

Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 Consultation Document

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Steve Worrall, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260204.

1 Purpose of Report

This report brings to the attention of Members the recently issued Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11, together the supplementary Equality and Diversity Strategy.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the new Framework document; and
- b) Authorise officers to prepare, for consideration and approval by the Strategy and Resources Committee, a response to the Framework and associated Equality and Diversity Strategy consultation survey.

3 Background

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service. It 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
- The support the Government will provide in helping them to meet these objectives.

The Framework is a strategic plan, which outlines the outcomes the Government expects to see delivered by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and Regional Management Boards (RMBs) across the range of their functions. The Framework sets out the challenges and opportunities faced by



the Service, its partners and the Government in support of the Service over the next three years.

The main proposed changes since the last Framework document include:

- Scaling down the narrative to key 'must/should' messages
- Lifespan – moving to a three-year document to run alongside the Fire and Rescue Service's financial commitments
- Structure – moving away from the nine to four new chapters focused on key strategic priorities:

Chapter 1 - Prevention, Protection and Response

Chapter 2 - Resilience

Chapter 3 - Diversity and Workforce

Chapter 4 - Governance and Improvement

The attached Appendix summarises the 'must/should' do paragraphs set out within the Framework.

The key priorities for FRAs set out within the Framework are ensuring that public expectations of FRAs are met and ensuring delivery of an enhanced resilience capability. The Framework also cites Equality and Diversity as a key priority, with Government looking to see a 'step change' in this area from FRAs over the next three years.

The Government still sees a role for RMBs and views them as essential to delivering efficiency, effectiveness and an enhanced resilience capability for FRAs. The Framework recommends that RMBs now 'take stock' of how effectively they have delivered the core functions that were set out for them in the Fire White Paper, Our Fire and Rescue Service, in 2003. To this end the Framework states (at paragraph 4.3):

'Regional Management Boards must have clear aims and objectives and where needed costed plans to deliver on their core business, which remains:

- integrating common and specialist services,
- putting in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies,
- introducing regional personnel and human resource functions,
- developing a regional approach to training,
- introducing regional procurement within the context of the National Improvement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service.'

To address the above requirement on 25 October 2007 the West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) approved a proposal to undertake a review of the outcomes delivered against the current WMRMB Programme Plan 2006-08, together with the requirements of the new Framework. The review will determine proposals for inclusion within this region's future 'costed' programme plan. At this preliminary stage, it is expected that many of the objectives presented within the new Framework will have already been addressed by the WMRMB during the period 2006-08.



The review will report back to the WMRMB Programme Board on 13 March 2008 with preliminary recommendations and a final report and programme plan will be presented to the WMRMB meeting scheduled for 24 April 2008. The recommendations of the WMRMB will be circulated to the Fire Authority, when known.

It is anticipated that the review will also satisfy paragraph 4.4 of the Framework that states:

'...Communities and Local Government expects RMBs to undertake a review to establish any further efficiencies that can be driven out through collaborative working and sharing functions. To that end, FRAs working through RMBs must review the opportunities to deliver greater efficiencies through closer joint working or sharing of functions at regional or sub-regional level and take action to implement those efficiencies.'

4 National Framework Consultation Questions

The Government wishes to seek views on the new Framework and invites responses to the following questions:

- 1 What are your views on the new structure of the National Framework?
- 2 Is the National Framework clear about the Government's objectives and priorities, what Fire and Rescue Authorities are expected to deliver, and the support the Government will provide? If not, how could it be improved?
- 3 Do you agree with the policies set out in each chapter? If not why not, and what alternative policy would you wish to see instead?
- 4 Do you have any comments on the implementation of the policies set out that are of relevance to the National Framework?

Views are also sought on the proposed Departmental Strategic Objective ('Ensuring safer communities by providing the framework for the Fire and Rescue Service and other agencies to prevent and respond to emergencies'), which can be found in the introduction to the Framework.

The consultation period is twelve weeks, with responses to be returned by **6 February 2008**.

Subject to the approval of Members, it is recommended that officers, working with Members, prepare a response to be brought to the January 2008 meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee for consideration and approval.

5 Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy

As stated above, the Framework also cites Equality and Diversity as a key priority, with the Government looking to see a 'step change' in this area from FRAs over the next three years. As a supplement to the Framework the Government has issued the draft Equality and Diversity Strategy that builds on the Equality Standard for Local Government, and the Core Values for the



Fire and Rescue Service. Its vision is to create, by 2018, a Service, which can demonstrate that it serves all communities equally to the highest standards, building on a closer and more effective relationship with the public and creating a more diverse workforce, which better reflects the local working population in each area. The Strategy requires action by FRAs, supported by Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Association (LGA) and other partners in five priority areas: leadership, workforce diversity, service delivery, evaluation and dissemination of good practice and accountability.

The Strategy proposes targets for recruitment, retention and progression by 2013. The Government's intention is to make a visible change to the style of recruitment and to the people joining the Service, which will build momentum and support change under the wider Strategy, especially on leadership and culture.

The Government seeks the Fire Authority's views in particular on:

- The level at which recruitment targets for women in operational roles should be set for all FRAs, within the range from 12% up to 18% (by 2013); and
- The level at which recruitment targets for minority ethnic staff should be set:
either (option 1) at the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation within the local working population;
or (option 2) within the range from the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation within the local working population up to 5% above that level (e.g. for an FRA where the minority ethnic percentage of the local working population is 10% the possible range would be 10% to 15%) (by 2013);
and, if option 2 is preferred, the level at which the target should be set;
- Whether, in order to ensure targets are meaningful, FRAs with very low minority ethnic working age populations (e.g. below 2%) and low recruitment requirements (e.g. less than 20 people a year) should set a minority ethnic recruitment target in terms of individuals recruited over the five-year period rather than a percentage of total recruitment.

It also proposes a third target: to reach parity in rates of retention and progression between minority ethnic and white employees, and between men and women, by 2013. Performance on recruitment, retention and progression in relation to the other equality strands (disability, faith and belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and age) and to women in non-operational roles would be monitored.

The aim in the long term would be to change the composition of the Fire and Rescue Service workforce in England so that it includes the same percentage of minority ethnic staff as in the working age population (currently 12%) and 12% women in operational roles (as an achievable basis for further action).



The Fire Authority is invited to comment on the draft Equality and Diversity Strategy and in particular to respond to the following questions:

Strategy

- Do you consider that the Strategy sets out the actions, which will together drive change? If not, why not? And what would you wish to change?

Targets and Monitoring

- Do you support the principle of recruitment, retention and progression targets and consider that they will drive improvement on workforce diversity? If not why not? And what would you propose should be put in place?
- What are your views on the level at which recruitment targets for women in operational roles and ethnic minority staff should be set (within the ranges proposed), in order to be challenging but achievable, and likely to motivate action?
- Do you consider robust monitoring of all seven strands of diversity achievable, and likely to motivate action?

Guidance

- Are there areas covered by the Strategy for which you consider specific guidance for the Fire and Rescue Service is required, (in addition to existing guidance developed for the Service or for the public sector in general)?
- We would also welcome any comments that you may have on the accompanying Impact Assessment (i.e. is there anything specifically you want Communities and Local Government to collect additional information on, i.e. costs / benefits?)

The consultation period is twelve weeks, with responses to be returned by **6 February 2008**.

Subject to the approval of Members, it is recommended that officers, working with Members, prepare a response to be brought to the January 2008 meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee for consideration and approval.

6 Financial Implications

Financial implications arising from the Framework that have a bearing on regional working arrangements will be included within the WMRMB review and reported back to the Fire Authority, when known. It is not possible at this early stage to provide an accurate assessment of the financial implications specific to this Authority in implementing the requirements of the new Framework and the Equality and Diversity Strategy.



7 Legal Comment

The Fire Authority's attention is drawn to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 that states:

Section 21: Fire and Rescue National Framework Paragraph 42

This section requires the Secretary of State to consult on and prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework ("the Framework"), to which fire and rescue authorities must have regard in carrying out their functions. The Secretary of State must keep the Framework under review and must consult on any significant revisions made to it. Parliament will have the opportunity to scrutinise the Framework before it takes effect.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached.

9 Appendix

Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 (Consultation Document) Summary of 'Should/Must' statements

10 Background Papers

Fire and Rescue Service Circular 52/2007 (issued 14 November 2007)
Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 Consultation Document
Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	*
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	*
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*





Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service EQIA number

Initial Equality Impact Assessment Form

Directorate	Performance	Department/ Section	HQ
Name of officer	Steve Worrall	Job title	ACFO
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed	National Framework	Date of assessment	5 th December 2007
New or existing policy	E		

1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service	National Framework (as set out within this CFA Report)		
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy/service?	Statutory Requirement		
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	FRS/FRA/Communities		
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?	Statutory Requirement		
5. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?	FRA, CLG, WMRMB		
6. Who implements the policy/service and who is responsible for this?	FRA, CLG, WMRMB		
7. Are there any concerns that this policy/service could have a differential impact on the following groups and what existing evidence do you have for this? Yes or No, please detail in boxes below.			
8. Age	¥	N	
9. Disability	¥	N	
10. Gender	¥	N	



11. Race	☹	N	
12. Religion or belief	☹	N	
13. Sexual orientation	☹	N	
14. Dependant/caring responsibilities	☹	N	
15. Could the differential impact identified in 7-14 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	☹	N	
16. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or another reason?	☹	N	Please explain for each, equality heading on a separate piece of paper.
17. Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	Y	N	FRA & WMRMB
18. Should the policy proceed to a full impact assessment?	☹	N	
19. Date by which full impact assessment to be completed	N/A		
20. Reason for non completion	The Framework promotes/enforces Equality and Diversity		

I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed.

I understand the Impact Assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Signed: (Assessing person)	ACFO Steve Worrall	Date:	5/12/07
Signed: (Line Manager)	CFO Alan Taylor	Date:	
Please note that this impact assessment will be scrutinised by the E&D Officer			



Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 (Consultation Document) Summary of ‘should’ and ‘must’ statements applicable to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) and Regional Management Boards (RMB)

Chapter	Para	FRA/ RMB	Must/ Should	National Framework Requirement
Prevention, Protection & Response	1.6	FRA	MUST	<p>...produce a publicly available IRMP [Integrated Risk management plan] covering at least a three-year timespan which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is regularly reviewed and revised and reflects up to date risk information and evaluation of service delivery outcomes. • has regard to the risk analyses completed by Local and Regional Resilience Forums including those reported in external Community Risk Registers (CRRs) and internal risk registers, to ensure that civil and terrorist contingencies are captured in their IRMP. • reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders. • demonstrates how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities in a cost effective way. • provides details of how Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their objectives and meet the needs of communities through working with partners; and • has undergone an effective equality impact assessment process.
	1.6	FRA	SHOULD	<p>...review the effectiveness of “cross-border” integration arrangements with neighbouring authorities and set these out appropriately in their IRMPs. Such reviews may best be carried out jointly and Regional Management Boards provide a potential forum for this to be taken forward.</p>
	1.10	FRA	MUST	



				...have a management strategy and a risk-based inspection programme to enforce the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and this must form part of the IRMP.
	1.15	FRA	MUST	...have in place effective arrangements for gathering risk information and making it readily available to operational crews. This should include an effective audit and review system to ensure that the information is current and in the required format.
	1.18	FRA	MUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have in place a plan to provide such level of emergency cover as it regards as appropriate during any period of emergency, liaising as necessary with other relevant organisations, but without reliance upon support of the Armed Forces; • ensure the availability of all necessary vehicles, equipment, training and support; and • Have in place arrangements for heightening public awareness and vigilance in respect of safety issues during periods of emergency cover.
	1.21	FRA	MUST	...be ready to implement the electronic incident Recording System by 31st March 2009.
	1.23	FRA	MUST	...work together with partners within their LRF to address the risk profile in their area.
	1.23	FRA	SHOULD	At the regional level Fire and Rescue Authorities should work together to ensure effective Fire and Rescue Authority representation at Regional Resilience Forums.
	2.9	FRA	MUST	<p>...make preparations to move their control service to the Regional Control Centre network in line with the FiReControl transition plan and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if not already a member of the RCC company in their region, become a member immediately; • remain a member of the RCC company in their region and participate in its running; including nominating the requisite number of directors and ensuring that those directors fulfil their duties and functions; • participate constructively in making preparations at a regional level for the transfer of the control service to the RCC; • enter into an agreement with the RCC company in their region for the delivery of the control service on their behalf by the RCC, no later than 12 months before the RCC becomes operational;
	2.9	FRA	MUST	



	cont.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enter into agreements with Communities and Local Government and other Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide national co-ordination of the RCCs where necessary and to provide a flexible approach to the use of all FRS resources by 1 April 2009; enter into agreements at least six months before cutover to the new system to ensure that resources can be effectively mobilised across Fire and Rescue Authority borders; complete the tasks defined in the transition plan by the required dates; co-operate fully with the FiReControl technology supplier; report progress regularly to Communities and Local Government using the tools provided for that purpose
	2.11	FRA	MUST	<p>...support the rollout of Firelink by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-operating with the suppliers by giving access to vehicles and existing control rooms, and by ensuring that training programmes are completed to timetable, providing all reasonable support. assisting the Firelink programme with testing of the new system and migration of radio communications to the RCC.
	2.15	FRA	MUST	<p>...use the contract established by Communities and Local Government to secure the long term maintenance of the New Dimension resources for which they are responsible.</p>
Diversity and Workforce	3.10	FRA	MUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy; Ensure that all plans, policies, practices and procedures are effectively equality impact assessed and appropriate action is taken to remove or mitigate any adverse impact; Produce and at least annually review an action plan for implementation of the Strategy, and report to elected members on progress; Provide annually to Communities and Local Government evidence of progress on equality and diversity for publication in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ statistical information on recruitment, progression and retention of staff across all diversity strands, and ➤ qualitative information on policies, procedures, practices and processes which support equality and diversity as evidence of progress made.
	3.20	FRA	MUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply IPDS principles to the recruitment, development and progression of all staff; use IPDS and the national processes based on it (National Firefighter Selection Tests, subject to final validation, and Assessment and Development Centres) for all Grey and Gold Book staff.



	3.21	FRA	SHOULD	<p>...carry out and record individual performance reviews annually which include an assessment of performance against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ role map units, National Occupational Standards or job description duties as appropriate, and ➤ agreed annual objectives, including the setting and assessing of equality and diversity objectives.
	3.26	FRA	MUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that they have in place role related training, development and assessment arrangements to develop and maintain the competence of staff. These should be linked to the IPDS framework and National Occupational Standards across the full range of operational activities; • have in place systematic arrangements to ensure incident and safety event outcomes inform the ongoing development of safe systems of work and training and development of staff. This should include the sharing of risk critical information on a regional/national basis when appropriate.
	3.29	FRA	SHOULD	<p>...appropriately quality assure their training and development programmes, and their use of the National Fire-fighter Selection process and Assessment and Development Centres.</p>
Governance and Improvement	4.3	RMB	MUST	<p>...have clear aims and objectives and where needed costed plans to deliver on their core business, which remains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ integrating common and specialist services, ➤ putting in place effective resilience plans for large scale emergencies, ➤ introducing regional personnel and human resource functions, ➤ developing a regional approach to training, ➤ introducing regional procurement within the context of the National Improvement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service.
	4.4	FRA	MUST	<p>...working through Regional Management Boards must review the opportunities to deliver greater efficiencies through closer joint working or sharing of functions at regional or sub-regional level and take action to implement those efficiencies.</p>
	4.10	FRA	SHOULD	<p>...work with local partners to identify targets, including fire targets where appropriate, that are priorities within the local area and offer appropriate contributions (time and resource) to meet those targets. To do this effectively they will need to evaluate the effectiveness of partnership arrangements, sharing evidence where appropriate.</p>



	4.13	FRA	MUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have regard to any guidance issued by Communities and Local Government in how to exercise this new duty [<i>Public Health Bill</i>]; • demonstrate that they have made changes to service provision, where appropriate, to reflect the needs and views of local communities and to demonstrate that they have considered the needs and views of all communities in making these changes.
	4.36	FRA	SHOULD	...continue to report efficiencies on an individual authority basis; but Communities and Local Government will also provide a facility and guidance for authorities to report collectively on efficiency savings delivered through the Regional Management Board.
	4.38	FRA	SHOULD	...have regard to the government's public sector pay policy and equal pay legislation.
	4.40	FRA	SHOULD	...have an Asset Management Plan in place which reflects guidance to be issued by Communities and Local Government in due course.
	4.42	FRA	MUST	...submit a business case to Communities and Local Government to gain approval to extend existing contracts outside the National Framework Agreements arranged through FireBuy Ltd.

