction they need to deliver a high quality service for their local communities.

Good progress has been made since the draft Framework was published. For example, Integrated Risk Management Plans are now in place; mass decontamination Incident Response Units have been strategically positioned around the country; Regional Management Boards have been established; the Fire and Rescue Services Bill is well advanced; and the Regional Control Centres project has made significant progress.

These important steps are part of a long-term reform and improvement agenda. The Government remains fully committed to the agenda as spelled out just over a year ago in the White Paper, *Our Fire and Rescue Service*. That is why we announced, as part of this year's spending review, a new Public Service Agreement target that commits us to achieving long-term reductions in fire deaths and deliberate fires; including real progress in the most disadvantaged areas.

We are determined to carry forward the necessary policies and practices to achieve a step change in the performance of this vital public service. We believe that the National Framework is a very important contribution to this objective.



**Nick Raynsford 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 has recently announced Public Service Agreements for the new Spending Review period (SR04), which will come into effect on 1 April 2005<sup>1</sup>. The new fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target covers England only and fully incorporates previous targets relating to accidental fire-related deaths and deliberate fires (see Annex A for previous targets). 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%.**

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.

Only by working together can central and local government achieve these targets. This partnership approach is at the heart of the National Framework, which is why we published a draft National Framework for consultation on 11 December 2003. We asked for comments from all stakeholders on the substance, style and usefulness of the document. The consultation period ended on 12 March 2004 and we are grateful to all those who responded. In general, they welcomed the clear direction from central government that the National Framework provides. All comments raised were considered carefully in producing this final National Framework for 2004/05. A full Government response to comments received is available on the ODPM website<sup>2</sup>.

**3** The delivery of improved fire and rescue services depends primarily on the efforts of individual Fire and Rescue Authorities and their staff working with their local communities and through Regional Management Boards.

**4** For this reason, the focus of the National Framework is delivery at local and regional level. The Framework's 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.

**5** 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.

<sup>1</sup> See: [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> See: [www.odpm.gov.uk/fire](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/fire)

## Summary

**6** The Framework is divided into nine chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Fire prevention and risk management** – covers work to prevent fires and manage risk, including 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): resilience; specialist and common services; control centres; procurement; training and human resources.
- **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 the new terrorist threat 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 implementation of 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 towards the introduction of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA); improvement planning; Best Value; freedoms and flexibilities; intervention strategy; and e-Government.
- **Chapter 9 – Research** – outlines proposals for a fire and rescue research strategy.

**7** Each section addresses in turn: 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 Bill

**8** The Fire and Rescue Services Bill represents a comprehensive reform of the statutory framework.

In particular, it proposes to put the prevention of fires at the heart of legislation, for example by creating a new duty to promote fire safety; and give Fire and Rescue Authorities powers to work with other partners in the community to deliver this duty. The Bill would give statutory effect to other roles Fire and Rescue Authorities already undertake, such as road traffic accidents and, by Order subject to Parliamentary scrutiny, their new responsibilities in responding to terrorist threats and other activities, such as responding to serious flooding. The Bill also gives Fire and Rescue Authorities wide discretion to plan, equip and respond to meet local risks and priorities.

**9** If enacted, the Bill will also give statutory force to the National Framework and require the Secretary of State to report against it. The relevant clauses of the Bill – following Grand Committee stage in the House of Lords – are as follows:

- Clause 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 subsequently lay the revised Framework before Parliament. For their part, Fire and Rescue Authorities must 'have regard' to the Framework when carrying out their functions.
- Clause 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 (Annex B) 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.

- Clause 23 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. The Audit Commission will work with ODPM and other stakeholders to develop and implement a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) framework for the Service. A first round of piloting has now been completed (see chapter 8). The expectations set out in the National Framework will be central to assessing the performance of authorities.
- Clause 24 requires the Secretary of State to report 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

**10** In future, the National Framework will be published in the Autumn. We will consult on the 2005/06 National Framework in the summer. Where significant changes to the Framework are necessary in-year, stakeholders will be fully consulted and amendments to the Framework will be published by Fire and Rescue Service Circular. We will inform stakeholders of any minor amendments and cross-refer them to the relevant paragraph of the National Framework.

**11** In developing policy, a Regulatory Impact Assessment is completed as necessary. The National Framework is designed to draw together, in one place, existing priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities. As a result, in the same way as for the draft National Framework, we do not consider that it will place extra burdens on business, charities, the voluntary or public sectors – and therefore no Regulatory Impact Assessment has been produced.

## Devolved Administrations

**12** The National Framework does not cover Scotland and Northern Ireland, where responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service is fully devolved to the Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly respectively. However, the UK Government will continue to work closely with its partners in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and we hope that the National Framework is of interest to them and Fire and Rescue Authorities in their territories.

**13** The Fire and Rescue Services Bill will devolve responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). We are working with the Assembly on how and when this will be achieved, and how to ensure that devolution is consistent with broader emergency and civil contingency arrangements. The NAW has consulted on its own National Framework. The Bill will continue to apply existing pension provisions to Scotland.





**1.1** The Government's aim, as set out in the new fire PSA target, is to reduce deaths and injuries from fire by:

- preventing fires from occurring and mitigating their effects;
- making sure individuals, employers and others understand and plan appropriately for what to do in the event of fire;
- improving intervention in fire and other emergencies, for example by ensuring that appropriate resources are in the right place at the right time to provide an effective response; and
- reviewing the Building Regulations in relation to the level of fire safety provision that should be designed into new or materially altered homes.

## Integrated Risk Management Plans

**1.2** The old, national standards of fire cover, which set out the speed and weight of response to fire depending on building density, were insufficiently flexible to allow Fire and Rescue Authorities to respond to the needs of their communities. They focused exclusively on risk to property rather than risk to life, and did not take account of the serious non-fire incidents to which the Service responds. From April 2003 local Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) have replaced national standards. **All Fire and Rescue Authorities must produce an IRMP.**

**1.3** IRMPs set out each Fire and Rescue Authority's strategy for:

- reducing the number and severity of fires, and in collaboration with other agencies, 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.

**1.4** An IRMP must 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 should identify the ways in which the authority can work in partnership with neighbouring authorities and other agencies to deliver improved public safety. It should develop these relationships and build upon the lessons learned. It must also set out the targets an authority will 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 achieve best value for its local council taxpayers. The IRMP itself should 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.

**1.5** Over 2003/04 authorities drew up their first IRMPs, went out to consultation on them with their local communities over the Autumn and, after taking account of the responses to consultation, started to implement their first year action plans as from 1 April 2004. Authorities should 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.)

**1.6** 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;
- take account of 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.

**1.7** ODPM recognises that authorities need support in developing and maintaining their IRMPs. We provided guidance on preparing and maintaining IRMPs in 2003, and in April 2004 issued guidance on the impact of the Working Time Regulations on current and new working patterns<sup>3</sup>. Further guidance will be issued as new issues and demands arise.

**1.8** During the past year we have also:

- undertaken a 'one-off' incident data cleansing exercise on behalf of all authorities that wished to avail themselves of the service, to help ensure that local risk can be reliably located and measured;
- made available free of charge the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit which is based on years of research into risk-based fire cover; and
- made available the Implementation Support Teams (ISTs), who have provided support and feedback on emerging good practice. We will continue to fund the work of four IST members during 2004/05.

**1.9** We recognise that the need to co-ordinate the planning of IRMP action plans with the budget-setting process will present a significant challenge for Fire and Rescue Authorities this year. Revised action plans that will be drafted by authorities in 2004/05 will need to be prepared much earlier than was the case in 2003/04. Many authorities will be at the intermediate stage of customising their risk assessment tools and developing risk strategies. We expect that they should be able to complete these preparatory tasks early in 2004/05 and should look to trial appropriate changes to their patterns of response later that year.

**1.10** The FiReControl Project (see Chapter 2) will lead to the creation of nine regional control centres for fire and rescue services 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. As part

of the FiReControl project we will issue good practice guidance in September on ways in which regional co-operation can improve the effectiveness of local IRMPs.

## Community Fire Safety

**1.11** The Fire Rescue Services Bill proposes a statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote fire safety. This is an important part of updating legislation and reflects the increased emphasis on prevention.

**1.12** Research shows that those most likely to be at risk from fire are those in the lower socio-economic groups, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and families with young children – who are often concentrated in deprived neighbourhoods. 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. In many cases this will require innovative methods and as part of the IRMP process joint working with partners in health, social services, housing, education, the voluntary sector and other emergency services.

**1.13** To support local initiatives the Government has established the Community Fire Safety (CFS) Innovation Fund for the period 2003-06. We are targeting resources at areas with the worst problems. Grants to Fire and Rescue Authorities totalling £1 million were allocated for 2003/04 and £1.5 million for 2004/05 on the basis of fatality rates from accidental domestic fires per 100,000 population in 2002/03. A further £2 million will be allocated for 2005/06. All authorities with a fatality rate worse than the national average will receive some funding, but the bulk of the Fund will go to areas with fatality rates above or close to the floor target included in the new fire PSA target. The grants are not ring-fenced but Fire and Rescue Authorities are encouraged to target the groups most at risk from fire in their areas.

**1.14** The National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC), which operates from within ODPM, was established in 1998 to sponsor national fire safety

<sup>3</sup> IRMP Guidance note 5 (ODPM April 2004). See: [www.odpm.gov.uk/irmp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/irmp)

publicity and education campaigns. It also provides best practice and an educational resource to brigades in their community fire safety work, through a suite of tools in the NCFSC toolbox<sup>4</sup>.

**1.15** We continue to take active steps to ensure that as many homes as possible have a working smoke alarm installed. Since 1987 we have conducted effective television campaigns promoting smoke alarms. Ownership has increased from 9% in 1987 to the current level of 76%. The NCFSC will continue to run high profile media campaigns to promote the importance of having a working smoke alarm installed in dwellings.

**1.16** There is still much more to do to increase smoke alarm ownership, especially among the elderly and lower socio-economic groups. We are also encouraging all Fire and Rescue Authorities, provided they have identified sufficient funding, actively to pursue smoke alarm installation programmes, targeting their efforts at those most at risk from fire in line with their IRMP. For example, many Fire and Rescue Authorities are pursuing home fire risk assessment work, which, in addition to offering fire safety advice to householders, includes supplying and fitting smoke alarms free of charge where a dwelling has none.

**1.17** Working with partners where appropriate, Fire and Rescue Authorities should develop a planned programme of community fire safety work, including evaluation, which responds to the needs and risks identified in their communities by the IRMP, and targets resources on vulnerable communities.

## Arson Reduction

**1.18** Arson is often part of a complex pattern of anti-social behaviour – low-level disorder and thoughtless actions which affect the quality of life of others, by creating fear or degrading the environment. These issues can only be dealt with successfully if Fire and Rescue Authorities, the police and other local partners work together.

**1.19** The Police Reform Act 2002 places a duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities, working with the police and local authorities in Community Safety Partnerships, to identify crime and disorder problems in their area and to develop and implement a strategy to tackle them. Increasingly, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) also include Fire and Rescue Authorities.

**1.20** Fire and Rescue Authorities can also contribute to community cohesion and neighbourhood renewal in many ways, including by making fire stations available for partnership and community use, and by working with young people. The Thematic Review, *'The Fire and Rescue Service – Working with Young People in the Community'*<sup>5</sup> surveys the full range of education and youth work undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Authorities and contains many examples of good practice. Youth training schemes and youth diversion work can increase awareness of fire safety and reduce hoax calls, and therefore form an important part of an authority's community fire safety strategy. This type of work can also help to tackle crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, as well as improving school attendance and employment chances for young people.

**1.21** Fire and Rescue Authorities should use the opportunity afforded by their membership of the Community Safety Partnerships (established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) to develop, with other agencies, local solutions to local problems – for example, deliberate firesetting, hoax calls and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

**1.22** Arson is the largest single cause of fires attended by fire and rescue services and deliberate firesetting is a very significant problem in many areas. 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 – for example, some neighbourhoods are scarred by burnt out, abandoned cars.

<sup>4</sup> See: [www.firesafetytoolbox.org.uk](http://www.firesafetytoolbox.org.uk)

<sup>5</sup> HMFSI/HMFSI for Scotland: *The Fire and Rescue Service – Working with Young People in the Community* (ODPM 2003).

**1.23** The Government supports arson reduction through the Arson Control Forum, which was established in 2001 to lead work on arson reduction. It advises on research into arson issues, sponsors local arson reduction initiatives and promotes best practice through guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities and other partners.

**1.24** Local arson reduction projects received £2.25 million in 2001-03. From 1 April 2003 funding specifically for arson prevention work over the next three years will total £11.3 million. Most will be used to fund local anti-arson initiatives: £2 million was invested in 2003/04, which will rise to £4.5 million in 2004/05 and £4.8 million in 2005/06.

## Building Regulations

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

**1.26** 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 existing building stock, they do provide a mechanism for the progressive 'designing in' of fire safety to the built environment. To support this regulatory system, we publish guidance in the form of Approved Document B. 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.<sup>6</sup>

**1.27** Early in 2004, the Government began a fundamental review of the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations and supporting Approved Document B. This review will consider fire safety in all types of buildings, including residential premises, schools and warehouses, and will draw on the findings

of recent research and experience. As part of the broad review we will be 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 will therefore consider carefully the role that sprinklers can play as part of a package of measures that can be provided in buildings. We expect to be in a position to publish a consultation paper on proposed changes, supported by a draft Regulatory Impact Assessment, in Spring 2005.

**1.28** 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. 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 consultation<sup>7</sup>. We have recently started a review of this important document. Following consultation with stakeholders, we aim to publish a revised version to coincide with implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order in 2005.

## Regulatory Reform Order

**1.29** It is the Government's intention to reform general fire safety legislation. This will include removal of the requirement to obtain a fire certificate. 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. Enforcement of these requirements will be principally by Fire and Rescue Authorities though other authorities may enforce the requirements in certain specified situations, for example the Health and Safety Executive for the nuclear industry.

<sup>6</sup> A consolidated version of the Approved Document can be found at: [www.odpm.gov.uk/approved-documents](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/approved-documents)

<sup>7</sup> *Building Regulations and Fire Safety – Procedural Guidance* (ODPM February 2001)  
See: [www.odpm.gov.uk/buildingregsfiresafety](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/buildingregsfiresafety)

**1.30** The Government's proposals, laid before Parliament on 10 May 2004 in the form of a draft Regulatory Reform Order, would complement the change in emphasis of the role of Fire and Rescue Authorities to one of prevention, where they are responsible for ensuring public safety by monitoring 'responsible persons' compliance with the law and, where necessary, enforcing the requirements of the new legislation. **An authority's strategy for enforcement of fire safety legislation must form part of its overall strategy for the protection of its community, as detailed in its IRMP.**

**1.31** 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.<sup>8</sup> This will improve upon the current approach to inspection where priority is given to premises needing a certificate under the Fire Precautions Act 1971. Further guidance on risk-based enforcement was issued in January 2004 as Fire Precautions Act Circular 29 and IRMP Guidance Note 4<sup>9</sup>.

## Crown Premises

**1.32** 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 Statement<sup>10</sup> published in June 2000 said: 'The Government will seek a legislative opportunity, when Parliamentary time allows, to remove Crown immunity from statutory health and safety enforcement'. ODPM is working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Health and Safety Executive (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.

**1.33** The Crown Premises Inspection Group (CPIG) will work closely with local Fire and Rescue Authorities, since both parties are interested in the risk posed by premises. CPIG enforce legislation and, to inform their risk prioritisation, 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.

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

<sup>8</sup> Fire Precautions Act Circular 28, Appendix 28/2, paragraph 59, advised that fire and rescue services should consider their approach to enforcement.

<sup>9</sup> See: [www.odpm.gov.uk/irmp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/irmp)

<sup>10</sup> See: [www.hse.gov.uk/revitalising/strategy.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/revitalising/strategy.pdf)



**2.1** The previous chapter highlighted the importance of developing local solutions to meet local needs. This is a fundamental part of the Government's approach, which is why we have devolved more responsibility to the local level – for example by withdrawing 'one size fits all' national standards of fire cover.

**2.2** However, there are some challenges to which local Fire and Rescue Authorities working in isolation do not have the capacity to provide an efficient and effective service. These include specialist areas such as responding to terrorist incidents, and services such as training and procurement on which collaboration should yield efficiency improvements.

**2.3** As we set out in the White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service*, the Government is committed to a regional approach where that is the most appropriate level.

**2.4** London already has its own Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, which is overseen by the Greater London Authority (GLA). In areas of England which vote in a referendum to establish an Elected Regional Assembly, Regional Fire and Rescue Authorities will be established and will be overseen by the assemblies in the way that the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) is currently overseen by the GLA.

**2.5** Outside London, prior to the establishment of any Elected Regional Assemblies, regional functions will be carried out by Regional Management Boards.

**2.6** ODPM worked closely with the Local Government Association (LGA) to ensure there was clear guidance on establishing and maintaining Regional Management Boards.

**2.7** It is important that Regional Management Boards, now they have been set up, accomplish 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.**

**2.8** Regional Management Boards should be able to demonstrate progress towards meeting the requirements in each of the six key areas listed at paragraph 2.10 of this document; and that they have the capacity – of both resources and expertise – to deliver in those key areas.

**2.9** The Government will ask for a further report on progress in each region in Autumn 2004. If the needs of public safety require urgent action – or audit evidence from fire CPA demonstrates a failure to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness – the Government will consider the use of its statutory powers<sup>11</sup> to combine Fire and Rescue Authorities and impose regional management structures. The Government recognises that some of the detail in Regional Management Board plans depends on the timing of its own further guidance on the six White Paper areas (see paragraph 2.10).

## The functions of Regional Management Boards

**2.10** 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);**
- **establish regional control centres (see below); and**
- **introduce regional procurement within the context of a national procurement strategy (see below).**

<sup>11</sup> These powers currently exist under the Fire Services Act 1947. Streamlined powers are being sought in the Fire and Rescue Services Bill.

## Regional Control Centres

**2.11** Work commissioned by the Government from independent consultants<sup>12</sup> in 2001 showed that the current pattern of control rooms was costly and inefficient. A subsequent report by HM Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI) in 2003<sup>13</sup> concluded that a centrally driven Best Value review process had failed to deliver improvement. Further work by Mott MacDonald in 2003<sup>14</sup> reviewed national control room provision in the light of the events of 11 September 2001 and the experience of joint control rooms during industrial action by firefighters in 2002/03. This reinforced the conclusions that regional control rooms were necessary to support resilience requirements and would achieve major efficiencies.

**2.12** The Government accepted the conclusions of the research done by Mott MacDonald that improvements in control room efficiency should be achieved by amalgamating fire control rooms rather than by attempting to integrate fire, police and ambulance control rooms. It is, however, seeking to build on the lessons of the tri-service control rooms in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Cleveland.

**2.13** The Government consulted widely on its proposed approach. The responses broadly endorsed this approach of regional controls (now called regional control centres to reflect more accurately their functions) on the basis of one per region, and the proposed governance arrangements. The Practitioners' Forum agreed to be the Stakeholder Group and has established a Sounding Board to discuss control centre issues.

**2.14** For resilience purposes, all the regional control centres will operate the same call-handling and mobilisation technology, procured and paid for by ODPM. ODPM has also taken the lead in securing appropriate accommodation for the new centres. The target is to implement the regional control centres project (FiReControl) to the same timetable as the

Firelink radio project (see paragraph 4.22) to maximise financial and operational efficiency. Harmonising the timetables will reduce costs. The intention is to roll out all the new regional control centres by the end of 2007.

**2.15** Staff in the new control centres will be trained to national standards in nationally agreed roles. ODPM is leading the implementation of this strategy, in partnership with Regional Management Boards, who will be responsible and accountable, through their constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities, for the control centres in their regions. It will be for them to establish the appropriate regional structures. Having a single control room reporting to a single management authority is consistent with the arrangements already set up in London.

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

- ensure the phased transition from existing control rooms to the new control centres is delivered within the overall national timetable by the end of 2007;
- ensure that the control centres are provided with timely, accurate and comprehensive information as to the status of operational assets;
- work closely with the Government to ensure that the timetable for roll-out, and integration with the Firelink timetable, are achieved;
- agree with Government by November 2004 arrangements for managing and maintaining the new centres; and
- comply with national protocols on staff roles, training and mobilising, and back-up and resilience requirements, drafts of which will be produced for consultation by December 2004.

**2.17** A Finance Working Group has been set up to make recommendations on funding issues associated with the project and will be reporting in September 2004. Where a central government department's

<sup>12</sup> Mott MacDonald: *The Future of Fire Service Control Rooms and Communications in England and Wales* (Home Office 2001)

<sup>13</sup> HMFSI: *Analysis of the Best Value Reviews of Control and Communications* (ODPM November 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Mott MacDonald: *The Future of Fire Service Control Rooms in England and Wales – Update* (2003). See: [www.odpm.gov.uk/futurecontrol](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/futurecontrol)



policies or initiatives increase the cost of providing local authority services, the 'new burdens' principle means that Government will fund the additional expenditure, provided that the aggregate value of the burdens in any financial year is greater than £100,000. Fire and Rescue Authorities would be consulted in determining the costs and savings arising from any new burdens imposed on them.

**2.18** Fewer staff will be needed for control duties when the new regional control centres are in place.

**Where at all possible authorities should re-deploy staff no longer needed for control centre work to other roles. They should also ensure retention of sufficient staff to manage individual control rooms until regional control centres have been established.**

Draft guidance was issued to Regional Project Teams for comment in June 2004. The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) (see Chapter 6) offers a route to equip staff with the skills they need for other work, for example on community fire safety or work elsewhere in local government.

## Procurement

**2.19** The Audit Commission's report *In the Line of Fire*<sup>15</sup> highlighted the need for greater co-operation between Fire and Rescue Authorities on the purchase of equipment and improved efficiency in purchase management. Authorities were statutorily required to review their procurement arrangements in 2001/02<sup>16</sup>, supported by Audit Commission guidance<sup>17</sup>. A review by HMFSI<sup>18</sup> concluded that, as with control rooms, a centrally driven Best Value review had not made sufficient progress in achieving efficiencies.

**2.20** Research carried out on behalf of ODPM by Cap Gemini Ernst and Young and the Improvement and Development Agency concluded that specialist Fire and Rescue Service procurement is best carried out

nationally, and that an appropriate institution should be established to undertake this work. This conclusion supports earlier Audit Commission work which supports national standards and specifications where appropriate. Non-specialist Fire and Rescue Service purchasing would be managed through the local government regional centres of procurement excellence, established under the Local Government National Procurement Strategy. Arrangements for specialised central and regional purchasing would enable the development of the sort of procurement expertise that individual Fire and Rescue Authorities find it hard to develop or acquire, and will lead to benefits derived from combined authority purchasing. The integrated clothing project is an example of how service-wide procurement can work to reduce the costs to individual Fire and Rescue Authorities. We encourage Fire and Rescue Authorities to commit to this project, a successful Round 4 Private Finance Initiative bid, which is strongly supported by ODPM.

**2.21** In partnership with stakeholders the Government has, through consultants, reviewed the work done to date on a national strategy for Fire and Rescue Service procurement, and a report was delivered in March 2004. Further work on legal and technical issues is ongoing. A draft procurement strategy will be issued in Summer 2004 for consultation. The final version of the strategy, to be produced in Autumn 2004, will set out:

- the details of the national arrangements for specialist Fire and Rescue Service procurement as part of the national procurement strategy; 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.

<sup>15</sup> Audit Commission: *In the Line of Fire* (Audit Commission 1995).

<sup>16</sup> The local government (Best Value) performance plans and reviews order 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Audit Commission guidance: *A uniform approach – a study of fire service procurement* (Audit Commission 2001).

<sup>18</sup> HM Fire Service Inspectorate: *Analysis of the Best Value Review of Procurement: Final Report* (ODPM 2003).

**2.22** Fire Service Circular 11/2004<sup>19</sup> gave advice on the arrangements that Fire and Rescue Authorities should adopt before entering into new contracts for major operational equipment, with the aim of aligning contract termination dates to those envisaged in the national strategy. These arrangements will be lifted once the draft national strategy is published<sup>20</sup>.

**2.23** Once it is published, Fire and Rescue Authorities should implement the national strategy for procurement.

## Business Change Managers

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

- provide information about modernisation of the Fire and Rescue Service to key stakeholders, including establishing links with other Government priorities, such as community safety and neighbourhood renewal;
- support Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards as they implement changes on the ground; and
- disseminate good practice.

<sup>19</sup> Issued in April 2004.

<sup>20</sup> In the first instance authorities should contact Phillip Smith at: [fsed6@odpm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fsed6@odpm.gsi.gov.uk)





**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 Fire and Rescue Authorities should, in future, place greater emphasis on preventing fires from happening in the first place, the need for an effective response to incidents that do occur is not diminished. Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to develop their capacity to respond to new challenges such as terrorist incidents in accordance with the emerging needs of the national New Dimension programme.

**3.3** In some areas it will be appropriate to maintain operational standards; in others, it will be necessary to make improvements. **Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure a professional and effective response is available to meet the range of incidents which they may encounter, working together as appropriate. This includes ensuring that:**

- **staff are trained to professional standards, and are familiar with risks;**
- **effective command and control systems are in place;**
- **incident commanders have the appropriate training and experience; and**
- **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.

**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** It is important that good practice is shared between Fire and Rescue Authorities, managers and

front-line staff. HMFSI will work together with the HSE and the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) on an ongoing basis to provide a national lead and co-ordination in the generation of health and safety guidance<sup>21</sup>. This is particularly appropriate in the case of generic risks and in the identification of common solutions to emerging challenges. We aim to risk assess the Operational Training and Development Manual in Autumn 2004; revise guidance on dynamic and generic risk assessment in Spring 2005; and improve the quality of accident and injury data and its collection arrangements in Autumn 2005.

**3.7** The national Health and Safety Task Group<sup>22</sup>, chaired by HMFSI – and on which all Practitioners' Forum organisations are represented – meets quarterly and reports against an agreed business plan through the Practitioners' Forum. The Group aims to develop policies and strategies to support the management of health and safety in the Fire and Rescue Service; ensure that such policies support the national workforce development competency requirements; and ensure that the risks arising from Fire and Rescue Service activities are properly managed.

**3.8** Fire and Rescue Authorities should have regard to guidance produced by the Health and Safety Task Group, share local good practice and explore opportunities for effective collaboration.

## Utilisation of Resources

**3.9** 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.

**3.10** Traditionally, pumping appliances, with pre-determined numbers of firefighters and officers, offered the initial response to emergency incidents. Occasionally specialist vehicles such as water carriers or aerial appliances supplemented the response.

<sup>21</sup> 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](mailto:fis@odpm.gsi.gov.uk)

<sup>22</sup> Further information about the work of the group can be obtained from Diane Bell (020 7944 5449 or [diane.bell@odpm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:diane.bell@odpm.gsi.gov.uk)).

**3.11** This overly prescriptive, blanket response can over-provide, particularly where hoax calls, signals from automatic fire alarm systems and fires clearly defined as being of limited extent are concerned. It can also mean that fewer resources remain available for incidents where the risk to life and injury is greatest – often in the home.

**3.12** In April 2004 ODPM published a Guide to Reducing the Number of False Alarms from Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems<sup>23</sup>, in conjunction with CFOA and the British Fire Protection Systems Association. This guide is aimed at the owners and users of such systems. Because of the introduction of IRMPs and the removal of the nationally recommended standards of fire cover and associated guidance, authorities will in future have more flexibility. Modern, intelligent information systems mean that risks can be assessed more effectively allowing a 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*;
- where appropriate, working with other Fire and Rescue Authorities and other emergency services, 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.

A series of guidance notes related to the introduction and management of IRMPs has been published. These are detailed at Annex C.

**3.13** 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 service providers

this should be pursued. For example, some authorities are already using defibrillation equipment and are engaged in co-responder schemes, which could save the lives of people who have suffered cardiac arrest, including firefighters.

**3.14 Fire and Rescue Authorities should therefore explore the benefits of implementing co-responder schemes in partnership with other agencies.**

### Mutual Assistance

**3.15** Fire and Rescue Authorities have for many years provided mutual support across borders for fire-related emergencies through the shared availability of fire crews and appliances.

**3.16** It is important that this best 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.

**3.17** Authorities should, therefore, design their IRMPs to ensure that, so far as practical, there is greater shared use of resources, particularly, for example: the services of senior officers<sup>24</sup>; 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.

**3.18** Regional Management Boards should provide an appropriate forum for improving collaboration.

### Incident Management Protocols

**3.19** 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

<sup>23</sup> See: [www.odpm.gov.uk/falsealarms](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/falsealarms)

<sup>24</sup> The Fire and Rescue Services Bill proposes to repeal the provisions of the Fire Services Act 1947, under which sole control of a fire is placed upon the senior officer present from the fire and rescue service of the area in which the fire originated.

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.

**3.20** Fire and Rescue Authorities have an increasing role to play in dealing with these incidents. If enacted, the Fire and Rescue Services Bill will give statutory effect to the wider role of Fire and Rescue Authorities in responding to emergency incidents other than fire. And the proposed Civil Contingencies Bill (see next chapter) includes provision to require Fire and Rescue Authorities to work with other emergency services in producing comprehensive plans for major and catastrophic incidents.

**3.21** Common emergency management policies, practices and procedures are essential. To ensure a consistent operational approach the Service should adopt the principles and procedures detailed in the *Fire Service Manual Vol. 2: Fire Service Operations – Incident Command*<sup>25</sup>. This will 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 publication, *Dealing with Disaster – 3rd Revision*<sup>26</sup>, provides the template for regular inter-service training and exercising and will form an integral part of the training at the Fire Service College (see paragraph 6.16 – 6.22). The Fire Service College will also provide a centre of specialist expertise in urban search and rescue and related major emergency incident techniques.

**3.22** In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Bill, Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards where appropriate, should:

- **work with other emergency services, authorities and agencies in the development of major emergency response management and recovery plans, and review all existing operational plans and policies;**

- **employ national incident command management systems to enable safe and effective emergency operations and joint service training; and**
- **adopt recognised good practice.**

## Fire Investigation

**3.23** Fire investigation can provide an invaluable insight into the behaviour of fire, and therefore useful evidence on ways to manage risk.

**3.24** 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 should be delivered more effectively by Fire and Rescue Authorities working together through Regional Management Boards.

**3.25** In the case of deliberate fires the lead authority will ultimately be 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. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Fire and Rescue Services Bill will provide formal powers for Fire and Rescue Authorities to investigate the causes of fires and the reasons for fire spread. These powers, which are balanced by safeguards for the public, would be for use in cases where permission for fire investigation cannot be obtained from, or is withheld by, the person responsible for the premises in question.

**3.26** 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 Autumn 2004. This will be supported by new National Occupational Standards for fire investigation for Fire and Rescue

<sup>25</sup> Fire Service Manual Vol. 2: *Fire Service Operations – Incident Command* (ODPM 2002).

<sup>26</sup> *Dealing with Disaster – 3rd Revision* (Cabinet Office 2003).

Authorities, the Police and the Forensic Science Service. These are being developed to Qualifications and Curriculum Authority criteria and will be available early in 2005. The Vocational Standards Group responsible for this work includes HMFSI and the Fire Service College, together with representatives from the Fire and Rescue, Police and Forensic Services and the insurance industry.

**3.27** Once it is published, Fire and Rescue Authorities should have regard to the model protocol for fire investigation and, through Regional Management Boards, should pool this specialist fire investigation capacity to provide an effective regional capability.

### Contingency planning for any future industrial action

**3.28** Drawing on the experiences of the recent national industrial action, new and more effective arrangements for the provision of emergency fire and rescue cover have been developed. Fire and Rescue Authorities will, in future, play a significant part in contingency provision, including the supply of appliances and equipment and the effective deployment of available personnel. Under the Fire Services Act 2003 – and after consultation – the Secretary of State has the power to direct the use of Fire and Rescue Authorities' facilities and assets. The Fire and Rescue Services Bill proposes to continue this power for the purposes of public safety.

### Quality Assurance and Best Practice

**3.29** The Audit Commission will, in future, be responsible for inspection of Fire and Rescue Authorities through CPA for Fire and Rescue Authorities (see Chapter 8).

**3.30** ODPM, primarily through HMFSI and the Fire Service College, will work with the Audit Commission to identify and promote good practice and to carry out co-ordinated national studies from time to time. A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding defining the roles of the Audit Commission, HMFSI and the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Team is attached at Annex D.

**3.31** HMFSI has initiated 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 encompass operational management. Any relevant information from this process will also be shared with the Audit Commission as further background to inform CPA implementation.

**3.32** Following CPA, 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 by Fire and Rescue Authorities.

**3.33** HMFSI will work with stakeholders to review all existing guidance relating to operational, technical and professional matters, and to disseminate good practice. HMFSI, in conjunction with the Fire Service College and other relevant stakeholders, will develop new arrangements and structures for the improvement of leadership development in the Fire and Rescue Service.







**4.1** Resilience is defined as the ability to manage disruptive challenges, such as terrorist attacks 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 Bill

**4.3** If enacted, the Fire and Rescue Services Bill will extend duties of Fire and Rescue Authorities to include the promotion of fire safety and response to road traffic accidents, in addition to their traditional firefighting role. The Bill would also provide the Secretary of State with the power to extend further the duties of authorities to deal with other emergencies. The proposed new duties will be set out in an Order, subject to Parliamentary approval, and will place on a statutory basis those emergencies to which authorities respond at present, but for which they have no statutory requirement to plan, train or equip. Authorities are likely, therefore, to be required to make provision for:

- removing chemical, biological or radioactive contaminants from people (using the mass decontamination equipment provided under the Government's New Dimension programme) and capturing any water used to remove such contaminants;
- incidents involving search and rescue. This would include any terrorist or other incident where there is the potential for persons to be trapped, or where it is necessary to use search and rescue equipment to detect individuals;
- major flooding incidents where there is a serious threat to human health or welfare. For example, firefighters would be needed to assist in the rescue of people trapped by large floods and their transfer to safety. This excludes smaller and more localised flooding events, such as a burst water main; and
- serious transport incidents, other than road traffic accidents.

We will consult widely on proposals before making any Order under the Bill.

**4.4** By Order, following consultation, the Bill would also require authorities to use and maintain any equipment as specified by the Secretary of State. This would include mass decontamination and search and rescue equipment provided under New Dimension programme, along with the Firelink radio system (see paragraph 4.22).

**4.5** Where authorities are given new duties in relation to the New Dimension programme, the Government will provide new resources in agreement with CFOA and the LGA as set out in paragraph 4.14 below. (The 'new burdens' principle is explained more fully at paragraph 2.17.)

### Civil Contingencies Bill

**4.6** Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Bill, currently before Parliament, along with the accompanying regulations and guidance, will establish a new framework to reinforce co-operation between the emergency services, local authorities and other front line responders at the local level. This will ensure that they can deal with the full range of emergencies from localised major incidents through to catastrophic incidents. 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. **Hence, once the Bill is enacted, Fire and Rescue Authorities will be under a duty to work in co-operation with other emergency services, local authorities and front line responders at the local level to:**

- **assess the risk of an emergency occurring;**
- **put in place emergency contingency plans and conduct exercises to ensure that they can both prevent and respond to emergencies;**
- **establish business continuity management arrangements, so that an authority can function in an emergency;**
- **share information with other local emergency responders; and**
- **inform the public about civil protection in order to reduce, control or mitigate the effects of emergencies.**

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

**4.7** Part 2 of the Bill, Emergency Powers, would give the Secretary of State powers to make temporary legislation requiring Fire and Rescue Authorities, and other local responders, to act in order to deal with the most serious of emergencies. Part 2 seeks to address a much wider range of circumstances than those addressed by the present legislation, which dates from 1920, reflecting the different risks and new threats we face today. It would broaden the definition of an emergency to include events and situations which threaten serious damage to human welfare, or to the environment or security of the United Kingdom. Part 2 of the Bill also proposes a range of safeguards against the possibility of misuse to ensure, amongst other things, compliance with Human Rights legislation and effective parliamentary scrutiny.

## Regional Resilience

**4.8** 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.

**4.9** The Fire and Rescue Service has a long-standing tradition of effective planning and response to non-fire incidents at the local level. However, the tragic events of 11 September 2001 changed the frame of reference for dealing with terrorism. The response to a similar attack in the UK, or one which involved a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) element, requires more than local planning and response. 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 4.10 and 4.11 below). The teams will also work with the Devolved Administrations to ensure effective cross-border arrangements.

**4.10** Regional Resilience Forums bring together central government agencies and the Armed Forces, and representatives of local responders, including the emergency services and local authorities. 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 2.10). **Fire and Rescue Authorities should, therefore, participate in the Regional Resilience Forums.**

**4.11** 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. If enacted, the Civil Contingencies Bill will also enable Ministers to appoint a Regional Nominated Co-ordinator, if required, to help co-ordinate activities under any regulations made in response to an emergency.

**4.12** These structures will provide the platform for co-ordinating 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.

## New Dimension

**4.13** To build resilience in the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September 2001, the Government launched the New Dimension programme. The 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 invested £56 million to purchase equipment for phase one of

the New Dimension programme, which includes purpose-built Incident Response Units (IRUs) equipped with mass decontamination facilities. All 80 IRUs were delivered by the end of March 2004 as planned. In addition the New Dimension programme provided 4,400 protective suits for firefighters and delivered enhanced search and rescue capabilities for the UK Fire Search and Rescue Teams.

**4.14** The Government is also providing up to £132m for phase two of the New Dimension programme. This includes the purchase of, and training in the use of, modern search and rescue equipment such as heavy lifting gear, search cameras and high volume water pumps which will improve authorities' capacity to respond to incidents involving, for example, collapsed buildings or wide-spread flooding. The Government will provide funds annually from 2005/06 to meet the crewing needs of this investment. Currently, the level of funding and the means of its allocation is under discussion between the Government, CFOA and the LGA.

**4.15** We will continue to locate the new vehicles and equipment strategically around the country to enable effective, co-ordinated national and regional responses to any large-scale incident. As was the case for deciding the location of IRUs, the location of vehicles and equipment for phase two will be the result of a robust, objective risk assessment exercise. This will be undertaken by ODPM's New Dimension Team together with CFOA and is due to be completed by the end of 2004.

**4.16** A national co-ordination centre has been established to direct resources according to need and risk assessment. This will remain in place until such time as the regional control centres are operational (see paragraph 2.11). In the meantime, the Government is keen to ensure a co-ordinated response from the Fire and Rescue Service in the event of a major emergency. That is why all Fire and Rescue Authorities have been invited to sign a Mutual Aid Agreement, which will enable individual authorities to ask for assistance from another authority in the event of a major incident. This builds on the analysis of mutual assistance set out in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.18.

**4.17** As requested in Fire Service Circular 8/2004, Fire and Rescue Authorities should confirm their willingness to participate in the Agreement by signing a copy of it and returning it to ODPM.

**4.18** The Fire and Rescue Services Bill proposes to allow the Secretary of State to direct a Fire and Rescue Authority to participate in such a scheme, but only where authorities are unable to come to an agreement about forming a scheme and where one of the authorities requests intervention.

## Training

**4.19** New Dimension training facilities have been built at the Fire Service College, and training courses began in April 2004. This will help to achieve the safe and effective management of operations outlined in paragraph 3.22.

**4.20** Training for firefighters is based on risk assessment carried out by the New Dimension programme in consultation with local fire and rescue services. Initial firefighter training has been fully funded by the Government as part of its investment in New Dimension. At the time of writing ongoing training for firefighters, along with its revenue implications, is under consideration and expected to be resolved for 2005/06.

**4.21** Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that Chief Fire Officers work with the New Dimension Regional Planners to decide which personnel receive New Dimension training.

## Firelink

**4.22** 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. Fire and Rescue Authorities will contribute to the

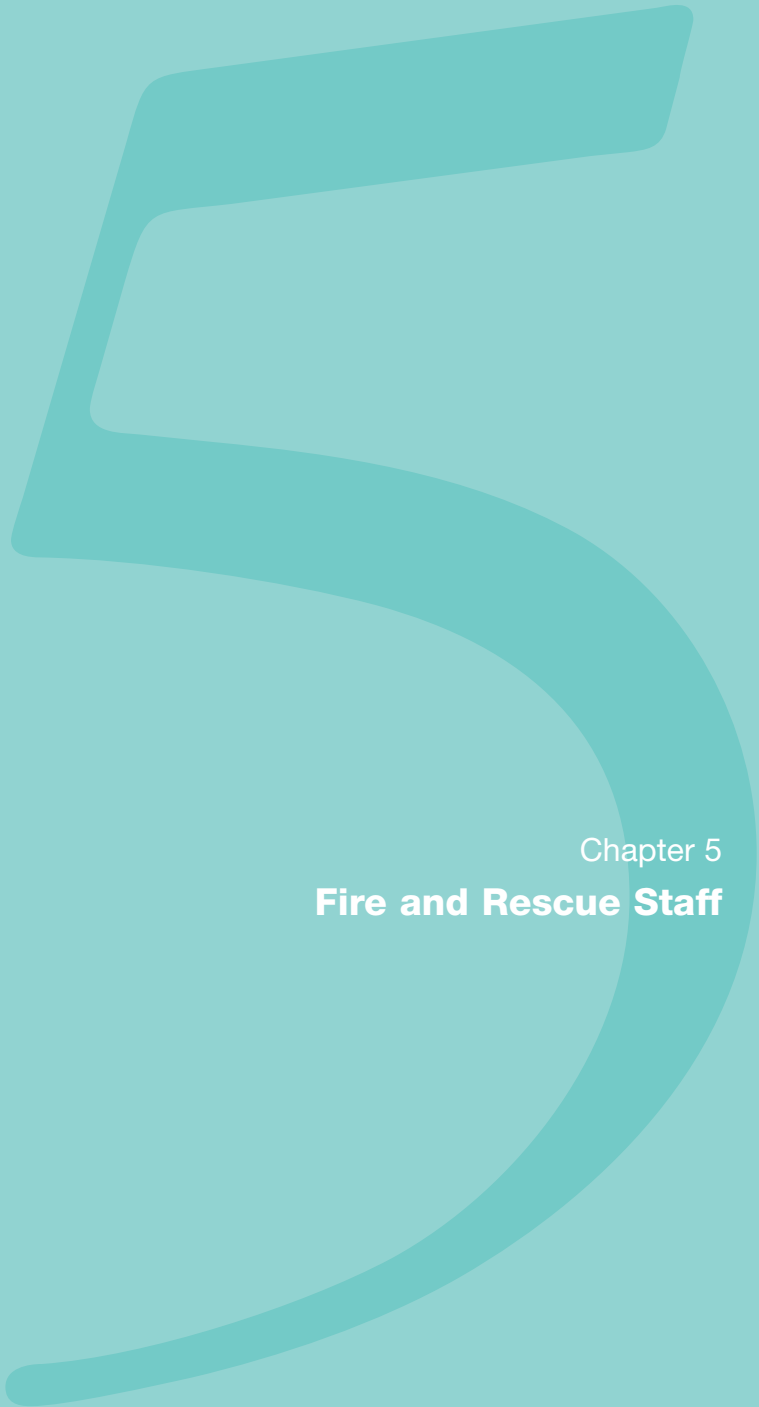
revenue costs of the new radio system. We will discuss with Fire and Rescue Authorities the scale of their contribution upon contract award, which is currently scheduled for Autumn 2004.

**4.23** It is planned that the new radio system will roll out from early 2005 to the end of 2007, when the low-band VHF radio spectrum used by the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales is being withdrawn. While the Firelink project is being developed, we recognise that it is essential to safeguard the performance of existing radio communications systems. ODPM is therefore funding measures that will sustain high-risk items of existing systems thereby ensuring that they continue to be operationally effective until they can be replaced.

**4.24** The roll-out of Firelink where possible will be implemented in conjunction with the implementation of regional control centres (FiReControl) (see paragraph 2.14), to maximise systems interoperability and reduce costs. Having a single national call-handling and mobilisation system linked to the national radio system will increase flexibility and resilience.

**4.25** Firelink, FiReControl and New Dimension project teams are working co-operatively to improve the capacity of the Fire and Rescue Service 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.





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, in both uniformed and non-uniformed roles; are used as effectively as possible; and are offered a rewarding and flexible career.

**5.2** Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that all members of staff are treated fairly and afforded equality of opportunity. 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 Fire and Rescue Service's aims and objectives effectively.

**5.3** Business needs will be driven to a large extent by an authority's IRMP. This will set out: when and where people and other resources are needed; how they will be used, in operational and non-operational roles; and what skills are required. **Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that their human resources strategy fully reflects the needs set out in the IRMP, and includes the use that will be made of flexible shift patterns and working practices.**

**5.4** The move away from 'one size fits all' shift patterns, and from standard nine to five hours for those who work in administrative jobs, will help to open up opportunities for people from a wider range of backgrounds and with family and other commitments. It should also mean a more flexible and rewarding career for all staff. The Government is in the process of amending the Firefighters' Pension Scheme to allow part-time service as a regular firefighter to count towards pension entitlement. This will facilitate arrangements that are already operating in some Fire and Rescue Authorities and encourage others to extend the practice. Amendments to the Scheme are expected to come into operation later in the year. **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.**

**5.5** The Government particularly values the contribution of staff on the retained duty system, who provide 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 tackle recruitment and retention challenges. Recommendations on tackling these issues will be made by the Retained Review Team, which has collected evidence on the current position and will make recommendations to the Practitioners' Forum in July 2004. The introduction of IPDS (see Chapter 6) is an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of staff on the retained duty system by exploiting the flexibilities it offers.

**5.6** The Government will, as part of the work on IPDS, examine ways in which it can best meet the needs of staff on the retained duty system, who, by virtue of being part-time, may not have the same opportunities for workplace development as wholetime staff. We will look at the scope for more use of, for example, e-learning and weekend training.

**5.7** The Government will work with the Fire and Rescue Service 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 in the Service; and work with the business community to:

- highlight the benefits of having in their workforce the skills which staff on the retained duty system can bring; and
- tackle the barriers to releasing employees for their fire and rescue duties.

**5.8** Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that they:

- **take practical steps to implement the recommendations of the Retained Review Team report;**
- **make full 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 whole time 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.**

## Human Resources Management

**5.9** The modernisation programme will place 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.

**5.10** Central government will work with Fire and Rescue Authorities, CFOA and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) to stimulate the development of a skilled, professional and strategic HR function by:

- encouraging more HR staff to undertake professional 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;
- supplying recruitment and career literature, launched in July 2004, which has been designed to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds to careers in the Fire and Rescue Service;
- facilitating the sharing of best practice among HR staff through the regular meetings of the developing Fire and Rescue Service HR Practitioners' Network and through seminars covering key HR and employment law issues; and
- setting out the role of training and development at regional level within the National Workforce Development Strategy (see chapter 6).

**5.11** The Government is working with the employers to draw up a pay and workforce strategy for Fire and Rescue Authorities. This strategy is one of a suite of strategies covering public sector workers. It will set out the broad goals and implementation plan for improving performance in Fire and Rescue Authorities, and will be updated regularly.

**5.12 Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should:**

- **draw up a regional HR strategy, encompassing recruitment, training and development (see Chapter 6), occupational health, health and**

**safety, medical advice services, sickness/ill health management, discipline, mobility and a regional equalities strategy; and**

- **identify and implement the most efficient and effective means for the region to deliver these services, including through lead authorities or out-sourcing where appropriate.**

## Improving opportunities

**5.13** The make-up of Fire and Rescue Service staff does not currently reflect the community it serves. In 2003, only 2.1% of operational staff were women and 2.1% of staff in the whole workforce were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

**5.14** Raising the profile of 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 responsibilities by introducing more flexible patterns of working. But these measures will not of themselves be sufficient.

**5.15** The Service needs to improve its performance. ODPM inherited targets set by the Home Office to encourage fire and rescue services to increase the representation of women in the operational workforce to 15% and ethnic minority staff in the workforce as a whole to 7% by April 2009. Working with partners, ODPM will support a strategy on equality and diversity which will include:

- the production of core values for the Fire and Rescue Authorities (see Annex E for draft core values);
- ODPM benchmarking of fire and rescue services' achievement on equality and diversity issues against the Local Government Equality Standard by Autumn 2004;
- reviewing equality training and the role of equality advisers by Autumn 2004, and disseminating good practice;
- a review of national recruitment, progression and retention targets for ethnic minorities by Autumn 2004, and for women by the end of 2004; and

- a programme of peer review on equality issues, both between Fire and Rescue Authorities and between Fire and Rescue Authorities and other sectors and local government services.

**5.16** The programme, which is being directed and supported by the Equality and Diversity Programme Board *Diversity Happens!*, chaired by Sir Graham Meldrum (HMCIFS), will result in a series of actions for Fire and Rescue Authorities which will comprise the national performance expectations in this area. In due course these will inform assessment as part of fire CPA and the improvement planning process (see chapter 8). The Local Government Equality Standard, which currently provides the generic national guidance, is being reviewed by the *Diversity Happens!* team with a view to producing a standard tailored for the Fire and Rescue Service by Spring 2005.

**5.17** Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should produce an equalities strategy as part of their regional Human Resources strategy (as set out in paragraph 5.12) which should include stretching targets for improvement. Regional HR strategies should be compatible with local IRMPs. It is for each Regional Management Board to decide which issues are best dealt with in the regional strategy and those which fall within IRMPs, and to ensure that there is a fit.

## Appointments and Promotion

**5.18** On 25 March 2004 the Government introduced the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 in order to:

- confirm the principles of IPDS (see chapter 6), including the replacement of ranks with roles;
- remove potentially discriminatory requirements e.g. for time-serving in certain ranks;
- remove the single level entry system for operational staff and facilitate multi-level entry, allowing for suitable staff to be recruited directly into roles other than firefighter;

- enable in-service staff with potential to progress more quickly; and
- make possible the introduction of the new standardised national firefighter recruitment and selection tests.

The new regulations have already led to some posts being advertised on open competition, including to applicants from outside the Fire and Rescue Service. If the Fire and Rescue Services Bill is enacted, the regulations will be repealed and fire and rescue services will make appointments on the basis of merit and open competition – as the regulations now allow.

### 5.19 Fire and Rescue Authorities:

- **must adhere to the requirements for the appointment of operational staff as set out in the Fire Services (Appointment and Promotion) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004, until such time as they are repealed; and**
- **should, following enactment of the Fire and Rescue Services Bill, act in accordance with the guidance issued by ODPM<sup>27</sup> and employ best practice in the operation of appointments and promotions for all staff in line with legal requirements and the principles of IPDS.**

## Recruitment

**5.20** The Government aims to ensure consistency in recruitment to Fire and Rescue Authorities. It has contributed to this by:

- providing centrally developed and funded national recruitment literature and career information for use by Fire and Rescue Authorities in recruiting staff to all sections of their workforce; and
- defining the personal qualities and attributes as the basis for appointment to all operational roles.

<sup>27</sup> For example, medical guidelines (for appointment and retention of staff) are due to be issued in September 2004 and national firefighter recruitment and selection tests in Spring 2005.

It will also:

- develop national firefighter selection tests by Spring 2005;
- define the personal qualities and attributes for control room roles by October 2005, and for the new control centre roles by the end of 2005;
- provide guidance on medical criteria for firefighter appointment and retention, which are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), by September 2004; and
- produce guidance and run seminars, conferences and workshops on good practice on selection and recruitment for all Fire and Rescue Service staff.

#### **5.21 Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards where appropriate:**

- **must comply with existing equality legislation on race and gender; the newly-introduced regulations on sexual orientation, religion or belief; the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995); and, in due course, with regulations on equal treatment and age;**
- **should apply identified good practice; and**
- **should, from Spring 2005, roll out and operate recruitment on a regional basis using the national firefighter selection tests.**

### **Discipline**

**5.22** The Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985 would be abolished on enactment of the Fire and Rescue Services Bill. From this date Fire and Rescue Service staff will no longer have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State on awards of dismissal, the requirement to resign or reduction in rank. Staff against whom a charge has been laid prior to enactment of the Bill will, however, retain the right of appeal. Once the regulations have been abolished, fire and rescue services will be expected to implement disciplinary procedures which are based on Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) best practice guidance.

#### **5.23 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:**

- **introduce disciplinary procedures based on ACAS best practice guidance; and**
- **consider the costs, 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**

**5.24** Fire and Rescue Authorities need to take effective steps to improve sickness management and reduce ill health retirements.

**5.25** The national fire and rescue targets for sickness are 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 firefighters and from 13.4 to 5.4 shifts per person for fire control staff by March 2005. The figures for 2002/03 were 10.2 shifts per person for firefighters and 13.0 for control room staff. Although marginally better than for the previous year, progress remains insufficient to meet the target by 2005. While recording systems have improved since 1998/99, there is no obvious reason for the continuing high levels of sick absence, which remain very inconsistent between authorities.

**5.26** The target for ill health retirements is, by March 2005, to reduce them to 6.9 retirements per thousand employees within all Fire and Rescue Authorities. There continues to be a year-on-year reduction in the number of ill health retirements, but at 16.9 per thousand in 2002/03 it is unlikely that the target will be met by 2005.

**5.27** The Government is in the process of amending the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Changes will 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 have to retire them with an ill health pension. They will also place an obligation on Fire and Rescue Authorities to use independent medical assessment – whose opinion

will be binding – before approving applications for early retirement on ill health grounds. We aim to have the amendments in operation in September 2004.

Guidance on medical issues will be issued to Fire and Rescue Authorities in Autumn 2004.

#### **5.28 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:**

- **ensure that their occupational health arrangements are efficient and effective, including considering the benefits of operating on a regional basis;**
- **ensure that full consideration is given to the health and fitness of staff and that they are assigned to appropriate roles;**
- **ensure that Government targets on the reduction of sickness absence and ill health retirements are achieved through the introduction and administration of effective absence management processes and procedures; and**
- **consider at a regional level the most efficient and cost effective method of obtaining independent Occupational Health advice.**

## **Pensions**

**5.29** The Government is committed to reviewing pension arrangements for all firefighters. Work is under way on the development of new pension arrangements which will reflect: the changes in the nature of firefighting duties under modernisation proposals; the changes in the regulatory and tax framework for pensions generally; and equality and diversity issues. We intend to issue proposals for consultation by the end of 2004 and envisage any new pension scheme being operational from April 2006. The Government is also reviewing the financial arrangements for funding firefighters' pensions (see paragraph 7.9).



## The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)

**6.1** The revised and enhanced roles for Fire and Rescue Service staff put a premium on flexibility, personal skills and competencies. This is true for all staff within the Fire and Rescue Service, whatever aspect of the service they deliver, and whether they are uniformed or non-uniformed.

**6.2** The new Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) for people and organisational management represents a complete change of approach to workforce development for Fire and Rescue Authorities. IPDS introduces a competence-based approach, and its system of development specifically targets the needs of the individual. (See also Chapter 5, which deals with HR issues.) Changes to the appointments and promotion regulations for operational staff (see paragraph 5.18) have made it possible for staff to join at all levels of the Service, and progress according to their ability. IPDS allows staff with high potential to undertake an appropriate programme of tailored development.

**6.3** While the IPDS programme has focused largely on operational and control roles to date, initial scoping work is now under way to consider role maps for non-operational posts within the Service.

**6.4** The Government is providing support and advice in the roll-out of IPDS through Implementation Support Teams operating from the 'IPDS Hub' – the centre of specialist expertise at the Fire Service College. Its communications programme includes written and electronic information, outreach work, workshops and seminars on all aspects of IPDS implementation, including workplace assessment, development programmes and national occupational standards. This programme will run until the end of 2005. Fire and Rescue Authorities are encouraged to make full use of it.

**6.5** The demands of the resilience agenda and emerging European training and development legislation underline the need for national standards and consistent procedures. The removal of national examinations for career advancement within operational roles will require

national consistency in the assessment arrangements that replace them. IPDS will provide the foundation for this through the Assessment Development Centre (ADC) project.

**6.6** The Government is:

- working with Fire and Rescue Authorities to develop ADCs as the means of assessing potential for the new uniformed roles;
- funding the development of assessment tools for use within the full ADC process which the Fire and Rescue Service will be expected to implement in 2005; and
- ensuring, through the Fire Service College, that appropriate quality assurance systems for development activities are put in place to enable equality of standards to be maintained through a diversity of providers by the end of 2004.

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

- **use the nationally developed personal qualities and attributes for assessing the potential of candidates for a new operational or control role;**
- **put in place systems and train managers to ensure that staff are assessed fairly against national standards and that workplace assessments are recorded consistently<sup>28</sup>;**
- **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; and**
- **communicate all changes to staff effectively.**

## National Workforce Development Strategy

**6.8** Firefighters, control operators and managers will be expected to demonstrate competence in new IPDS roles and in many cases this will mean developing people's existing knowledge, skills and understanding.

<sup>28</sup> See Fire Service Circulars 14/2003 and 20/2003.

Similar challenges face staff fulfilling other roles within the Service. To meet these more diverse needs at national, regional and local level, Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to look to a range of sources for their training and development support, including 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, Government will draw up a draft National Workforce Development Strategy, the first part of which will be published for consultation in July 2004. The Strategy fits within the Government's wider skills development framework. The first stage of the strategy will be implemented following consultation.

**6.10** There is over-provision of facilities dedicated to fire training and development. Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) statistics show wide variations in the use of training facilities and the cost of provision.

**6.11** Specialist, operational incident command and urban search and rescue training is best delivered at the Fire Service College's unique fireground, which is the only place where it can be carried out. The national strategy will set out the role of the College in developing fire and rescue staff. It proposes, for example, that this specialist operational training should be a mandatory element of IPDS at key stages, and that authorities should use the College for it; but other simulated and operational training may be carried out regionally and locally. The provision of quality assurance in the delivery of IPDS, including accreditation and securing the training of trainers to national occupational standards, is another function we propose should be led by the College.

**6.12** The Government believes that it will be most efficient and effective if some facilities are shared at a regional level. **Regional Management Boards should review the use currently made of existing facilities and resources, and consider whether any improvements can be made. They should consider whether better value for money could be achieved by providing training locally, regionally or at the Fire Service College.**

**6.13** Fire and Rescue Authorities should consider the draft National Workforce Development Strategy when it is published, and provide comments on it to ODPM within the consultation period.

**6.14** **Until the National Workforce Development Strategy has been finalised and put in place, Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should concentrate on identifying the efficiencies to be achieved through greater regional collaboration, for example in the use of assessment development centre processes and the delivery of core modules.**

**6.15** **Once the National Workforce Development Strategy is published, Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should:**

- **deliver training and development in accordance with national standards and the Strategy; and**
- **draw up their regional HR strategies to encompass regional workforce development plans in line with the Strategy; and**
- **deliver training as efficiently and effectively as possible, at the regional level, or via the Fire Service College, where appropriate.**

## The Fire Service College

**6.16** The College will continue to provide a national and international facility for operational incident management training, centred on its unique fireground. It will operate on a full cost recovery basis, as trading fund status requires. Its objectives include:

- delivering as its core business the training and education that the UK Fire and Rescue Authorities want and need in ways that suit its customers;
- developing its core business in ways that offer customers affordable, competitively priced best value training whilst enhancing its expertise and longer-term position; and
- demonstrating sustained improvement and financial stability.



**6.17** The College will develop a comprehensive suite of courses to support all aspects of vocational development, including community fire safety, work with young people, fire safety legislation and risk management. It will provide a centre of expertise on civil contingency planning, including search and rescue techniques. It also expects to provide training on New Dimension response and containment techniques, in partnership with other emergency services.

**6.18** The Government has invested £5 million in capital funding to improve the College's training facilities and student accommodation; and £2.5 million under the New Dimension programme to build new urban search and rescue facilities. A further £2.5 million is being provided to develop the remaining IPDS modules and workbooks, and to implement IPDS both within the College and across Fire and Rescue Authorities as a whole through the IPDS Hub (see paragraph 6.4) and Implementation Support Teams. The fireground is being refurbished and enhanced to develop its potential as the primary UK facility for New Dimension training.

**6.19** It will also develop its role as a centre of excellence by exploring partnerships and, where it makes sense, co-location with key fire and rescue organisations. Following the report of the Government Task Force into the College<sup>29</sup>, it is working on options for partnership with the private sector in developing the use of its fireground and facilities.

**6.20** Within the National Workforce Development Strategy, the College will play a key role in the support framework for IPDS. It is proposed that the college will:

- be responsible for central policy on setting and maintaining the national occupational standards;
- provide consistency and quality control in the delivery of IPDS through accrediting, verifying and possibly licensing learning and development modules for local and regional delivery;
- 'train the trainers' in accordance with national standards and expectations for all Fire and Rescue Service specialisations;
- review and develop policy on IPDS as a whole, and on the management of recording systems; and

- through the IPDS Hub, provide expert advice and support to Fire and Rescue Authorities on IPDS and its implementation.

**6.21** The Government also expects the College to become a Centre of Vocational Excellence within the learning and skills framework for vocational training managed by the Department for Education and Skills, and a Higher Education Funding Council for England centre of excellence in teaching adults. This will enable the College to offer a broader range of qualifications to fire and rescue staff.

**6.22** Fire and Rescue Authority users of the College should provide it with feedback via the Practitioners' Forum, which provides the 'user-group' function for the College.

## Leadership

**6.23** There is a need for a new approach to leadership within the Fire and Rescue Service, both from authorities and from senior managers within the Service. This needs to be underpinned by the effective development of staff to prepare them for management roles and to ensure that they have the skills to carry out the full range of management and leadership responsibilities. New entrants with different backgrounds and experience will help develop a breadth and depth of approach that will add to the existing skills base. Multi-tier entry and targeted development schemes will support this aim.

**6.24** Under the auspices of the IPDS Project Board, a new group has been convened to consider whether and to what extent there is a need for a specific leadership model for the Fire and Rescue Service. The group, which will include the Fire Service College and a range of stakeholders, will also make recommendations about selecting and developing senior level leaders for the future.

### **6.25 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:**

- **develop and support existing staff in their leadership functions;**
- **encourage interchange of staff between authorities and with outside organisations; and**
- **make use of the new flexibilities for recruitment (see paragraph 5.20).**

<sup>29</sup> *Future of the Fire Service College* (ODPM July 2003).



## Revenue Support

**7.1** In 2004/05, Fire and Rescue Authorities received an average increase in grant of 4.2% and no authority received less than a 3.5% increase.

**7.2** The changes under the modernisation programme and the associated agreement on pay and terms and conditions will have significant financial ramifications. There will be 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, and through regional collaboration. Overall, the Government believes that the costs and savings of these changes should balance across the Spending Review 2002 (SR02) period (2003/04 to 2005/06). Fire and Rescue Authorities, through the LGA, have said in the past that this is achievable and the Independent Review of the Fire and Rescue Service<sup>30</sup> said 'We are confident that, within the foreseeable future, benefits will more than exceed additional costs, including those of the pay increases we propose'.<sup>31</sup> **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.**

**7.3** As the Government has repeatedly made clear, Fire and Rescue Authorities must understand fully their own responsibility for minimising council tax increases. It is, first and foremost, for local authorities to set their own council tax. The Government expects authorities to act prudently. If they do not, the Government is prepared to use its powers to cap excessive increases. For Fire and Rescue Authorities (other than county councils), 2004/05 budget requirements were judged excessive if there was:

- a 7% or more increase in budget requirement between 2003/04 and 2004/05; and
- a 13% or more increase in Band D council tax between 2003/04 and 2004/05; and

- a Band D council tax for 2004/05 greater than the average for the relevant group of authorities (i.e. either £45 for metropolitan or £53 for combined Fire and Rescue Authorities).

In light of these principles a number of Fire and Rescue Authorities' budget requirements were deemed to be excessive, causing the Government either to 'designate' them for in-year capping or 'nominate' them for action to limit their 2005/06 budget increases. If necessary, the Government will take further action to limit excessive council tax increases in 2005/06.

**7.4** The Treasury'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'.<sup>32</sup> 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.

**7.5** The Government recognises that there may be a lag between costs and savings of modernisation. An additional £30 million transitional funding is available for England and Wales, which will be released subject to satisfactory progress on ongoing pay negotiations and modernisation. Phase one of the Audit Commission's national pay verification study on modernisation in the Fire and Rescue Service made it clear that while progress had been made, there was still more to do.

**7.6** For England this funding will be distributed as grant *pro rata* to the existing Fire Formula Spending Share. ODPM has notified all English Fire and Rescue Authorities of the amount of transitional funding they should expect to receive, subject to the conditions in paragraph 7.5 above being met. The Government's position remains that the transitional funding should be repaid in full and within the SR02 period. The only practical option identified thus far for recouping this money is to reduce the 2005/06 local government finance settlement for authorities with responsibility for fire and rescue services. This would inevitably give rise to at least some difference between the amount of

<sup>30</sup> The Independent Review of the Fire Service, *The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives* (2002). See: [www.irfs.org.uk](http://www.irfs.org.uk)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, chapter 12 – *Implementing Reform*, paragraph 12.22.

<sup>32</sup> *Releasing Resources to the Frontline – Efficiency Review*, Budget 2003 Review (HMT 2003).

transitional funding that authorities receive and the amount later deducted, given the effects of any changes to the data that feeds into the formula that determines the distribution of funding, and of floors and ceilings in 2005/6. The Government is willing to consider any alternative mechanisms that can be identified. In Wales ODPM will distribute the transitional funding *pro rata* relative to head of population. Recouping the money from Welsh authorities with responsibility for fire and rescue services will be the responsibility of the National Assembly for Wales, but ODPM will expect to recoup it within the SR02 period.

**7.7** The Government recognises that there have been delays in the pay and modernisation process and that, amongst other things, this could mean that we will be seeking to recoup the transitional funding less than a year after it has been distributed to Fire and Rescue Authorities. It is important that we have a clearer picture of the pressures Fire and Rescue Authorities may face, and the extent to which they are making efficiency improvements. ODPM, LGA and CFOA officials are working to develop the evidence base.

## Pensions finance

**7.8** The problems with the current ‘pay-as-you-go-system’ of financing pensions include:

- volatility as a result of significant fluctuations in the number of firefighters retiring in any given year, which has fed into council tax precept increases; and
- a lack of transparency, as the high proportion of expenditure by Fire and Rescue Authorities on pension payments obscures the actual level of resources available for service delivery. Over time, as the number of pensioners and – in real terms – their pension costs increase, the proportion of authorities’ expenditure on pension payments will increase.

**7.9** In 2001 a Treasury, Home Office and Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions official working party reviewed arrangements for the financing of police and firefighter pensions. The review recommended that employee contributions and a new employer’s contribution should be paid into a pensions account from which pensions outgo (pensions awards and lump sum payments) would be met. Government would top up the

account at the end of the year, or recover any surplus, as necessary. The underlying principle would be that employer and employee contributions together met the full costs of liabilities being accrued while central Government met the costs of paying retirement pensions. Authorities would retain responsibility for paying ill health retirement costs and injury awards. At the outset, appropriate adjustments would be made in the level of grant so that neither local nor national taxpayers would be disadvantaged. These new arrangements would counter the yearly volatility in pensions expenditure and increase transparency in that authorities’ budgets would accurately reflect the ongoing, accruing costs of providing the frontline service. The Government is therefore minded to pursue this option. Further work on this is underway and detailed proposals will be issued for consultation in early 2005.

## Distribution

**7.10** The proposed changes to pensions finance arrangements could entail a change to the Fire Formula Spending Share, as the existing system, which includes an element predicated on forecast pensions outgo costs, could no longer be fair. In addition, the Government has recognised that the costs and savings of modernisation may fall unevenly across Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Government has therefore asked a working group of officials, including the LGA and representatives from Fire and Rescue Authorities, to examine the case for change and possible alternatives to the existing Fire Formula Spending Share that might better reflect Fire and Rescue Authorities’ needs. The Government will consider proposals for changes to the formula in the light of the working group’s conclusions. Any changes to the formula would come into effect for 2005/06 at the earliest.

## Local Prudential Borrowing Regime

**7.11** 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

**7.12** The Government is distributing £60.53 million in supported capital expenditure to English and Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2004/05, plus an extra £1 million which has been set aside for regional control centres and £0.15 million for joint procurement.

## Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities

**7.13** The Government recognised that Combined Fire Authorities' change to major precepting status means holding reserves for the first time by adjusting the alternative notional amounts used for capping purposes by 3%.

## Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

**7.14** Seven schemes have successfully signed and are operational following the inception of PFI for the Fire and Rescue Service in 1998. ODPM Fire Service Circular 16/2003 invited Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales to submit indicative bids for a share of up to £106 million notional credit approvals (NCAs) as part of the fourth round of projects to be supported under PFI. The bidding round was over-subscribed by approximately 180%. Two successful schemes were announced on 24 March 2004. These were LFEPAs integrated clothing project, which would potentially benefit 30 Fire and Rescue Authorities; and a joint North East fire and rescue services' bid for community fire stations and a community life skills centre. The next stage is for both projects to produce an Outline Business Case for submission to the inter-departmental Project Review Group.

**7.15** The PFI programme could help Fire and Rescue Authorities with the provision of some of the capital assets necessary to meet the modernisation agenda. It is hoped to hold a further bidding round for authorities towards the end of 2004.

## Other sources of funding

**7.16** We have also made £4.5 million available for community fire safety and £11.3 million for arson reduction work (see Chapter 1).

**7.17** The Government has invested heavily in the New Dimension programme and is funding the Firelink project (See Chapter 4).

**7.18** The Government also funds a wide range of work of relevance to Fire and Rescue Authorities' role, particularly on prevention and community fire safety, for example on neighbourhood renewal.

## Charging

**7.19** 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 accidents to stalled lifts and people locked out of their homes, accounts for almost half the calls which the Service attends.

**7.20** Authorities have had a power under section 3 of the Fire Services Act 1947 to charge for dealing with these special service calls. As currently proposed, clause 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Bill preserves a power to recover the full costs incurred. We have established all the activities for which a charge is currently made by authorities in England and will specify them in the first Order made under the Clause 19 power.

**7.21** A number of authorities have become accustomed to recovering an element of profit when setting the level of charge for services such as training and safety consultancy. To ensure that these income streams are not put at risk after the introduction of the new charging regime we will make trading Orders under section 95 of the Local Government Act 2003. These will be reviewed after the introduction of a CPA for Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2005. Although this concession will require trading to be conducted through a company structure, with associated costs, authorities will be required to price their services at market rates in the interests of fair competition. This combination of measures is considered to be revenue neutral.

A large, stylized teal number '8' graphic that serves as a background element for the chapter title. It is composed of two thick, rounded loops that meet at a central point, creating a continuous, flowing shape.

Chapter 8

**Performance management**

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

**8.2** The Government has invited the Audit Commission to introduce an inspection regime based on the CPA system used to assess local authorities in order to provide this assurance. The expectations set out in the National Framework will be taken into account by the Audit Commission in its CPA review of Fire and Rescue Authorities' performance. The detailed arrangements made by Fire and Rescue Authorities to deliver functions through their Regional Management Boards will also be assessed as part of the CPA process.

**8.3** CPA will provide each authority with a baseline for improvement. It will also provide local people with a picture of performance, and a means to identify and deal with poor performance. High performers will be offered increased freedoms and flexibilities to support further innovation and excellence in service delivery.

**8.4** Early development and piloting work supports a model of CPA that builds upon the established process for local government, while also addressing the specific needs and issues relevant to Fire and Rescue Authorities. Effective corporate governance in terms of leadership and performance management, and a good understanding of the needs of the local community, are key characteristics of high performing authorities. Corporate assessment is therefore central to CPA and will focus on, and test the capacity for each authority to:

- derive and deliver against national, regional and local priorities;
- lead and manage performance;
- work effectively with partners and the community; and
- make best use of resources and workforce skills.

**8.5** CPA aims to contribute to the process of service improvement. To this end, Fire and Rescue Authorities are advised to carry out a self assessment, before the CPA review, to help Members and senior officers to focus on the priorities in their performance management and to help the authority to get the most out of the CPA process.

## Piloting and timeframe

**8.6** The Audit Commission has already undertaken a first round of piloting with four volunteer authorities. This proved invaluable in refining the initial assessment framework and provided the basis for the recent public consultation by the Commission on proposed components of a Fire and Rescue Service CPA model. Further discussion will take place with stakeholders and a second round of piloting is proposed for September prior to the CPA framework being finalised. The project remains on course for fieldwork to begin in January and for reports for all English Fire and Rescue Authorities to be published by August 2005.

**8.7** CPA for single tier and county councils is being redesigned for 2005/06 onwards. Proposals for the redesign are being developed and it is intended that county Fire and Rescue Authority CPA results will be appropriately incorporated.

**8.8** The Audit Commission, through its appointed auditors, will continue to have an ongoing engagement with each authority's performance management processes through scrutiny of the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP).

## Improvement Planning, Capacity Building and Freedoms and Flexibilities

**8.9** Authorities should be focussing on improvement priorities in the context of their regular BVPP cycle, particularly in the light of the White Paper, the National Framework and implementation of IRMPs.

**8.10** Following publication of CPA reports, each authority will have a robust baseline to undertake a cycle of improvement planning. We envisage supporting this process further by a round-table discussion between the authority, the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Team, HMFSI and the Audit Commission, to discuss improvement priorities and capacity building. It will be for the authorities to fund the implementation of improvement plans from their own resources.

**8.11** There will inevitably, and rightly, be public focus on how poor performance is addressed. ODPM will look to work with authorities to address any identified

poor performance as a matter of priority. We are committed to the principles set out in the protocol agreed with local government for any use of the Secretary of State's intervention powers (see Annex B).

**8.12** We will consider how the ongoing improvement planning cycle, the inspection processes, and future development of CPA will integrate with those of local government partners.

**8.13** ODPM has been working with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) on the provision of national capacity-building programmes for local government in areas such as performance management and training for elected members. Fire and Rescue Authorities have access to these programmes<sup>33</sup>.

**8.14** The replacement of the national standards of fire cover with local IRMPs and associated changes will give Fire and Rescue Authorities far more flexibility to meet the needs of their local communities. We are working with stakeholders to develop proposals for new freedoms that will be made available to successful and innovative Fire and Rescue Authorities following CPA.

## Best Value and data collection

**8.15** Best Value will remain an important tool for reviewing and managing performance against service objectives. In line with developments elsewhere in local government, in future the emphasis will be on Fire and Rescue Authorities and Regional Management Boards using Best Value as a flexible management tool to improve service delivery, rather than national prescription. Further guidance will be provided in a Fire and Rescue Authority Best Value Circular (see paragraph 8.18). (The current Fire Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are at Annex F.)

**8.16** Performance Indicators have an important role in providing a broad diagnostic tool for both local performance management and independent performance assessment. ODPM has established a working group with practitioner and wider stakeholder representation, in order to:

- explore, test and pilot further changes to statutory indicators for 2005/06 to reflect the performance expectations of the White Paper and the National Framework and to underpin performance assessment; and
- support the increased need for Fire and Rescue Authorities to develop their own measures, for example to assess their performance standards set against their IRMPs by undertaking a process to identify and promote a complementary set of voluntary indicators.

**8.17** The current provisions of the Fire and Rescue Services Bill will require Fire and Rescue Authorities to have regard to the requirements of the National Framework in discharging their Best Value responsibilities.

## Further Consultation

**8.18** ODPM will shortly be consulting Fire and Rescue Authorities and other stakeholders on:

(i) A Fire and Rescue Authority Best Value Circular incorporating proposals on:

- improvement planning;
- freedoms and flexibilities;
- the use of intervention powers;
- good practice on Best Value reviews, BVPPs and other action plan requirements.

(ii) BVPI proposals for 2005/06.

**8.19** Final versions of these measures will in due course be referenced in the 2005/06 National Framework.

<sup>33</sup> See the following websites:

ODPM – <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/capacitybuilding>

IdEA – [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk); and

LGA – <http://www.lga.gov.uk/EnhancedIndexDetails.asp?lsection=59&ccat=770>



## Local Public Service Agreements

**8.20** Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) offer financial reward for meeting stretching targets. A rolling programme of discussions has begun with county, metropolitan and single tier local authorities on second round LPSAs as their existing agreements conclude.

**8.21** Although only county Fire and Rescue Authorities will have direct access to an LPSA, it is expected that authorities will put forward their view of their local priorities, having discussed these with partners, via the LSP and other forums. All Fire and Rescue Authorities therefore have an opportunity to engage in the process. For example, a target on tackling arson may be appropriate where this is a significant local issue.

## e-Government

**8.22** ODPM is required to meet Government targets for e-delivery of services including<sup>34</sup>:

- 100% of relevant Government services should be capable of being delivered electronically by 2005; and
- 100% of all newly created public records will be electronically stored and retrieved by 2004.

**8.23** These targets apply equally to central and local government, including Fire and Rescue Authorities. For local government, a corporate BVPI (BVPI 157) measures progress against the above 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. ODPM's PSA of assisting local government to achieve 100% capability in electronic delivery of priority services by 2005, in ways that customers will use<sup>35</sup> is now supplemented by benchmarks for priority service delivery and the take-up of e-services.

**8.24** To this end, ODPM intends to consult the Fire and Rescue Service during the summer of 2004 on a range of priority e-government outcomes, which may include:

- delivering a range of tools and services to promote fire safety in the home, in commercial premises and the wider community;
- effective and efficient purchasing of goods and services through implementation of e-procurement;
- ensuring equality and fairness for job applicants and workforce diversity through the structured provision of online information on a career as a firefighter;
- enabling Fire and Rescue Authority members and staff to work from home or away from the office base where appropriate;
- providing services outside of standard working hours via the Internet or telephone contact centres;
- development of web-based services as a major access channel for interactions between the citizen and the Fire and Rescue Service;
- enhancing risk management planning through adoption of national arrangements for electronic collection and distribution of incident statistics;
- effective customer relationship management;
- providing the capability for staff to undertake interactive, PC-based learning anywhere and at any time; and
- making available to staff relevant web-based information and tools to support the Fire and Rescue Service modernisation agenda.

**8.25** Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that their plans for e-government contribute to both their key organisational objectives and those set out in the Government's White Paper *Our Fire and Rescue Service and the National Framework*<sup>36</sup>. While Regional Management Boards have no direct responsibility for e-government, authorities may choose to pool their resources to work towards e-government priorities.

**8.26** Through its local e-government programme, ODPM is already funding a range of National Projects that will help Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver the priority outcomes<sup>37</sup>, including the e-Fire National Project. ODPM is also considering a number of fire-specific e-government initiatives as candidates for future funding.

<sup>34</sup> web-site of the Office of the e-Envoy: [www.e-envoy.gov.uk](http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk)

<sup>35</sup> *The National Strategy for Local e-Government* (ODPM 2002).

<sup>36</sup> Further information can be found at: [www.localgov.gov.uk](http://www.localgov.gov.uk) and [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

<sup>37</sup> Further information on National Projects can be found at: [www.localgov.gov.uk](http://www.localgov.gov.uk)



**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 research, primarily in support of the Building Regulations and Fire and Rescue Service operations, but also in support of fire safety more generally. ODPM is currently undertaking work on:

- **Risk Management**, in particular the development of the FSEC methodology and the associated toolkit (see paragraph 1.8);
- **Civil Resilience**, including projects identified by the Building Disaster Assessment Group to ensure that fire and rescue service procedures are adequate for incidents in tall buildings;
- **Building Regulations**, including studies to develop the science that underpins many aspects of fire safety in buildings and developing an understanding of the effectiveness of residential sprinkler systems;
- **Community Fire Safety**, including an evaluation of the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund (see paragraph 1.13); and
- **Arson**, through the Arson Control Forum (see paragraph 1.23).

**9.3** Further information can be found on ODPM's website ([www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)) under 'science and research', and at [www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk](http://www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk).

## National Fire and Rescue Research Strategy

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

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

- further statistical and other analyses better to 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 cost-effectively;
- 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 on the design and use of Fire and Rescue Service personal protective and other equipment, vehicles, and premises;
- research into search, rescue, and decontamination procedures for the civil population, including the deployment of specialist equipment and procedures for use by the Fire and Rescue Service to improve civil resilience; 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** The first stage will be for Government to allocate the £1 million made available in 2004/05 for the support of suitable projects related to Fire and Rescue Service business. We will agree this programme of research in outline by August 2004, having consulted the Practitioners' Forum and the Business and Community Safety Forum.

**9.8** ODPM has had informal discussions with officials in other Government Departments and representatives of manufacturing industry, academia, and commerce. We have established support for the creation of an online Fire Research Academy, whose function will be to create the first comprehensive national

fire and rescue research strategy by December 2004. Thereafter, one of the responsibilities of the Fire Research Academy will be to seek to ensure that fundamental fire and rescue research is conducted nationally as set out in the strategy, which it will keep under review.

**9.9** A steering group will be established shortly and a preliminary website launched. An early draft of the proposed national strategy will be posted on the website for consultation by the end of September 2004.

**9.10** The strategy will look not just at what research is needed, but also at improving communications between sponsors of research and all those that can benefit from it.

**9.11** Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

- draw on the relevant research in exercising their functions, for example in formulating their strategies to prevent fires; and
- avoid duplication by drawing on others' work and sharing their own findings and plans, including through the Practitioners' Forum.

## Statistics

**9.12** 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, it collects and publishes data relating to operational and HR issues. These data are published in support of relevant Best Value Performance Indicators and will be used in support of new CPA inspections.

**9.13** 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 has been established to advise on the amount of detail to be collected on these incidents in future.

**9.14** The review is the first stage of a larger project to upgrade the data collection process by capturing electronic information directly from authorities. This project will improve data quality and result in more timely statistics, thereby allowing many authorities to access their own validated data more quickly. This would mean significant advances in monitoring progress against targets and performance indicators.

**9.15** Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

- continue the timely completion of statistical returns issued by ODPM; and
- 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, which was launched with the review of the existing fire incident collection in Autumn 2003. We aim to complete this work in 2005.





## Annex A

### ODPM Strategic Priorities

#### 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.

### Additional Targets For the Fire and Rescue Service

In addition to the new ODPM fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target, the following targets all remain valid until they are either signed off in the appropriate Annual Report (having reached their target date) or are superseded by equivalent new targets.

#### SR02 Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) targets:

To reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20% averaged over the 11 year period to 2010 compared with the average recorded in the five year period to 1999 – with no local authority fire brigade having a fatality rate more than 1.25 times the national average by 2010.

To reduce by 10% the number of deliberate fires by March 2010 from the 2001/02 baseline.

#### SR2000 SDAs:

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.

To reduce the number of building fires in England and Wales by 3% by March 2006.

To reduce sickness absence and sustain improvement thereafter, by 2005 to a level consistent with, or better than those presently achieved by the best quartile of employees – an average of 6.5 shifts for firefighters and 5.4 shifts for control staff.

To operate so that level of ill health retirement are reduced by 2005, and are consistent with, or better than the best quartile of 6.9 retirements per 1,000 employees for the Fire Service.

**SR02 PSA Target 4 on local government services:**

Improve delivery and value for money of local services by:

- introducing comprehensive performance assessments and action plans, and securing a progressive improvement in authorities' scores;
- overall annual improvements in cost effectiveness of 2% or more; and
- assisting local government to achieve 100% capability in electronic delivery of priority services by 2005, in ways that customers will use.



## Annex B

### 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 non-statutory 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

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

DEPARTMENT for WORK and PENSIONS

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

## Annex C

### 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

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 Rom/Hazard Analysis Guidance

Community Fire Safety Toolbox and associated publications

Dangerous Goods – Emergency Action Code List

Requests for information or advice on any specific topic should be directed to the Fire Information Service  
020 7944 5450 or [fis@odpm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fis@odpm.gsi.gov.uk)

## Annex D

### 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 10 May 2004 and will apply until 31 December 2005. It may be revised or revoked before that date.

3. This MOU assumes the intentions expressed in the White Paper published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on 30 June 03 and the draft National Framework published on 11 December 03 (as subsequently amended) will become legislation.

4. An extract from the White Paper concerning comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) is attached as Appendix 1. CPA was developed by the Audit Commission as a framework for measuring performance by local government. It aims to support improvement in local authorities and can lead to increased freedoms and flexibilities.

#### Responsibilities

##### ODPM

5. The ODPM will work closely with the Audit Commission and stakeholders as the Commission develops a new CPA for the Fire and Rescue Service

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

##### 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 co-ordinate work with fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) on their improvement plans following the publication of CPA outcomes.

##### 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.
- Support the Audit Commission in developing the new CPA function for the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Support the implementation of CPA and work with FRSIT, in responding to the outcome of CPA.
- 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.



## 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 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 (being officers, servants or agents of the Commission) 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. Measures in the Fire and Rescue Service Bill could extend this provision.

**13.** The Audit Commission will implement a new CPA for the fire service.

**14.** 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

**15.** 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 the National Framework.	Provides professional advice related to policy development.	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.
<i>Delivery of CPA</i>	Advice to Ministers on policy. Provides advice, support and funding for design and delivery.	Provides advice and support.	Designs, leads and delivers. Produces reports.
<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.	Identifies, agrees and promotes.	CPA or audit may identify good practice.
<i>National Studies</i>	Identifies need. Agrees and commissions activity.	Identifies need. Agrees and commissions activity.	May carry out studies.

*Continued*

Activity	Responsibilities		
	FRSIT	HMFSI	Audit Commission
<i>Professional support for FRAs</i>	Identifies need.	Identifies need. Helps respond to need in consultation with FRSIT.	Not applicable.
<i>Operational Service Delivery</i>	Requires assurance.	Provides assurance.	CPA assesses corporate arrangements and compliance with guidance and service standards.
<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.	No direct reporting to Ministers, but reports in the public domain, from both CPA and audit.
<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.	Provide professional support and guidance. Support agreed intervention strategy.	Assesses and reports. Audit teams support improvement planning. Can make recommendations to the Secretary of State.

### Arrangements for co-operation

**16.** 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

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

**18.** 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.

**19.** 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.

### Shared planning and information exchange

**20.** 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.

**21.** 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

**22.** 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

**23.** Wherever possible and appropriate, FRSIT, HMFSI and the Audit Commission will combine resources into co-ordinated joint teams. Leadership and the terms of reference for such teams will depend on the circumstances of the tasks being undertaken.

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

### Reporting

**25.** 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.

**26.** 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

**27.** 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

### An extract from the Fire and Rescue White Paper published by the ODPM on 30 June 2003

#### Comprehensive Performance Assessment

6.9 The Local Government White Paper *Strong Local Leadership – Quality Public Services* introduced the concept of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for local authorities. The Audit Commission, working with other inspectorates and key stakeholders, developed and implemented the methodology for CPA, which brings together performance-indicator data, plan assessments and inspection. These procedures provide an overall assessment of performance on service delivery and of each authority's corporate strengths and weaknesses. Last year, the Audit Commission published CPA outcomes for all county and single-tier local authorities. It is currently implementing an appropriate CPA framework for district councils. This framework provides for each local authority:

- an improvement planning baseline for each council to work with government to deliver better services for local communities;
- the means to communicate clearly to local people a picture of the performance of their council;
- a basis for government to reduce and rationalise assessment measures and to reward high performance with increased flexibilities (such as reduced levels of inspection);
- priorities for the targeting of capacity support and inspection resources; and
- a means to identify and deal with failure.

We are asking the Audit Commission to work with us and other stakeholders to develop a performance assessment framework, using the lessons from local government CPA, as the basis for assessing the performance of fire and rescue authorities and their services, and for improvement planning. This framework will also form the basis for determining which fire and rescue authorities merit increased freedoms and flexibilities as a result of consistently good performance as measured against the tough national targets which we will set.

## Appendix 2

### 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.

## Annex E: Draft Fire and Rescue Service Core Values

### We Value Diverse Communities

- We are committed to serving all parts of our communities,
- We recognise that diverse needs, expectations and risks need diverse solutions,
- We always fulfil our responsibilities to people, communities and the environment,
- We remove barriers to entry and seek true diversity to reflect the communities we serve,
- We will challenge inappropriate behaviour,
- We actively seek feedback.

### We Value Our People

- We are committed to developing our people,
- We build relationships that are based upon mutual trust and respect,
- We work in an inclusive way,
- We recognise that everyone has a contribution to make,
- We respect and see difference as a strength,
- We behave in an ethical way,
- We promote well-being of others,
- We allow empathy to flourish,
- We are active and participative listeners,
- We communicate with honesty and integrity,
- We say 'thank you'.

### We Value Innovation, Change and Learning

- We encourage critical and lateral thinking and manage constructive challenge,
- We take responsibility for improving our performance,
- We develop ourselves and others to achieve our full potential,
- We take responsibility for our actions,
- We encourage problem solving at all levels,
- We capture good ideas from wherever they originate,
- We learn from our experiences.

### We Value Our Fire and Rescue Service

- We are passionate about building our great reputation,
- We make work rewarding and motivating,
- We all pull together in the right direction,
- We are a team and not a family,
- We enjoy and celebrate our work,
- We focus on priorities by setting clear objectives and accountabilities,
- We provide the right service at the right time and in the right place,

## Annex F

### Best Value Performance Indicators 2004/05

<i>BVPI 142</i>	The number of calls to fire attended: i) total calls (excluding false alarms) per 10,000 population; ii) primary fires per 10,000 population; iii) accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings.
<i>BVPI 143</i>	The number of – i) deaths; and 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>	The number of calls to malicious false alarms per 1,000 population.
<i>BVPI 149</i>	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection apparatus per 1,000 non-domestic properties.
<i>BVPI 150</i>	Expenditure per head of population on the provision of fire and rescue services.
<i>BVPI 206</i>	Number of deliberate fires per 10,000 population.

### Corporate Health BVPIs

<i>BVPI 2</i>	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>	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.
<i>BVPI 12</i>	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>	i) whole time 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 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.

## Annex G

List of Acronyms	
ACAS	<i>Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service</i>
ADC	<i>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>
CIPD	<i>Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development</i>
CIPFA	<i>Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting</i>
CPA	<i>Comprehensive Performance Assessment</i>
CPIG	<i>Crown Premises Inspection Group</i>
DWP	<i>Department for Work and Pensions</i>
FSEC	<i>Fire Service Emergency Cover</i>
GLA	<i>Greater London Authority</i>
HMCIFS	<i>Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Service</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 and Development Agency</i>
IPDS	<i>Integrated Personal Development System</i>
IRMP	<i>Integrated Risk Management Plan</i>
IRU	<i>Incident Response Unit</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>
MoU	<i>Memorandum of Understanding</i>
NAW	<i>National Assembly for Wales</i>
NCA	<i>Notional Credit Approvals</i>
NCFSC	<i>National Community Fire Safety Centre</i>
ND	<i>New Dimension</i>
NPE	<i>National Procurement Executive</i>
ODPM	<i>Office of the Deputy Prime Minister</i>
PFI	<i>Private Finance Initiative</i>
PSA	<i>Public Service Agreement</i>
RMB	<i>Regional Management Board</i>
RRT	<i>Regional Resilience Team</i>
SDA	<i>Service Delivery Agreement</i>
SR	<i>Spending Review</i>