

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2006/07 – OVERVIEW

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with a summary overview of the Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07, introduced by the Audit Commission.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to note:

- a) The contents of this report and
- b) That they may be called upon by auditors to provide evidence qualifying the Fire Authority's performance.

3 Background

To assess performance of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) the Audit Commission has introduced the Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07. The Framework recognises that FRAs are currently in the process of improvement planning and that the early signs of improvement are only now starting to emerge. The Framework is, therefore, designed to be proportionate and measure the scale and sustainability of this improvement.

The Commission states that the Framework will be proportionate and will focus on improvements made against the fire and rescue Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPA) and will measure the service as experienced by the community. The approach to measuring improvement and performance in FRAs will be through a performance framework with three elements:

- A **use of resources assessment**. This will assess the FRA across a broad range of financial issues and provide a scored assessment, including whether the FRA is providing value for money.
- An assessment of improvement, or deterioration, in performance measured through a **scored direction of travel assessment**. The assessment will be outcome focused and draw together all assessments on the FRA.



- A **scored service assessment**, which will have an emphasis on service delivery and include an operational assessment of the quality of service delivery.

The Commission consulted on a proposed performance framework for FRAs in the spring of 2006. In light of the consultation responses the Commission has amended its proposed performance framework that now reflects the need to:

- Promote value for money;
- Improve financial management and financial reporting;
- Encourage improvements in public services that people value, by challenging FRAs from the perspective of service users and diverse communities;
- Promote good governance, greater accountability, better decision making and the proper conduct of public business; and
- Stimulate significant improvement in the use of performance information, data quality, data analysis, information management and the public accessibility of relevant information.

4 Performance Framework 2006/07 - Overview

The performance framework is a complex process, comprised of several objective and subjective elements. Full details can be accessed via the Audit Commission's website:

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/fire/fireframework.asp>

A summary of the framework's key assessments are described below, supported by the attached appendix, which for ease of explanation portrays the framework in the form of a flow diagram.

5 Use of Resources Assessment

The Use of Resources (UoR) assessment provides a scored assessment across a broad range of financial issues, including a judgement on the Fire Authority's arrangements for securing value for money. It focuses on the importance of having sound and strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the Authority's priorities and improve services. The assessment is challenging and is directly comparable with those made by the Commission for police authorities, councils and health bodies. It is based on the same structure of auditors' judgements, using Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs).

It has 5 themes covering:

- Financial reporting
- Financial management
- Financial standing
- Internal control
- Value for money

Each of the five themes in the UoR will be scored on a scale of 1 to 4:

- 4** - Performing strongly – well above minimum requirements
- 3** - Performing well – consistently above minimum requirements
- 2** - Adequate performance – only at minimum requirements
- 1** - Inadequate performance – below minimum requirements



The overall use of resources score will then be based on a combination of the scores for each theme.

6 Scored Direction of Travel Assessment

A scored direction of travel assessment is an important element of the performance framework. The purpose of this assessment will be to provide a concise statement on an authority's improvement, or deterioration, since the baseline CPA assessment. The assessment will recognise progress since the CPA and qualify it by stating how well the authority is performing and whether or not it is considered that it will continue to improve.

The assessment focuses on two KLOEs:

- What evidence is there of the authority improving outcomes?
- How much progress is being made to implement improvement plans to sustain future improvement?

The outcome of this assessment is awarded a *direction of travel label*:

- Improving strongly
- Improving well
- Improving adequately
- Not improving adequately or Not improving

7 Scored Service Assessment

The service assessment is made up of two elements: the operational assessment of service delivery; and the performance information element. Both of these elements will be scored separately and given a 1 - 4 score, which will then be combined to give the overall service assessment score.

The operational assessment covers the following areas:

- Risk analysis;
- Prevention and protection;
- Operational preparedness;
- Call management and incident support; and
- Emergency response.

All emergency responses (firefighting, fire rescue, transport accidents, specialist rescues, major incidents, terrorism, and environmental threats) will be included.

The Commission will bring together a range of current Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) to determine the performance information element score. BVPIs have been selected from those nationally available to assess the outcome of the services delivered by FRAs. The set of BVPIs used measures outcomes rather than inputs or processes and covers the full range of services provided so far as is possible.



The BVPIs assessed are:

- F1 Primary fires per 10,000 population
- F2 Accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings
- F3 Deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population
- F4 Injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population
- F5 Percentage of accidental dwelling fires confined to room of origin
- F6 False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non-domestic properties attended
- F7 Number of deliberate primary fires (including vehicles) per 10,000 population

Based upon the scores achieved through the operational assessment, combined with the performance demonstrated through the BVPIs, an overall score on a scale of 1 to 4 as shown below will be awarded:

- 4 - Performing strongly – well above minimum requirements
- 3 - Performing well – consistently above minimum requirements
- 2 - Adequate performance – only at minimum requirements
- 1 - Inadequate performance – below minimum requirements

8 Data Quality Review

Whilst not included as a central element of the Performance Framework, the Audit Commission has undertaken a review of the Fire Authority's data quality arrangements. The auditor's conclusions on the management arrangements for data quality will inform the Commission's UoR assessment. The UoR key lines of enquiry, particularly for financial management and value for money, rely on adequate non-financial data to support FRA processes for the achievement of value for money.

The auditor will determine a score for the Fire Authority against each data quality KLOE on the following scale:

- 4 - Performing strongly – well above minimum requirements
- 3 - Performing well – consistently above minimum requirements
- 2 - Adequate performance – only at minimum requirements
- 1 - Inadequate performance – below minimum requirements

The score awarded will influence the judgement within the UoR assessment, but will not, in isolation, form part of the overall scorecard.

9 Structured Self-assessments

The performance framework process includes the requirement to produce two self-assessments that address:

- Service assessment; and
- Direction of travel and use of resources assessment

They are used to guide the fieldwork aspect of the assessments to ensure that they are proportionate and focused. Both self-assessments prepared on behalf of this Fire Authority are published on the Brigade's website.



10 Scored Judgement

At the conclusion of the performance framework assessments (March 2007) a scored judgement will be made by the Audit Commission. The judgement will provide a statement on the Fire Authority's performance in four areas:

Performance Framework 2006/07 Scorecard	
CPA 2005 Score:	➤ Excellent
	➤ Good
	➤ Fair
	➤ Weak
	➤ Poor
Use of Resources:	➤ 4 - Performing Strongly
	➤ 3 – Performing well
	➤ 2 – Adequate performance
	➤ 1 - Inadequate performance
Direction of Travel:	➤ Improving strongly
	➤ Improving well
	➤ Improving adequately
	➤ Not improving adequately or Not improving
Service Assessment:	➤ 4 - Performing Strongly
	➤ 3 – Performing well
	➤ 2 – Adequate performance
	➤ 1 - Inadequate performance

11 Timetable

The following activities are currently underway, or are planned to take place during the forthcoming six months.

July to September 2006

Value for Money conclusion work (part of annual audit requirements)

August 2006

Use of resources (themes 1 to 4) fieldwork commences

End September 2006

Report to those charged with governance issued, covering auditors' work under the Code of Audit Practice

16 October 2006

Value for money and direction of travel self assessment returned to FRA Relationship Manager

Week commencing 16 October 2006

On site operational service assessment carried out

Late November 2006 to January 2007

Use of resources (theme 5 - value for money) and direction of travel field work



Late February 2007

Fire and rescue service assessments published for all FRAs

Late March 2007

FRA performance framework results published for all FRAs
Annual audit and inspection letter published

12 Member Involvement

Within certain elements of the performance framework process it is highly likely that auditors may choose to interview Members of the Fire Authority to assist in the judgements made and conclusions drawn. No details of interviews to be scheduled were available at the time of preparation of this report.

13 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

14 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

15 Appendix

Performance Framework 2006/07 Flow Diagram

16 Background Papers

Audit Commission Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07
<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/fire/fireframework.asp>

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.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	*
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity	*	Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act	*	National Framework	*
Comprehensive Performance Assessment	*	Operational Assurance	*
Equality and Diversity		Retained	*
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	*
Environmental		Staff	*
Financial	*	Strategic Planning	*
Fire Control/Fire Link	*	West Midlands Regional Management Board	*

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Performance Framework 2006/07 Flow Diagram

