



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

The Fire and Rescue National Framework

2005/06





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December 2004

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London

Cover photograph courtesy of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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E-mail: odpm@twoten.press.net
or online via www.odpm.gov.uk/fire

Printed in Great Britain on paper comprising 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp.

Product code 04FHSD02737

December 2004

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Ministerial Foreword

The Fire and Rescue Service is changing for the better – better for the communities it serves and better for those working in it. The Government has set out ambitious targets to drive down accidental fire deaths and deliberate fires. To achieve these we need to ensure that all Fire and Rescue Authorities are operating to best effect across the full range of their responsibilities and are delivering real value for money for our communities. The National Framework sets out how, working in partnership with Fire and Rescue Authorities and their staff, we can achieve these aims.

At Fire and Rescue Authorities' request we undertook to publish the 2005/06 National Framework in time to inform budget setting processes. It reflects progress that has been made since the publication of the 2004/05 National Framework in July 2004. It also reflects comments we have received in response to our consultation exercise. Once again I am grateful to all those who provided comments. We have carefully considered all the responses we have received and have reflected them in the National Framework where appropriate. The Government's full response to the comments has today been published on the ODPM website¹.

The pace of change in the Service has not diminished, nor will it in the immediate future. We are working along with stakeholders in shaping the next steps. We have recently consulted stakeholders on a number of key modernisation issues, including Best Value for Fire and Rescue Authorities, Best Value Performance Indicators, the National Workforce Development Strategy, the National Procurement Strategy, Section 9 (Emergencies Order) and, most recently, new pension arrangements for firefighters. Most of these inform the 2005/06 Fire and Rescue National Framework. Where they do not we have made clear how we will take stakeholders' comments forward.

Because it is forward looking the National Framework reminds us of the challenges and opportunities ahead. Fire and Rescue Authorities will soon be starting the process of Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Fire CPA will provide a robust assessment of progress by the Service since publication of the White Paper and a firm basis for further improvement. We look forward to working with you to achieve our goals.



Nick Raynsford MP
Minister for the Fire and Rescue Service

¹ See: www.odpm.gov.uk/fire

Introduction

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

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

2 The Government's new fire Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for England will come into effect on 1 April 2005². The target is:

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

3 The National Framework is a strategic plan outlining how the PSA and other objectives can be delivered.

4 As we have made clear, this document is not a national blueprint. Giving Fire and Rescue Authorities the flexibility they need to meet the specific needs of their local communities remains at the heart of the Government's approach. The Framework is designed to give authorities a firm foundation on which to build local solutions.

Summary

5 The Framework is divided into nine chapters:

- Chapter 1 – Fire prevention and risk management – covers work to prevent fires and manage risk, including the development of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs).
- Chapter 2 – Working together: the regional level – covers the functions on which Fire and Rescue Authorities should work together through Regional Management Boards (RMBs), and focuses on regional control centres and procurement.

- Chapter 3 – Effective response – focuses on providing an effective response when incidents do occur.
- Chapter 4 – Resilience and New Dimension – sets out the strategy for responding to the new terrorist threat and other major natural or manmade 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 (IPDS) 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.

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

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

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

² See: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

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

- Section 21 requires the Secretary of State to prepare and keep current a National Framework setting out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities, with the aim of promoting public safety, and the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of authorities and their functions. He must consult representatives of the authorities and their employees before making significant revisions, and must give them effect by statutory instrument. For their part, Fire and Rescue Authorities must 'have regard' to the Framework when carrying out their functions.
- Section 22 provides the Secretary of State with the power to intervene if he considers a Fire and Rescue Authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework. While Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to make progress in all areas set out in the Framework, references to what authorities 'must' or 'should' do indicate those areas that Ministers consider most important, with 'must' being stronger. They are also highlighted in bold text. Any use of intervention powers will be in accordance with the principles of the Local Government Intervention Protocol (Annex A) as agreed with the Local Government Association (LGA) (see Chapter 8). We envisage that these powers would only be used as a measure of last resort.
- Section 23 requires the Secretary of State to consult on and publish an intervention protocol. ODPM has consulted on the application of the Local Government Intervention Protocol and will publish the protocol in due course.
- Section 24 explicitly extends the Audit Commission's powers to inspect – contained within the Local Government Act 1999 – to include performance expectations in the Framework that might not be covered by the Best Value inspection powers in the 1999 Act. The Audit Commission will work with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and other stakeholders to develop and implement a CPA framework for the Service. 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.

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

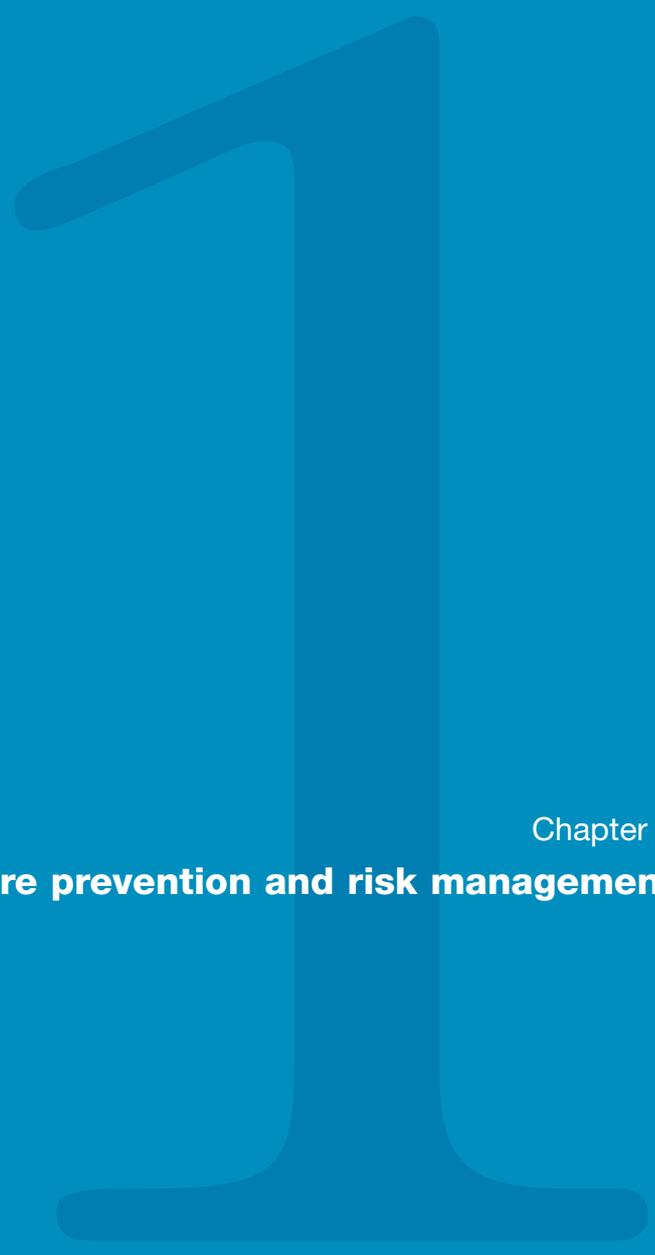
Future Frameworks

9 In future, National Frameworks will be published in the Autumn. We are likely to consult on the next National Framework in Summer 2005. 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 paragraphs of the National Framework.

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

Devolved Administrations

11 The National Framework does not cover Scotland and Northern Ireland; nor Wales, where responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service is now fully devolved. The National Assembly for Wales has consulted on its own National Framework for Wales and plans to publish this shortly. The UK Government will continue to work closely with its partners in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.



Chapter 1

Fire prevention and risk management

1.1 The Government's aim, as indicated in the new fire PSA target (see Annex B), is to reduce fire deaths and deliberate fires 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 Since April 2003 every Fire and Rescue Authority has been required to produce a local IRMP that sets out the authority's strategy, in collaboration with other agencies, for:

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

1.3 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 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 should achieve best value for its local council

taxpayers. The IRMP 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. 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.)

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

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

1.5 ODPM recognises that authorities need support in developing and maintaining their IRMPs. We provided initial guidance on preparing and maintaining IRMPs in 2003 and subsequently in April 2004 on the impact of the Working Time Regulations on current and new working practices. It is intended that further guidance on good practice will be produced by the Practitioners' Forum in 2005/06.

1.6 The need to co-ordinate the planning of IRMP action plans with the budget setting process presented a significant challenge for Fire and Rescue Authorities this year. This process should become easier with successive plans; ODPM intends that authorities should have the opportunity to realign both their IRMP and Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) development processes to fit with the timetable for budget setting.

1.7 Some authorities have argued that it has not been possible to make significant changes because they have not yet completed customising the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit. However, others in the same position have been able to propose and implement changes on the basis of other risk evidence. FSEC was not intended to be the only tool through which the Service would exercise its professional judgement on risk. We expect all authorities using FSEC to have completed customising it for practical use in time for next year's round of action plans.

1.8 The FiReControl Project (see Chapter 2) will lead to the creation of nine regional control centres (including London, which already has one) 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. The Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), supported by ODPM, is working on guidance on ways in which regional co-operation can improve the effectiveness of local IRMPs and will issue guidance on this in Spring 2005.

Community Fire Safety

1.9 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 created a new statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote fire safety. This places fire prevention at the heart of Fire and Rescue Service activity. **Authorities should consider community fire safety and its contribution to meeting the new duty in preparing their IRMPs and in deciding the balance of funding and resources.**

1.10 Research shows that those most likely to be at risk from fire are those in the lower socioeconomic 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.

1.11 Most Fire and Rescue Authorities already have links with some local agencies and partnerships. Increasingly, authorities are also members of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). **Authorities should actively seek to work jointly with local partners in health, social services, housing, education, the voluntary sector and other emergency services to reduce risk to the vulnerable groups in line with their IRMPs.**

1.12 Fire and rescue services around the country are already carrying out the wide range of community fire safety work. To assist the further development of local initiatives the Government has established the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund totalling £4.5million for the period 2003-06. We are targeting resources at areas with the worst problems, on the basis of fatality areas from accidental domestic fires per 100,000 populations in 2002/03. Grants to Fire and Rescue Authorities totalling £2million have been 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.

1.13 The National Community Fire Safety Centre (NCFSC), which operates from within ODPM, was established in 1998 to sponsor national fire safety publicity and education campaigns. It also provides best practice and an educational resource to fire and rescue services in their community fire safety work, through a suite of tools in the NCFSC toolbox³.

1.14 Since 1987 we have conducted effective television campaigns promoting aspects of fire safety in the home, with a particular focus on promoting smoke alarms. Ownership has increased from 9% in 1987 to the current level of 76%. The NCFSC will continue to run high profile media campaigns to promote the importance of having a working smoke alarm installed in dwellings.

³ See: www.firesafetytoolbox.org.uk

1.15 Most Fire and Rescue Authorities already install free smoke alarms, but smoke alarm ownership is still far from universal and needless deaths and injuries are still occurring as a result. The Government has therefore provided £25 million capital funding for 2004-08 to support a significant expansion of activity. All Fire and Rescue Authorities will receive funding to install free smoke alarms with 10-year batteries in association with a programme of Home Fire Risk Checks. Automated fire suppression systems may also be installed where justified by a risk assessment, for those who can be protected in no other way.

1.16 Fire and Rescue Authorities will be expected to target their programme on the most vulnerable households in line with their IRMPs – particularly the elderly, but also deprived households and areas, young families and Black and Minority Ethnic communities. The capital grants have therefore been allocated on the basis of regional smoke alarm ownership, and within each region on the basis of the Fire Index⁴, weighted by population.

Arson Reduction

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

1.18 Arson is often part of a complex pattern which includes crime, fear of crime, antisocial behaviour and poor quality public space. Low-level disorder and thoughtless actions affect the quality of life of others, by creating fear or degrading the environment. All these issues can only be dealt with successfully if Fire and Rescue Authorities, the police and other local partners

work together, for example in Arson Task Forces which bring together police and fire and rescue personnel, and operate car clearance schemes which aim to remove abandoned cars as quickly as possible. This work forms part of the national strategy on nuisance vehicles, *Cleaner Safer Greener Communities: Removing Nuisance Vehicles*⁵, which includes advice on good practice sources of support. The Government proposes to introduce new powers for local authorities to tackle nuisance vehicles under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.

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

1.20 Fire and Rescue Authorities should work with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships⁶ and other partnerships to develop, with other agencies, local solutions to local problems – for example, deliberate firesetting, hoax calls and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

1.21 Fire and Rescue Authorities can reduce arson and improve fire safety, as well as contributing to community cohesion and neighbourhood renewal, in many other 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*⁷ surveys the full range of education and youth work undertaken by Fire and Rescue Authorities and contains many examples of good practice. Youth training schemes and youth diversion work can reduce firesetting and hoax calls, and increase awareness of fire safety. 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.

⁴ The Fire Index, used in the calculation of the FSS allocation, is the unweighted sum of six standardised indicators measuring various aspects of poverty and social exclusion. For more information see: www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0405/datadefs.pdf

⁵ See: www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk

⁶ Established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

⁷ HMFSI/HMFSI for Scotland: *The Fire and Rescue Service – Working with Young People in the Community* (ODPM 2003).

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

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

1.24 Local arson reduction projects sponsored by the Arson Control Forum received £2.25 million in 2001-03. Evaluation of these projects has shown a significant impact with levels of arson around 30% below comparable areas where no project has been undertaken. The projects have shown what can be achieved by a dedicated multi-agency approach with strong local support – for every £1 funding, other partners have contributed an additional £3. Cost effectiveness is high – it is estimated that for every pound spent, £16 has been saved in costs of fire to the economy.

1.25 The Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund is providing a total of £11.3 million to assist the further development of local arson reduction work in 2003-06. Sixty-six projects made successful bids including 24 car clearance schemes and 29 Arson Task Forces. £4.8 million has been allocated to these projects or to research for 2005/06.

Building Regulations

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

1.27 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, ODPM publish guidance in the form of Approved Document B⁸. The current substantive version of this was published in 2000, although subsequent amendments arising out of European harmonisation were published in a supplement in 2002, and came into force on 1 March 2003.

1.28 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 ODPM will be targeting the provision of fire safety measures in those new and altered premises where people are considered to be most vulnerable. The Government is keen to improve fire safety by all reasonable means and will therefore consider carefully the role that sprinklers can play as part of a package of measures that can be provided in buildings. ODPM expect to be in a position to publish a consultation paper on proposed changes, supported by a draft Regulatory Impact Assessment, in Spring 2005.

1.29 The process of designing fire safety into buildings relies upon developing and maintaining 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 guidance⁹ on the level of consultation that should exist between Fire and Rescue Authorities and Building Control Bodies. ODPM has recently started a review of this important document and, following consultation with stakeholders, aims to publish a revised version to coincide with implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order.

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

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

Regulatory Reform Order

1.30 The Government is reforming general fire safety legislation. This includes 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 principally be by Fire and Rescue Authorities though other authorities may enforce the requirements in certain specified situations, for example the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for the nuclear industry.

1.31 The Government's proposals, in the form of a draft Regulatory Reform Order (RRO), have had a first scrutiny from the relevant Committees in the Houses of Parliament, and are expected to complete their second scrutiny in early 2005. The proposals 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 compliance with the law and, where necessary, enforcing the requirements of the new legislation. There will be guidance for businesses and enforcers before the Order comes into force, expected towards the end of 2005. Under existing legislation and under the RRO, an Authority's strategy for the enforcement of fire safety legislation is a key part of its overall strategy for the protection of its community. **Authorities must therefore have a fire safety inspection programme and this must form part of its IRMP, as set out in IRMP Guidance Note 4, which gives advice on risk-based enforcement.**

1.32 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 life¹⁰. This will improve upon the

current approach to inspection where priority is given to premises needing a certificate under the Fire Precautions Act 1971.

Crown Premises

1.33 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 Statement¹¹ 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 and the HSE to explore the best way to achieve this through jointly addressing health and safety and fire safety legislation. In the meantime, the Government remains committed to ensuring full compliance with the requirements of health and safety law and best practice.

1.34 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.

1.35 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.

¹⁰ Fire Precautions Act Circular 28, Appendix 28/2, paragraph 59, advised that fire and rescue services should consider their approach to enforcement.

¹¹ See: www.hse.gov.uk/revitalising/strategy.pdf



Chapter 2

Working together: the regional approach

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 in favour of local IRMPs.

2.2 However, there are some challenges for which local Fire and Rescue Authorities working in isolation do not have the capacity to provide an efficient, effective and economical 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 Chapter 4 of 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 has its own Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEP), which is overseen by the Greater London Authority (GLA). The White Paper made clear that if any area of England voted in a referendum to establish an Elected Regional Assembly, a Regional Fire and Rescue Authority would be established. Otherwise, regional functions would be carried out by Regional Management Boards.

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

2.6 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.**

2.7 Regional Management Boards should be able to demonstrate continuing progress towards meeting the requirements in each of the six key areas listed at paragraph 2.9 of this document; and that they have the capacity – in terms of both resources and expertise – to deliver in those key areas.

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

The functions of Regional Management Boards

2.9 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).**

Regional Control Centres – the FiReControl project

2.10 In 2003 the Government accepted the conclusions of independent research¹² and work by HMFSI¹³ that considerable improvements in national resilience and efficiency could be achieved by creating

¹² Mott MacDonald: *The Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales* – Update (ODPM 2003).

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

a national network of nine regional fire control centres (including London) in place of the existing 46 control rooms. The FiReControl project is being managed by a central project team and regional project teams established by the Regional Management Boards, with the aim of delivering the project by 2008. The project is seeking to build on the lessons of the tri-service control rooms in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Cleveland. It is part of a resilience programme comprising FiReControl, Firelink and New Dimension. The Practitioners' Forum has established a sounding board to discuss control centre issues.

2.11 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 taken the lead in securing appropriate accommodation for the eight new centres, which will be built by the private sector. It expects to announce the locations of the new centres in February/March 2005. FiReControl will be delivered to the same timetable as the Firelink radio project (see paragraph 4.23) to maximise financial and operational efficiency. Harmonising the timetables will reduce costs. The first three "early adopter" centres will be in the North East, South West and East Midlands regions. The remaining centres will follow in the order West Midlands, South East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and Eastern. If changes are required to London's existing regional control centre, these will take place at the end of the programme.

2.12 A FiReControl Finance Working Group (FFWG) was set up to make recommendations on funding and governance issues associated with the project. Its report was issued for consultation in November 2004. All Fire and Rescue Authorities have been invited to respond to this document by 4 February 2005.

2.13 Where a central government department's 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 across all authorities in any financial year is greater than £100,000. A procedure has been agreed with the LGA for assessing new burdens costs. In 2005/06 payment will be made by means of a grant. The expectation is that in 2005/06, new burdens will be limited to

project management costs, a small amount of additional recruitment and retention, and possibly some convergence costs. We will be looking to make early notification of the additional funding for individual Fire and Rescue Authorities.

2.14 Regional Management Board Chairs were consulted on the full outline business case, and Fire and Rescue Authorities on the outline business case with some commercially sensitive information excluded. The final business case will be published in mid 2005. The FFWG made recommendations on options for sharing costs within regions and between regions. Depending on how authorities wish to take forward these recommendations, and on their decisions on staffing and management issues, they will be able to calculate their likely future costs in the light of the final business case figures. The agreement to lease the control centres will be signed by central government, and the leases will be signed by the vehicle chosen by Fire and Rescue Authorities to run their regional control centre. The other main costs for which Fire and Rescue Authorities will be responsible will be staffing and maintenance costs.

2.15 The FFWG report discussed two governance options: a lead authority or a local authority company. While the latter is the Government's preferred option at this stage, both would ensure that the control centres remain in public ownership. Certain FiReControl functions will need to be carried out nationally, and further work is being done on the options. If a new organisation were set up to discharge these functions, representatives of the local authority companies could comprise its board, thus ensuring close links between the regional and national structures. The Government has asked Fire and Rescue Authorities in responding to the consultation document to say whether they would wish the management vehicle in their region to be a local authority company or a lead authority, and if the latter, which authority.

2.16 Staff in the new control centres will be trained to national standards in nationally agreed roles, but appointed and employed by the public authority chosen by the region to run the control centre. The management entity will be responsible for all staff matters in the new control centre, for management and maintenance, and for delivering the service to national requirements.

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

- ensure that they contribute to the delivery of the phased transition from existing control rooms to the new control centres within the overall national timetable by 2008;
- ensure that the control centres are provided with timely, accurate and comprehensive information on appliance and crew availability and on other assets to make possible effective mobilisation; and
- work closely with the Government to ensure that the timetable for roll-out, and integration with the Firelink timetable, are achieved.

2.18 Fewer staff will be needed for control duties when the new regional control centres are in place. **The Government expects authorities to make best efforts to redeploy 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.** The Employers' Organisation will issue guidance on staffing issues, including TUPE, redundancy and recruitment and retention. 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*¹⁴ 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 2001/02¹⁵, supported by Audit Commission guidance¹⁶. A review by Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI)¹⁷ 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 (see above) which supports national standards and output-based specifications where appropriate. Non-specialist Fire and Rescue Service purchasing would continue to be managed by authorities, acting through regional leads where appropriate and drawing on the Centre of Excellence established under the Local Government National Procurement Strategy¹⁸.

2.21 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 welcome Fire and Rescue Authorities' commitment to this project.

¹⁴ Audit Commission: *In the Line of Fire* (1995).

¹⁵ The local government (Best Value) performance plans and reviews order 1999.

¹⁶ Audit Commission guidance: *A uniform approach – a study of fire service procurement* (2001).

¹⁷ HMFSI: *Analysis of the Best Value Review of Procurement: Final Report* (ODPM 2003).

¹⁸ *Local Government Procurement Strategy* (ODPM October 2003)

See: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/downloadable/odpm_locgov_024923.pdf

2.22 The Government issued a draft procurement strategy¹⁹ for consultation in September 2004 that sets out:

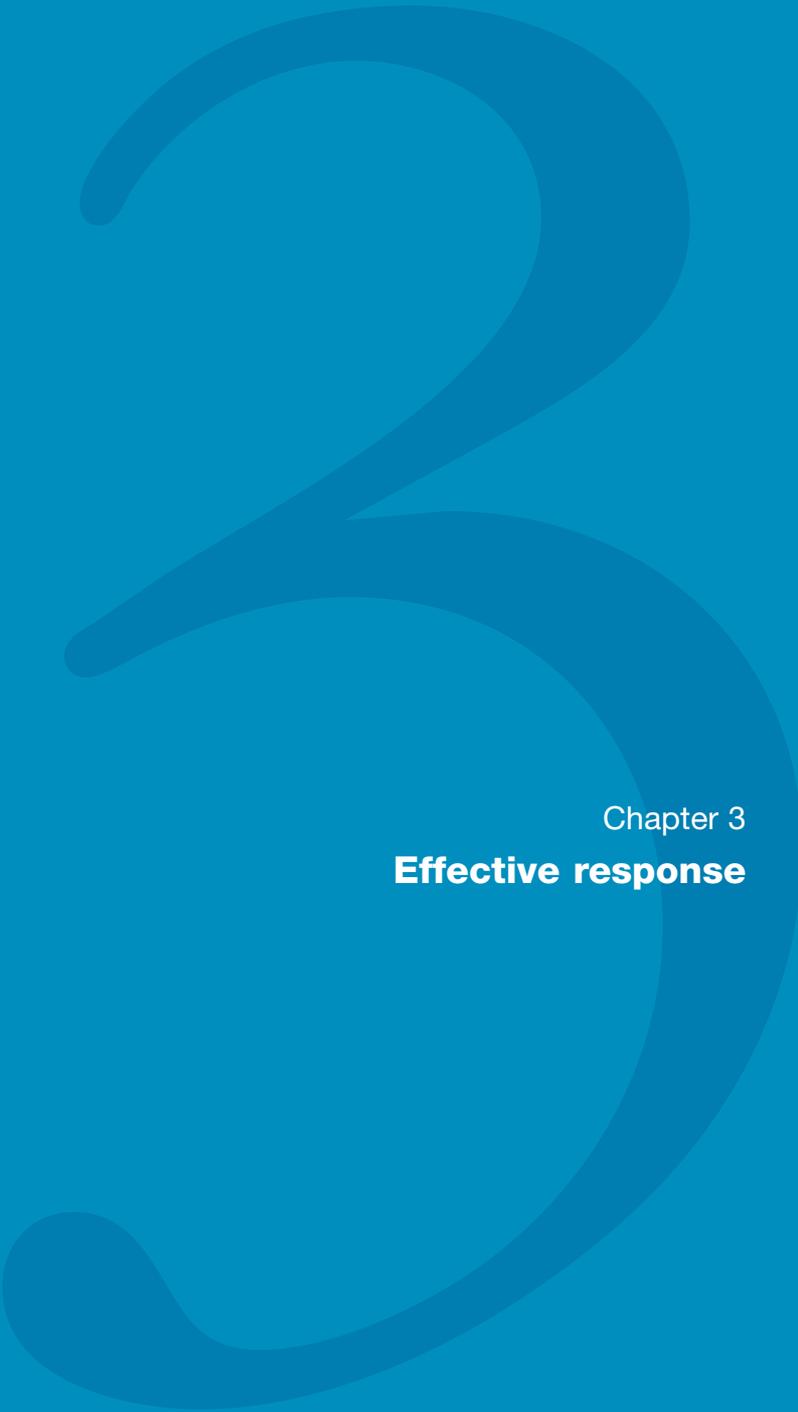
- the details of the national arrangements for specialist Fire and Rescue Service procurement as part of the national procurement strategy through creation of a new national procurement institution, (“FiReBuy”); and
- the role of Regional Management Boards as part of the strategy, including call-off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

Consultation on the draft strategy closed on 3 December. The full strategy will be published by 1 April 2005.

2.23 Prior to publication of any OJEU notice, Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to consult ODPM²⁰ where they expect to let a contract before the strategy comes into force (in Spring 2005, on current assumptions).

¹⁹ *Draft National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service* (ODPM September 2004)
See: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_fire/documents/page/odpm_fire_030990.pdf

²⁰ Contact: Phillip Smith, 020 7944 0055 or fshed6@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

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Chapter 3

Effective response

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

3.2 Although 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. In some areas it will be appropriate to maintain operational standards; in others, it will be necessary to make improvements. And 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 Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure an effective response is available to meet the range of incidents which they may reasonably expect to 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. It is important, therefore, that good practice is shared between Fire and Rescue Authorities, managers and front-line staff.

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

3.6 A national Health and Safety Task Group, on which all Practitioners' Forum organisations are represented (including the HSE) – meets quarterly and reports against an agreed business plan through the Practitioners' Forum. The task group provides a national lead and co-ordination in the generation of health and safety guidance and good practice²¹. This is particularly appropriate in the case of generic risks and in the identification of common solutions to emerging challenges. The Group aims to 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.

Utilisation of Resources

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

3.8 Traditionally, pumping appliances, with 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.

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

²¹ 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

3.10 In April 2004 ODPM published a Guide to Reducing the Number of False Alarms from Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems²², in conjunction with CFOA and the British Fire Protection Systems Association. CFOA has also produced a Model Agreement for Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems²³. These documents, together with the introduction of IRMPs and the use of modern intelligent information systems, allow risks to be assessed more effectively, providing the flexibility for more appropriate and better targeted response. **Fire and Rescue Authorities should:**

- have regard to ODPM's 'Guide to Reducing the Number of False Alarms from Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems';
- consider the adoption of the CFOA 'Model Agreement for Remotely Monitored Fire Alarm Systems' published in 2004 following wide consultation with stakeholders;
- 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.

3.11 A series of guidance notes related to the introduction and management of IRMPs has been published. 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 others are engaged in co-responder schemes, which are saving the lives of people who have suffered cardiac arrest, including firefighters.

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

Mutual Assistance

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

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

3.15 Authorities should, therefore, design their IRMPs to ensure that, so far as practical, there is greater shared use of resources, particularly, for example: the services of senior officers²⁴; pumping and non-pumping appliances, such as those used for aerial access; equipment used in traffic accident response and the bulk supply of water; and specialist support services such as rope rescue teams.

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

Incident Management Protocols

3.17 Major fire-related incidents, terrorist attacks or large environmental disasters have no respect for authority boundaries. Nor can they be dealt with by one emergency service working in isolation. Increasingly, they demand co-ordinated planning, operational co-operation and compatibility in response management between Fire and Rescue Authorities and other emergency and non-emergency responders, such as local authorities, the Environment Agency or the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

²² See: www.odpm.gov.uk/falsealarms

²³ See: www.fire-uk.org/pubs/RMFA_CFOA_Policy_Final.pdf

²⁴ The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 repeals ss30(3) and 30(6) of the Fire Services Act 1947 under which sole control of a fire was placed on the senior officer present from the fire and rescue service of the area in which the fire originated. This should allow greater flexibility in the sharing of senior officers.

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

3.19 Common policies, practices and procedures for the operational management and command of emergencies are essential. To ensure a consistent operational approach the Service should adopt the principles and procedures detailed in the *Fire Service Manual Vol. 2: Fire Service Operations – Incident Command*²⁵. This will help to ensure the adoption nationwide of common arrangements and the safe and effective management of operations. CFOA and HMFSI will work together to maintain the Manual's currency in response to new threats and emerging issues. The Manual, together with the Cabinet Office publication, *Dealing with Disaster – 3rd Revision*²⁶, 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.

Fire Investigation

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

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

3.22 In the case of deliberate fires, the lead authority is the Police. In other cases, the lead authority will depend on the circumstances and the initial fire investigation results. A degree of flexibility is necessary to allow the leadership at various stages of the investigation process to be shared, with the most relevant agency assuming the lead role as required. Formal protocols and

Memoranda of Understanding are essential foundations for ensuring that the needs of all partners are considered.

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

3.24 The Arson Control Forum, which brings together police, fire and rescue practitioners, insurers and other stakeholders, is currently developing a model protocol for fire investigation, to be launched in early 2005. This will be supported by new National Occupational Standards for fire investigation for Fire and Rescue 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.

3.25 Through Regional Management Boards, Fire and Rescue Authorities should pool specialist fire investigation capacity to provide an effective regional capability.

Contingency planning for any future industrial action

3.26 It cannot be assumed that the Armed Forces will be available to provide cover in the event of industrial action by firefighters. The Government will continue to examine how National Contingency Planning arrangements can be further improved. This will include linking any revised arrangements with improved regional resilience, the future role of the Armed Forces, raising public awareness and other elements which comprise emergency fire and rescue services.

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

²⁶ *Dealing with Disaster – 3rd Revision* (Cabinet Office 2003).

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

Quality Assurance and Good Practice

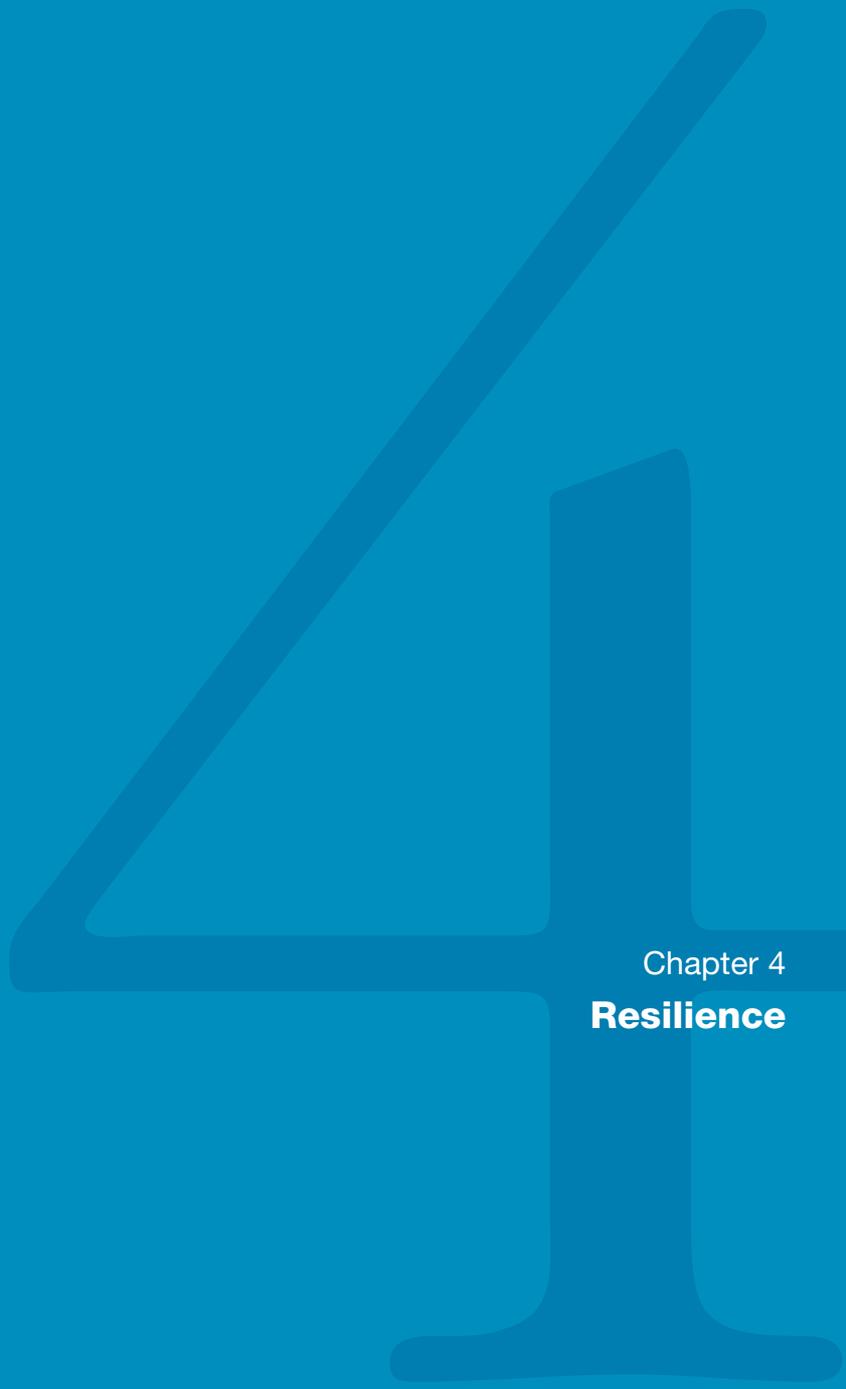
3.28 The Audit Commission is responsible for inspection of Fire and Rescue Authorities through CPA for Fire and Rescue Authorities (see Chapter 8).

3.29 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 C.

3.30 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 be a dialogue on issues related to operational management and assurance. Any relevant information from this process will also be shared with the Audit Commission as further background to inform CPA implementation.

3.31 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.

3.32 HMFSI will work with stakeholders to review all existing guidance relating to operational, technical and professional matters (see Annex D), and to disseminate good practice. This review should result in the availability of simplified and more easily accessible guidance from March 2006.



Chapter 4
Resilience

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

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

Statutory responsibilities of Fire and Rescue Authorities

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

4.3 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the Secretary of State with the power to extend further the duties of authorities to deal with emergencies. The proposed new duties will be set out in an Order (known as the Section 9 Emergencies 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. This excludes smaller and more localised flooding events, such as a burst water main; and
- serious transport incidents, other than road traffic accidents.

4.4 We are consulting on a draft Order. The date on which the Section 9 Emergencies Order provisions come into force is a matter that Ministers will consider after the consultation ends on 13 December 2004.

4.5 The Government will act in accordance with the 'new burdens' principle, and if needed will provide new resources having consulted CFOA and the LGA. (The 'new burdens' principle is explained more fully at paragraph 2.13.)

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

4.6 Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which received Royal Assent on 18 November 2004, along with the accompanying regulations and guidance, establishes 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. **As a consequence of this Act, Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards where appropriate, must work in co-operation with other emergency services, local authorities and front line responders at the local level to:**

- **assess the risk of 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 4.11) will help Fire and Rescue Authorities to discharge their statutory duties under Part 1 of the Act.

4.7 Part 2 of the Act, Emergency Powers, gives 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 previous legislation, which dated from 1920, reflecting the different risks and new threats we face today. It provides a definition of an emergency which includes events and situations which threaten serious damage to human welfare, or to the environment or security of the United Kingdom. Part 2 of the Act also puts in place 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 longstanding 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. Other events, such as widespread flooding or a major infectious disease outbreak, could also require regional co-ordination. That is why the Government has put in place regional resilience structures. Since April 2003, Regional Resilience Teams have been operational in each of the Government Offices in all nine English regions. The teams will provide support for the Regional Resilience Forums and Regional Civil Contingencies Committees in the event of regional response arrangements being called upon (see paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13 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, the Armed Forces, and representatives of local responders, including the emergency services and local authorities. Each Forum has one representative from the Fire and Rescue Service. The Forums work to improve the co-ordination of planning at a regional level and improve communications between the centre and the region and between the region and local responders. Participation in the Regional Resilience Forums will help Regional Management Boards to put in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies (see paragraph 2.10).

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. The Civil Contingencies Act also enables Ministers to appoint a Regional Nominated Co-ordinator, if required, to help co-ordinate activities under any regulations made in response to an emergency.

4.12 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.

Resilience Programmes

4.13 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.

New Dimension

4.14 The New Dimension programme seeks to ensure that Fire and Rescue Authorities are sufficiently trained and equipped to deal safely and effectively with major CBRN and conventional terrorist incidents on a national

scale. The Government announced investment of up to £188 million to purchase equipment for England and Wales. Incident Response Units equipped with mass decontamination facilities are already operational and are supported by the provision of protective suits for firefighters. Enhancements to the existing search and rescue capability provided through the UK Fire and Rescue Service Search and Rescue Teams means that every region in England now has this capability.

4.15 Work on New Dimension is now focused on the delivery of six distinct but interdependent capability projects:

- Mass Decontamination
- Urban Search and Rescue
- High volume pumping, water rescue and water safety
- Command and Control
- Operational Logistics
- Long term capability management

This work is being taken forward in partnership with CFOA. Decisions about the location of equipment and the consequent training and accommodation require input from Fire and Rescue Authorities. For this reason, Fire and Rescue Authorities are strongly encouraged to engage with the New Dimension programme planning process through their Regional Management Board's nominated resilience contact.

4.16 This planning work will result in the purchase 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 widespread flooding. Ministers have announced up to £16 million funds annually from 2005/06 to meet the crewing costs. In 2005/06 funding will be directed at Fire and Rescue Authorities' hosting urban search and rescue equipment. The distribution details were announced alongside the Local Government Settlement.

4.17 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. Decisions on the location of future equipment will be based on the outcome of a robust, objective, risk assessment exercise undertaken by the New Dimension programme.

4.18 Initial firefighter training has been fully funded by the Government. Ongoing training is being considered as part of the programme's planning work. Government will consult Fire and Rescue Authorities on its proposals.

4.19 A national co-ordination centre has been established to direct resources according to need and risk assessment. This will remain in place until 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. These would build on the mutual assistance arrangements set out in paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16.

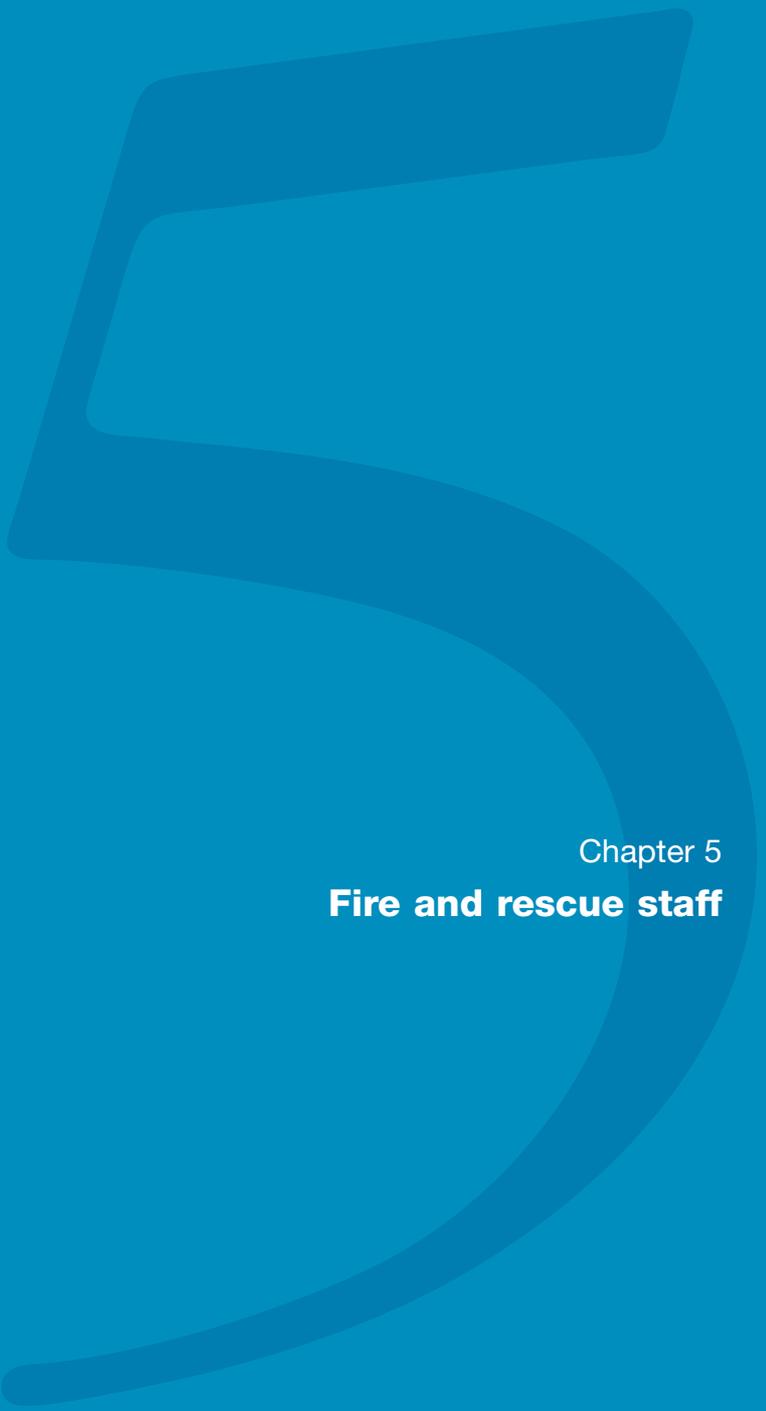
4.20 Fire Service Circular 8/2004 asked Fire and Rescue Authorities to confirm their willingness to participate in the Mutual Aid Agreement. A final agreed version of the Agreement will be sent to Fire and Rescue Authorities by the end of 2004.

Firelink

4.21 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, in line with Fire Service Circular 7/2002, will contribute to the revenue costs of the new radio system from 2006/07. We will discuss with Fire and Rescue Authorities the scale of their contribution upon contract award, which is currently scheduled for Spring 2005. It is planned that the new radio system will roll-out from 2005 to 2008.

4.22 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.

4.23 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.



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;
- used as effectively as possible; and
- offered a rewarding and flexible career.

The Service comprises operational staff who spend most of their service in an active role of prevention and intervention; and managerial, administrative and support staff whose contribution is equally important and who keep the Service functioning. The freedoms which have been conferred by the abolition of the Appointments and Promotion Regulations and the common framework of IPDS (see Chapter 6) mean that movement within the workforce should be more flexible than in the past. For example, there may be opportunities to move from a non-operational to an operational role or from operations to community fire safety. It is important that the Service treats its workforce as a unified whole, including developing and recognising specialist skills. There should be no artificial barriers to staff from different backgrounds aspiring to the most senior jobs.

5.2 Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that all members of staff are treated fairly and afforded equality of opportunity. They 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. It is not about providing more training and development, but about ensuring that it is better tailored to the needs of the workforce as a whole than it has been in the past.

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 has amended the Firefighters' Pension Scheme to allow part-time service as a regular firefighter to count towards pension entitlement. This is facilitating arrangements that were already operating in some Fire and Rescue Authorities and encouraging others to extend the practice. All other staff have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme which already makes provision for flexible working including on a part-time basis. **Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that there is as much opportunity as is reasonably possible for people to work flexibly, for example on a part-time basis, using flexi-time or working as part of a job share arrangement.**

5.5 The Government particularly values the contribution of staff on the retained duty system, which provides the backbone of many Fire and Rescue Authorities across the country. It is important that full use is made of their valuable skills and that more is done to tackle recruitment and retention challenges. Recommendations on tackling these issues were made by the Retained Review Team to the Practitioners' Forum in September 2004. The Review Team's report and recommendations will be published in January 2005. A task group has been set up jointly by the Practitioners' Forum and the Business and Community Safety Forum to facilitate the delivery of the Retained Review Team's recommendations. Fire and Rescue Authorities may wish to consider what practical steps they can take, in the light of guidance from the task group, to implement these recommendations.

5.6 The introduction of IPDS (see Chapter 6) is an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of staff on the retained duty system. 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 stakeholders, including the retained duty system task group, to encourage more people to apply to join the retained duty system, to make the positive changes necessary to encourage existing staff to stay in the Service and to 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:

- 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 wholetime and other staff; and
- break down artificial barriers between staff on the retained duty system and other staff, including where appropriate exploring options such as mixed crewing and providing wholetime staff with the opportunity to undertake additional service on the retained duty system.

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 The Government will work with Fire and Rescue Authorities, CFOA and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 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; and

- facilitating the sharing of good 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.

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. The National Workforce Development Strategy (see Chapter 6) covers training and development aspects of the wider Pay and Workforce Strategy.

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 outsourcing 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 (see Annex B) 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. Achieving greater diversity within the Service is clearly the responsibility of Fire and Rescue Authorities. However, ODPM is fully supportive of this aim and will work with partners to develop a strategy on equality and diversity supported by a national programme.

5.16 The programme *Diversity Happens!* 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). Initial scoping of the programme has identified the following projects:

- the dissemination and integration of the core values developed for and by the Fire and Rescue Service (Annex E);
- a review of national recruitment, progression and retention targets for ethnic minorities and women by March 2005;
- tailoring of the Local Government Equality Standard, for Fire and Rescue Authorities by Spring 2005;
- reviewing equality training and the role of equality advisers by May 2005, and disseminating good practice;
- 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; and
- benchmarking of Fire and Rescue Authorities' achievement on equality and diversity issues against the Local Government Equality Standard by May 2005.

5.17 Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should produce an equalities strategy as part of their regional HR strategy (as

set out in paragraph 5.12) which should include stretching but achievable targets for improvement. Regional HR strategies should be compatible with local IRMPs. It is for each Regional Management Board to decide which issues, in addition to those set out in paragraph 5.12, 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 It is the responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Authorities to appoint, develop and promote staff on the basis of good practice in accordance with legal requirements. With the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act on 1 October 2004 the Fire Services (Appointments and Promotion) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004 were repealed. For those staff previously subject to the above regulations, **Fire and Rescue Authorities should have regard to the principles of IPDS (see Chapter 6), including the Personal Qualities and Attributes Framework²⁷**. The provisions of the national firefighter selection tests will be introduced in Spring 2005 and will inform Regional Management Boards' regional recruitment procedures.

Recruitment

5.19 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 literature²⁸ and career information including a web-based recruitment toolkit²⁹ for use by Fire and Rescue Authorities in recruiting staff to all sections of their workforce;
- issuing an advisory document "Medical and Occupational Evidence for Recruitment and Retention in the Fire and Rescue Service³⁰"; and

²⁷ See Fire and Rescue Service Circular 51-2004

²⁸ See: www.odpm.gov.uk/fire/recruitment
Copies are available by contacting michelle.harrison@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

²⁹ See: www.frstoolkit.odpm.gov.uk

³⁰ *Medical and Occupational Evidence for Recruitment and Retention in the Fire and Rescue Service* (ODPM September 2004). See: www.odpm.gov.uk

- supporting the production by CFOA and the Disabilities Rights Commission of guidance for Service managers on meeting their duties under the employment requirements of the Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2003³¹.

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; and
- continue to review and update guidance and run seminars, conferences and workshops on good practice on selection and recruitment for all Fire and Rescue Service staff.

5.20 Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards where appropriate:

- **must comply with existing equality legislation on race and gender; the regulations on sexual orientation, religion or belief; the requirements of the Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2003; and, in due course, with regulations on equal treatment and age; and**
- **should apply identified good practice.**

Discipline

5.21 With the introduction of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Fire Services (Discipline) Regulations 1985 were abolished. Staff that had been formally charged under the 1985 Discipline Regulations before 1 October 2004 retain the right of appeal to the Secretary of State on awards of dismissal, the requirement to resign or reduction in rank. The National Joint Council agreed that the 1985 Regulations could continue to be used, on a non-statutory basis, by Fire and Rescue Authorities until 1 January 2005.

5.22 To comply with the provisions of the Employment Act 2002 (Disputes Resolution) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/752) and in line with the provisions of the sixth edition of the National Joint Council's Scheme of

Conditions of Service (the Grey Book) **Fire and Rescue Authorities are required either:**

- **to have developed and implemented disciplinary procedures which are based on Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) best practice guidance³²; or**
- **to have introduced for use within their authority the model disciplinary procedure as set out in the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades Scheme of Conditions of Service (the Grey Book).**

5.23 Fire and Rescue Authorities should give consideration to the costs, good 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 fire and rescue national 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 to reduce them to 6.9 retirements per thousand employees within all Fire and Rescue Authorities by March 2005. There continues to be a year-on-year reduction in the number of ill-health retirements, but it is unlikely that this target will be met.

³¹ See: www.drc-gb.org (Available January 2005)

³² See: www.acas.org.uk/publications

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

5.28 The Government has amended the Firefighters' Pension Scheme to enable Fire and Rescue Authorities to continue to draw on the experience of trained firefighters who may no longer be fit to undertake firefighting duties, rather than have to retire them with an ill-health pension. The amendments also place an obligation on Fire and Rescue Authorities to use independent medical assessment – whose opinion is binding – before approving applications for early retirement on ill-health grounds.

5.29 Fire and Rescue Authorities should:

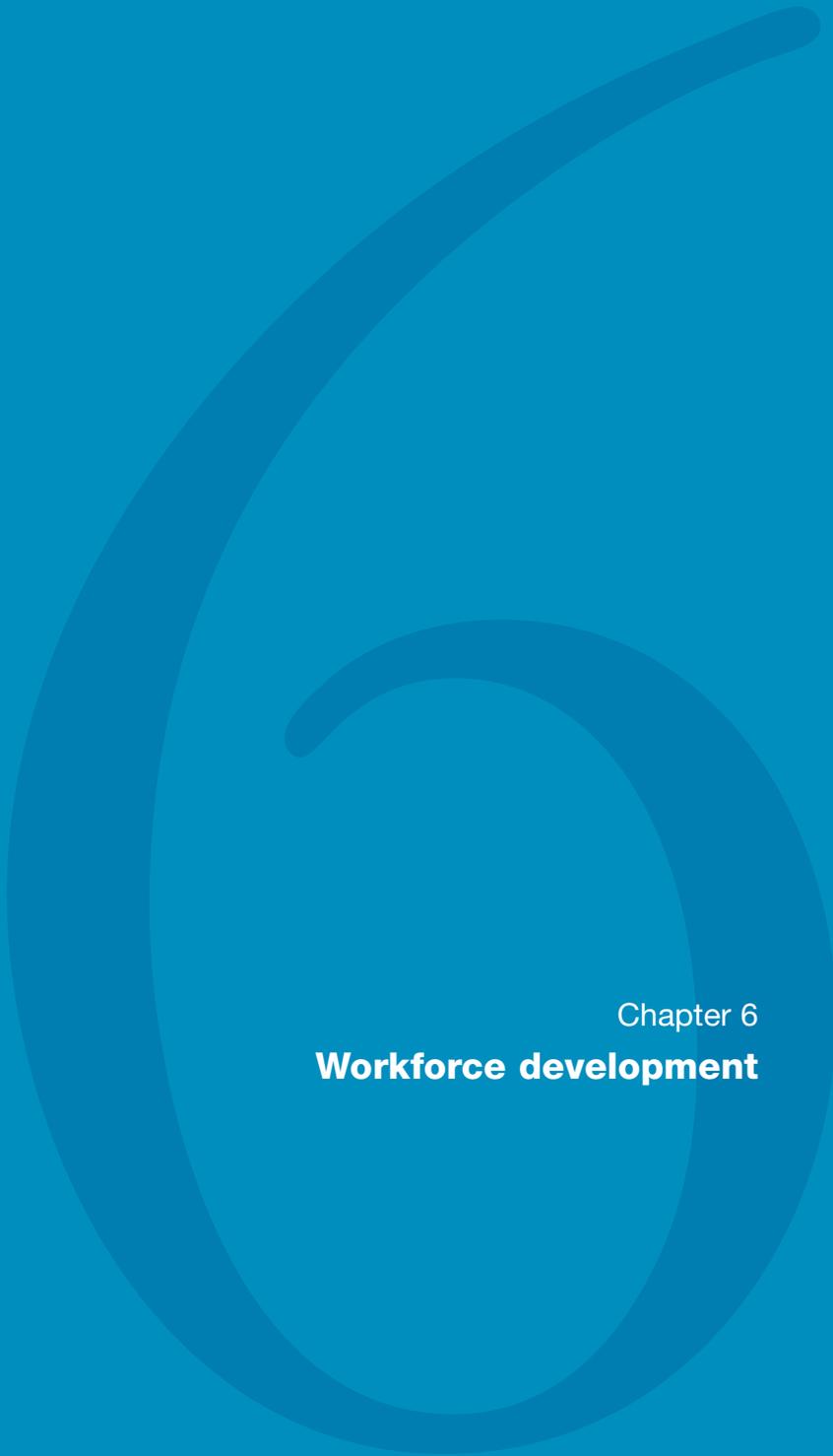
- ensure that their occupational health arrangements including the provision of occupational health advice are efficient and effective;
- ensure that full consideration is given to the health and fitness of all staff and that they are assigned to appropriate roles;
- introduce and administer effective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

Pensions

5.30 The Government has reviewed the pension arrangements for all firefighters. On 13 October 2004, ODPM published two consultation documents³³ making proposals for a new firefighters' pension scheme and for amendments to the existing scheme. The period for consultation ends on 14 January 2005. Thereafter, the Government will consider the comments and decide on the new arrangements. The aim is that any new pension arrangements should 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 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).

³³ *Government Proposals for a New Firefighters Pension Scheme and Proposals for amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme* (ODPM October 2004)

See: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_fire/documents/page/odpm_fire_032358.hcsp and www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_fire/documents/page/odpm_fire_032360.hcsp



Chapter 6

Workforce development

The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)

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

6.2 The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) for people and organisational management represents a complete change of approach to workforce development for Fire and Rescue Authorities. Brought in as part of the June 2003 pay and modernisation agreement for operational staff, IPDS introduces a competence-based approach, and its system of development specifically targets the needs of the individual. The repeal of the appointments and promotion regulations for operational staff (see paragraph 5.18) has made it possible for people to join at all levels of the Service and to 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, work is now under way to consider role maps for wider roles within the Service. This CFOA-led work is due to provide an initial report in February 2005.

6.4 The Government has supported the Service in the implementation 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. IPDS will provide the foundation for this through the Assessment Development Centre (ADC) project which will provide the process through which

people will be assessed and selected for development for a new role.

6.6 The Government is:

- working with Fire and Rescue Authorities to develop ADCs as the means of assessing potential for new uniformed roles;
- funding the development of a suite of assessment tools (to be rolled out in 2005) which will be available for Fire and Rescue Authorities to use within the full ADC process; and
- working with all stakeholders to ensure appropriate quality assurance systems for consistent application of IPDS standards are in place by mid 2005.

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, as required under the June 2003 pay and modernisation agreement;**
- **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 IPDS requires people to demonstrate competence in their role and, in many cases, this will mean developing people's existing knowledge, skills and understanding to required standards. To meet these more diverse needs, Fire and Rescue Authorities will need to look to a range of sources to help staff attain and maintain competence. This may include some outside the traditional fire and rescue institutions (such as Further Education and management colleges) and e-learning.

6.9 To support Fire and Rescue Authorities, ODPM held a consultation exercise prior to drawing up a National Workforce Development Strategy (NWDS) for the Fire and Rescue Service in England. This high-level strategy will ensure the Fire and Rescue Service operates within the Government's wider skills development framework. Responses to the consultation support the aims and objectives of the NWDS, but it is clear that the strategy needs to be more explicitly inclusive of all Fire and Rescue Service staff. It also needs to recognise the investment that has been made in local training resources and to strike the balance between giving Fire and Rescue Authorities flexibility in their choice of training provides and maintaining the integrity of IPDS standards.

6.10 It is important for the aims and objectives of the NWDS to be matched with the facilities currently available for the training and development of Fire and Rescue Service staff. This will help to ensure that an informed judgement can be made by Fire and Rescue Authorities about where their staff training and development needs can most effectively be met. Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting statistics show wide variations in the use of training facilities and the cost of provision. ODPM has commissioned the Chief Executive of the Fire Service College to draw up a national training and development plan for the Fire and Rescue Service in England, in consultation with stakeholders. Part of this process will include addressing concerns raised by NWDS consultees about IPDS accreditation and quality assurance. The training and development plan is due to be completed by March 2005.

6.11 The Government believes that it is most efficient and effective if some facilities are shared at a regional level. **Fire and Rescue Authorities, through Regional Management Boards, should:**

- **review the use currently made of existing facilities and resources and ensure those are used to deliver training as efficiently and effectively as possible; and**
- **deliver training and development in accordance with national standards to support all staff who are either working towards or seeking to maintain competence against relevant standards.**

The Fire Service College

6.12 The College will continue to provide a national and international facility for operational incident management training, centred on its unique facilities. ODPM is undertaking a review of the funding regime of the Fire Service College. This is looking both at the advantages and disadvantages of the current financial arrangements and at other options from the perspective of the College's business, ODPM's strategic interests and the needs of the Service. The College's core objective remains the delivery of the training and education that UK Fire and Rescue Authorities want and need in ways that suit its customers.

6.13 The College will be developing a comprehensive suite of courses to support all aspects of vocational development, including community fire safety, working with young people, fire safety legislation and risk management. Its potential as a centre of expertise on New Dimension training techniques, including urban search and rescue and dealing with CBRN incidents is being realised and closer partnership with other emergency services is being explored. The College is developing its role as a centre of excellence by exploring partnerships and co-location with key fire and rescue organisations and working on options for partnership with the private sector in developing the use of the site and facilities. The College plays a key role in the support framework for IPDS in partnership with ODPM. It is responsible for providing expert advice and support on IPDS to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

6.14 The College is exploring opportunities to access Learning and Skills Council funding to support vocational development across the service. This would enable the College to offer a broader range of qualifications to Fire and Rescue Service staff.

6.15 The Practitioners' Forum has established a Futures Group which provides an opportunity for key Fire and Rescue Service stakeholders to give feedback on the College's performance and to be kept informed of and contribute to its strategic development.

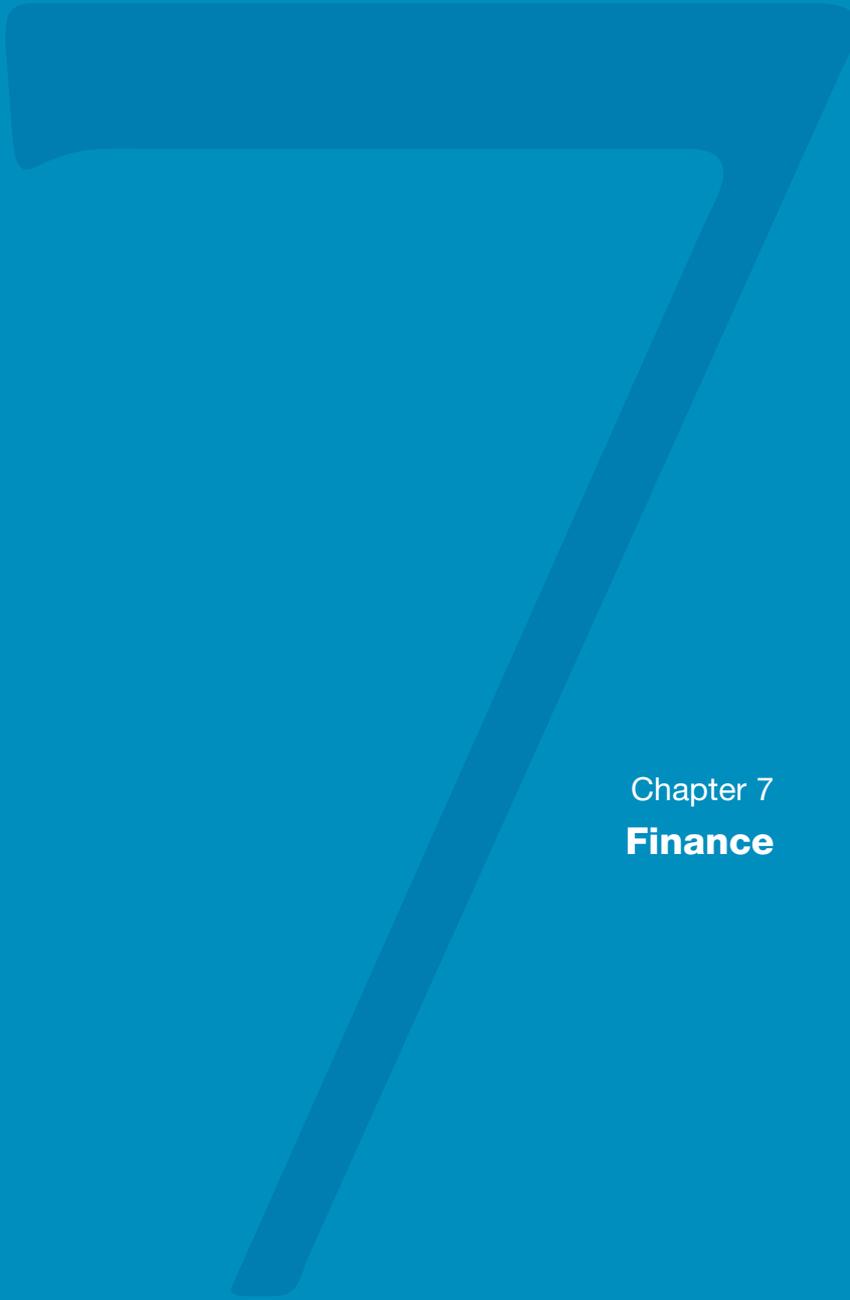
Leadership

6.16 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 will support this aim.

6.17 Under the auspices of the IPDS Project Board, ODPM with other relevant stakeholders is developing new arrangements to improve leadership development in the Fire and Rescue Service. Two task and finish groups have been convened. The Strategic Leadership Development Framework group is developing a scheme to identify, select and develop suitable candidates for the strategic levels of Fire and Rescue Service management. The Targeted Development group is designing a scheme, and will propose an implementation strategy, to facilitate the targeted progression of Fire and Rescue Service personnel to middle management. We aim to complete the design of the middle management scheme by Summer 2005 and the strategic leadership programme by Winter 2005.

6.18 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.**

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Chapter 7
Finance

Revenue Support

7.1 According to the provisional 2005/06 local government settlement, Fire and Rescue Authorities will receive an average increase in grant of 3.7% and no authority will receive less than a 2.5% increase in 2005/06.

7.2 The Government continues to recognise that the modernisation programme and the associated agreement on pay and terms and conditions has and will have significant financial ramifications. There are increased costs to fund the pay award and potentially some aspects of the modernisation agenda, for example the increased emphasis on prevention. However, substantial savings are also available, for example through better targeting of resources to match risks, regional collaboration and more efficient working practices, which might include the use of overtime, alternative duty systems, part time working, greater use of non uniformed staff, revised crewing levels and officer cover arrangements. The Independent Review of the Fire and Rescue Service³⁴ said 'We are confident that, within the foreseeable future, benefits will more than exceed additional costs, including those of the pay increases we propose'³⁵. 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 Sir Peter Gershon's efficiency review that formed part of Spending Review 2004 (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'³⁶. The aim is to ensure that maximum use is made of increased investment. The principles apply equally to central government and Fire and Rescue Authorities. Local government as a whole has been set a target of achieving £6.45 billion in efficiency gains by 2007/08. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a part to play in helping local government to

meet that target. ODPM has assumed within its own efficiency target that English Fire and Rescue Authorities together will achieve £105m gross efficiency savings in 2007/08 compared to the position in 2004/05. This would amount to a gross efficiency saving in 2007/08 equivalent to around 5% of total 2004/05 expenditure. More detail is given in ODPM's efficiency target's technical note³⁷. Efficiency gains will be retained locally for re-investment in front-line service. Efficiency improvements are already an integral part of modernisation. ODPM will continue to provide support to Fire and Rescue Authorities, for example through the improvement planning process (see Chapter 8). We are still working on details, including how to measure the target, and will consult stakeholders in due course.

7.4 The Government has long recognised that there may be a lag between costs and savings of Fire and Rescue Service modernisation. That is why, at the LGA's request, we paid £30 million transitional funding to English and Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2004/05. Originally the Government planned to recoup the transitional funding before the end of 2005/06. But we have recognised that there have been delays in the pay and modernisation process and that, amongst other things, this would have meant that we were seeking to recoup the transitional funding less than a year after it had been distributed to authorities. The LGA therefore suggested that the recouping of the transitional funding be deferred until 2006/07. The LGA and Fire and Rescue Authorities have provided evidence to support their case, including on efficiencies to be delivered for 2006/07. We have therefore agreed to meet the LGA's request. This is reflected in the grant increases described in paragraph 7.1.

Council Tax

7.5 As the Government has repeatedly made clear, Fire and Rescue Authorities must understand fully their own responsibility for minimising council tax increases.

³⁴ The Independent Review of the Fire Service: *The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives* (2002). See: www.irfs.org.uk

³⁵ Ibid, Chapter 12 – *Implementing Reform*, paragraph 12.22.

³⁶ *Releasing Resources to the Frontline – Efficiency Review*, Budget 2003 Review (HMT 2003).

³⁷ See: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_about/documents/page/odpm_about_032565.pdf

The Government used its reserve capping powers for the first time in 2004/05 and will not hesitate to use them again in 2005/06 if necessary. Capping powers were exercised against five Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2004/05. One authority was capped in-year and four were set notional 2004/05 budget requirements which are lower than the actual budget requirements. The notional figure will be used in subsequent years' capping comparisons.

7.6 The Government expects to see significantly lower council tax increases in 2005/06. If necessary, we will take even tougher action than we did in 2004/05. The Government expects average council tax increases in England in 2005/06 to be less than 5%. This applies to all authorities, including Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Three Year Settlements

7.7 Spending Review 2004 announced that the Government would be introducing three year revenue and capital settlements for local police and Fire and Rescue Authorities. The purpose of this change is to maximise the benefits of three year spending plans for central government departments by cascading them down to the maximum extent possible. To that end the Government aims to issue proposals for consultation by the end of 2005.

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 retirement pensions. Authorities would retain responsibility for paying pension 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. Further work on these new financial arrangements is underway and detailed proposals will be issued for consultation in early 2005, with the expectation that the new arrangements will be introduced in April 2006.

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 2006/07.

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 According to the provisional local government settlement, the Government will also distribute £57.98 million in supported capital expenditure to English Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2005/06. ODPM has informed English Fire and Rescue Authorities of the amount of supported capital expenditure which each can expect to receive alongside the provisional local government settlement. Following devolution of capital funding of Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities to the Welsh Assembly Government, it is now responsible for distributing supported capital expenditure to Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

7.13 Eight schemes have successfully signed following the inception of PFI for the Fire and Rescue Service in 1998. Seven of these schemes are now operational. 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 oversubscribed by approximately 180%. Two schemes went through to the next stage, as announced on 24 March 2004. These were LFEPA's Personal Protective Equipment project, part of the integrated clothing project (see paragraph 2.21). This is now a national project that all English Fire and Rescue Authorities have signed up to and is likely to become the first national procurement under the aegis of FiReBuy (see paragraph 2.22). ODPM is in discussion with HM Treasury about the best way to finance the project,

but remains committed to it. The second scheme is a joint North East fire and rescue services' bid for community fire stations and a community life skills centre. The joint North East scheme has assembled its project team to work up the detail of the proposal into a Business Case.

7.14 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 launch a further bidding round for authorities at the end of 2004 and to announce successful bids in mid 2005.

Other sources of funding

7.15 We have made £25 million available to Fire and Rescue Authorities in England for the period up to March 2008 to enable the Fire and Rescue Service to undertake Home Fire Risk Checks and to provide free smoke alarm installation for vulnerable, high risk households. We have also made £4.5 million available for community fire safety and £11.3 million for arson reduction work (see Chapter 1).

7.16 The Government has invested heavily in the New Dimension programme and is funding the Firelink project (See Chapter 4). In addition to the £188m capital investment the government has planned for the next three years, Ministers recently announced that the Government will provide up to £16m a year to help meet the crewing needs of this investment.

7.17 The Government recognises that there will be net additional costs to fire and rescue authorities during the transition from local control rooms to the national network of control centres. Central government will support these costs in line with new burdens principles. ODPM has agreed a process with the LGA to agree on the sum due under new burdens in 2005/06 (see paragraph 2.13).

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.

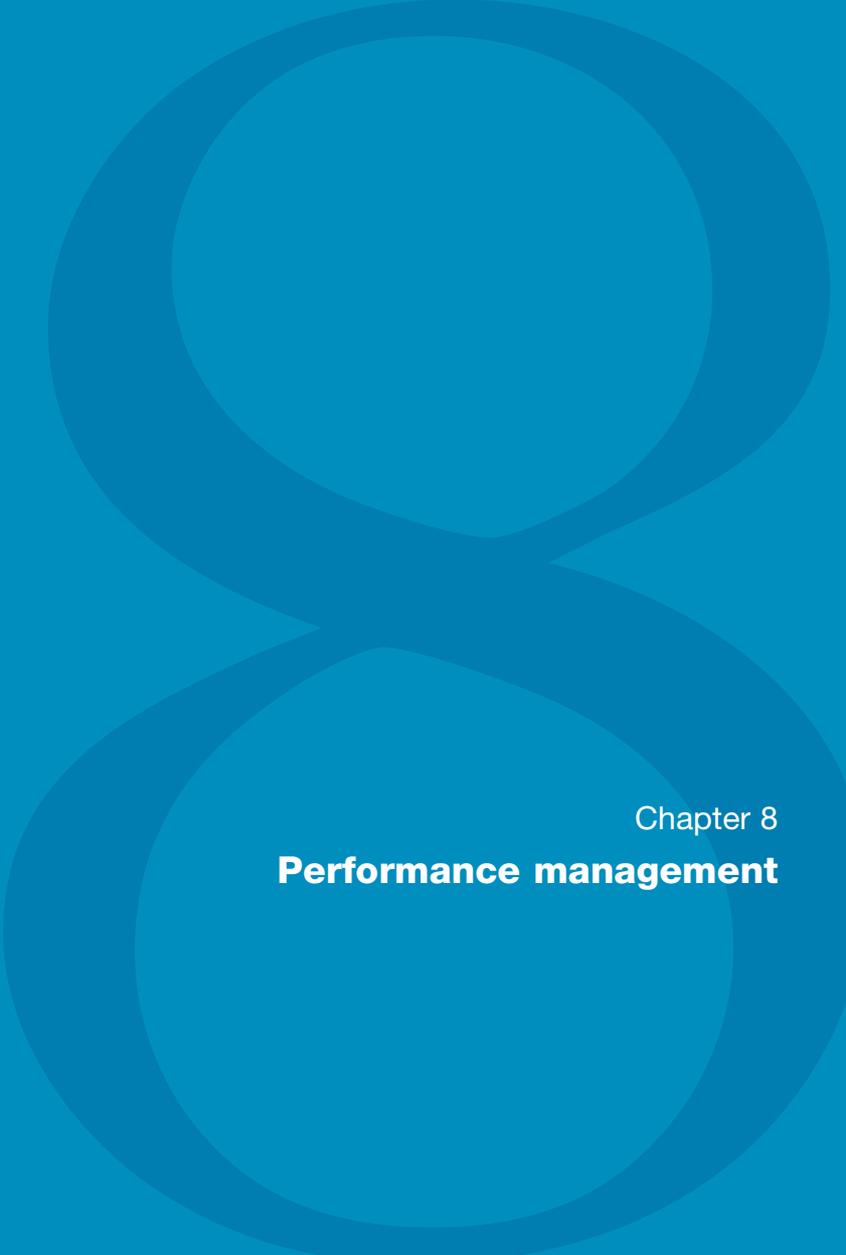
Charging

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 Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 preserves a power to charge for responding to incidents other than fire calls and ensures that emergency medical assistance is free at the point of delivery. By “charge” we mean the recovery of up to the full costs incurred by the authority in providing that service to distinguish it from “trading”, which is considered in paragraph 7.21 below. The first Order made under Section 19 came into effect on 1 October 2004 and specifies all services for which at least one English Fire and Rescue Authority was charging as at 1 April 2004. Authorities will wish to consider very carefully whether the costs of providing the non-statutory services specified in the Order should fall on those who requested the service or on council tax payers.

7.21 A number of authorities have become accustomed to recovering an element of profit when setting their fees for services such as training and safety consultancy. This is known as “trading”. In normal circumstances we would consider that this commercially based activity should be permitted only as part of a flexibilities package following a favourable assessment under the CPA process. However, during our consultation on the Section 19 power, forceful representations were made that we should ensure that these income streams were not put at risk during 2005 by the new charging regime. For that reason we made a trading Order under section 95 of the Local Government Act 2003 to cover all services in which named English Fire and Rescue Authorities were trading on 1 April 2004. The Order will be reviewed after the introduction of a CPA for Fire and Rescue Authorities in 2005. Although this arrangement requires 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.

7.22 ODPM expects to issue guidance on the charging and trading Orders shortly after publication of the National Framework.

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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 work required to implement Fire and Rescue Service CPA will be fully funded by ODPM. 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 In consultation with stakeholders the Audit Commission has developed a model of CPA for the Service 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 elected Members and senior officers to focus on their performance management priorities and to help the authority to get the most out of the CPA process.

Piloting and timeframe

8.6 The Audit Commission has recently completed a second round of piloting with four volunteer authorities. The Audit Commission will publish the final CPA framework in December. 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 As anticipated county Fire and Rescue Authority CPA results will be appropriately incorporated in the implementation of the redesigned CPA for single tier and county councils for 2005/06 onwards.

8.8 The Audit Commission, and appointed auditors, will continue to have an ongoing engagement with each authority's performance management processes through scrutiny of its Performance Plan and improvement processes which follow implementation of CPA.

Improvement Planning, Capacity Building and Freedoms and Flexibilities

8.9 Authorities should be focussing on improvement priorities in the context of their regular business planning cycle, incorporating BVPP and IRMP requirements, and reflecting the national performance expectations of the White Paper and the National Framework.

8.10 Following publication of CPA reports, each authority will have a robust baseline to undertake a cycle of improvement planning. It will be for the authorities to fund the implementation of improvement plans from their own resources. However, we intend that this process be supported further by a roundtable discussion between the authority, the Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Team (FRSIT), HMFSI and the Audit Commission, to discuss improvement priorities and capacity building. These proposals have been strongly supported by authorities following consultation. The round-table process is being trialled with the help of the second round CPA pilot authorities, with a view to refining proposals and developing more detailed guidance for participants.

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 A). Following consultation, authorities have fully endorsed this approach. It is therefore proposed that the protocol will be appropriately amended to reflect its application to Fire and Rescue Authorities and the new intervention powers available to the Secretary of State in section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

8.12 Further guidance on improvement planning and freedoms and flexibilities will be contained in a Fire and Rescue Authority Best Value Circular, which will be issued shortly. We will continue to 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 Performance Partnership³⁸ and with contractors on the Local Government Capacity Building Framework Contract to provide national and regional capacity building programmes for local government in a range of areas such as performance management and training for elected members. Business Change Managers (see paragraph 8.15) will act as the link to ODPM Directors of Practice in each Government Office to facilitate access for Fire and Rescue Authorities to these programmes as well as to potential direct grant funding to support local or regional improvement programmes³⁹.

8.14 We have worked with stakeholders to develop new freedoms that will be made available to successful and innovative Fire and Rescue Authorities following CPA. Details will be announced in the Fire and Rescue Authority Best Value Circular referred to in paragraph 8.12.

Business Change Managers

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

- represent the interests of ODPM in each region by providing a resource for Fire and Rescue Authorities to aid the development of Regional Management Boards. This will include identifying and achieving business change benefits, both generally and in relation to the six key areas of work attributed to Regional Management Boards (see paragraph 2.10).
- on behalf of FRSIT, support the CPA improvement planning roundtable meetings following the inspection process in each Fire and Rescue Authority. They will liaise with individual Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Audit Commission and other ODPM bodies and will act as the Fire and Rescue Service link to ODPM Directors of Practice and the ODPM/LGA local government capacity building programme (see paragraph 8.13).
- work within the relevant Government Office to ensure that key stakeholders in the region support and understand the modernisation agenda. This includes establishing links with work on crime and disorder reduction, neighbourhood renewal, social exclusion, resilience, local government performance improvement and housing (see paragraphs 1.9-1.25).

Best Value and data collection

8.16 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. Detailed guidance will be contained in Fire and Rescue Authority Best Value Circular referred to in paragraph 8.12.

Best Value and data collection

8.17 The Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) which we propose to apply to Fire and Rescue Authorities from 1 April 2005 are at Annex F. Performance Indicators have an important role in providing a broad diagnostic tool to enable performance to be tracked

³⁸ The Improvement and Development Agency, the Local Government Employers' Organisation, the 4Ps and LACORs.

³⁹ See the following websites:
ODPM – www.odpm.gov.uk/capacitybuilding
IdeA – www.idea.gov.uk; and
LGA – www.lga.gov.uk/EnhancedIndexDetails.asp?lsection=59&ccat=770

over time for both local performance management and independent performance assessment. The current set of performance indicators have been developed and refined with the help of a working group with practitioner and wider stakeholder representation, piloting by volunteer authorities and national consultation. These performance indicators are intended to reflect the performance expectations of the White Paper and the National Framework and to underpin performance assessment.

8.18 We are also working with Service stakeholders to support a process to identify and promote appropriate voluntary indicators that Fire and Rescue Authorities can opt to use where they may need to develop their own local performance measures, for example to assess their performance standards set against their IRMPs.

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

Local 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.

Local Area Agreements

8.22 Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are being developed. They will improve co-ordination between central government, local authorities and their partners. They

will simplify the number of funding streams and help join up public services by encouraging local bodies to align and pool their budgets. Mainstream funding may contribute to achieving outcomes. Local authorities who are leading in the development of LAAs will need to engage local partners, such as Fire and Rescue Authorities, in their proposals. If the current pilots are deemed to be successful there will be a wider roll-out of LAAs in 06/07.

e-Government

8.23 Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to meet Government targets⁴⁰ for e-delivery of services including:

- 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.

8.24 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 use⁴¹ is now supplemented elsewhere in local government by benchmarks for priority service delivery and the take-up of e-services.

e-Fire

8.25 ODPM no longer intends to publish Implementing E-Government priority outcomes for Fire and Rescue Authorities as it has done for other local authorities. The restructured e-Fire National Project will help Fire and Rescue Authorities meet their e-government targets. This aims to develop a public web portal for the Fire and Rescue Service, providing fire safety information and services to business and the community and a platform for future developments.

⁴⁰ web-site of the Office of the e-Envoy: www.e-envoy.gov.uk

⁴¹ *The National Strategy for Local e-Government* (ODPM 2002).



Chapter 9
Research

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

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

9.2 ODPM and predecessor departments have for many years sponsored programmes of research. ODPM is currently undertaking work including:

- Risk Management, in particular the continued development of the FSEC methodology and the associated toolkit (see paragraph 1.7);
- Civil Resilience, including projects identified by the Building Disaster Assessment Group to ensure that Fire and Rescue Service procedures and building design are compatible;
- Building Regulations, including studies to develop the science that underpins many aspects of fire safety in buildings and further investigations into the effectiveness of residential sprinkler systems, specifically in relation to the use of concealed sprinkler heads;
- Community Fire Safety, including an evaluation of the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund (see paragraph 1.11);
- Arson, through the Arson Control Forum (see paragraph 1.22); and
- Social research, such as the employment status of staff on the retained duty system.

9.3 Further information can be found at the ODPM website⁴² under 'science and research', and at the Arson Control Forum website⁴³.

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, trade unions, manufacturers and suppliers, academia and insurers.

9.5 The Government believes that there is considerable scope to improve collaboration on fire and rescue research. It is working, in collaboration with the fire and rescue research community, to develop a comprehensive fire and rescue research strategy that will help underpin the modernisation agenda and the new challenges facing the 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 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;
- research on the development of Fire and Rescue Service staff required for the delivery of the modernisation agenda; and
- support for underpinning fire science in academia.

⁴² www.odpm.gov.uk

⁴³ www.arsoncontrolforum.gov.uk

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

9.7 The first stage was 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. ODPM Ministers agreed this programme of research in outline in September 2004, after consultation with the Practitioners' Forum and the Business and Community Safety Forum.

9.8 Following informal discussions and an early consultation meeting in September 2004, ODPM is taking forward the creation of an online Fire Research Academy. As part of the process relating to the setting up of this Academy, ODPM will be consulting key stakeholders on the creation of the first comprehensive national fire and rescue research strategy. This will initially be published in December 2004, although we expect the document will continue to develop and evolve in line with changing needs and aims. Thereafter, one of the responsibilities of the Fire Research Academy will be to seek to advise on fundamental fire and rescue research in the light of the national strategy which it will keep under review.

9.9 A steering group will be established shortly and a preliminary website⁴⁴ was launched in early November 2004.

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

9.11 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 and the Academy.

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 BVPIs 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. A scoping study has been completed and provided options for taking forward the work – including the creation of a bespoke system or the further development of current ODPM systems. These options will be considered by the Steering Group over the next month. 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. We aim to complete this work by the end of 2005 and are also actively considering additional data that will be needed for the introduction of BVPIs in April 2005. We will provide Fire and Rescue Authorities with as much warning as possible of any changes to the content or coverage of the information required, for both BVPIs and any other data used for monitoring purposes.

9.15 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.

⁴⁴ www.fireresearchacademy.org.uk



Annexes

Annex A

Protocol on Central Government Engagement in Poorly Performing Local Authorities

Preamble

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

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

Purpose

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

4. The term 'engagement' is used to refer to 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

29. 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 B

Fire and Rescue Service Targets and ODPM Strategic Priorities

Fire Public Service Agreement

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

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

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

Main target: Accidental fire-related deaths in the home

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

Sub-target 1: Floor Target

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

Sub-target 2: Deliberate fires

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

Additional Targets for the Fire and Rescue Service

Equality and Diversity Targets:

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

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

SR2000 SDAs:

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 levels 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.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1

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

Priority 2

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

Priority 3

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

Priority 4

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

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

Priority 5

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

Annex C

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

May 2004

Memorandum of Understanding

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

2. It came into force on 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. <i>Continued</i>

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 D: Operational and Technical Guidance

The current sources for Operational and Technical Guidance are:

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

It is anticipated that simplified, more easily accessible forms of guidance will be available from March 2006 – see paragraph 3.32. Requests for information or advice on any specific topic should be directed to the Fire Information Centre 020 7944 5715.

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 2005/06	
BVPI 142	ii) primary fires per 10,000 population; iii) accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings.
BVPI 143	The number of – i) deaths; ii) injuries (excluding precautionary checks), arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population.
BVPI 144	The percentage of accidental fires in dwellings confined to room of origin.
BVPI 146	i) Number of calls to malicious false alarms not attended per 1,000 population; ii) Number of calls to malicious false alarms attended per 1,000 population.
BVPI 149	i) False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non-domestic properties; ii) Number of those properties with more than 1 attendance; iii) The % of calls which are to a property with more than 1 attendance.
BVPI 150	Expenditure per head of population on the provision of fire and rescue services.
BVPI 206	i) Number of deliberate primary fires (excluding deliberate primary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population; ii) Number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population; iii) Number of deliberate secondary fires (excluding deliberate secondary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population; iv) Number of deliberate secondary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population.
BVPI 207	The number of fires in non-domestic premises per 1,000 non-domestic premises.
BVPI 208	The % of people in accidental dwelling fires who escape unharmed without FRA assistance at the fire.
BVPI 209	The % of fires attended in dwellings where: i) a smoke alarm had activated; ii) a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate; iii) no smoke alarm was fitted.

Corporate Health BVPIs	
BVPI 2	i) The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms. ii) The duty to promote race equality.
BVPI 8	% of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days.
BVPI 11	i) The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women. ii) The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities. iii) The percentage of top 5% of earners that are disabled.
BVPI 12	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.
BVPI 15	i) Wholetime firefighter ill-health retirements as a % of the total workforce. ii) Control and non-uniformed ill-health retirements as a % of the total workforce.
BVPI 16	The % of employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area.
BVPI 17	% of ethnic minority uniformed staff of ethnic minority population of working age in brigade area.
BVPI 157	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.
BVPI 210	The % of women fire-fighters.

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

