
REPORT AUTHOR(S): CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: HOME OFFICE FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL
FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLAND GOVERNMENT
CONSULTATION

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Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
ORGANISATIONAL RISK	✓	OTHER (please specify)	

Any implications affecting this report are noted within the report.

PURPOSE:

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), of the Government consultation on the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England document.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Fire and Rescue Authority elected members acknowledge the draft National Framework document and the changes from the 2012 version and the 2014 addendum.
2. Elected members consider any response to the question areas that they would want to submit and for any response to be delegated to the Chair of the Authority to meet the required timescales.

1 Background

- 1.1 The National Framework sets out the government's expectations and requirements for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England.
- 1.2 The government has a duty under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to produce the framework and keep it current. The Home Secretary reports every 2 years on Fire and Rescue Authorities' compliance with the framework.

- 1.1 The Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework which:
 - a) Must set out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
 - b) May contain guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and
 - c) May contain any other matter relating to Fire and Rescue Authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
- 1.2 Every Fire and Rescue Authority must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. Every authority must publish a statement of assurance of compliance with the Framework.
- 1.3 The National Framework was last published in 2012 and changes are required to embed the fire reform programme and provisions in the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#).

2 Consultation

- 2.1 An open consultation will start from 27 December 2017 to 14 February 2018 to receive views of the proposed Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.
- 2.2 The consultation is aimed at the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and their staff, as well as fire and rescue representative bodies.
- 2.3 The document can also be found on the following hyperlink <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-revised-fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england>
- 2.4 The consultation welcomes comments on the following sections:
 - Delivery of Core Functions
 - Inspection, Accountability and Assurance
 - Governance
 - Achieving Value for Money
 - Workforce
 - National Resilience
 - Intervention Protocol (Annex A)
 - Other general comments not covered in the above sections.
- 2.5 The previous national Framework was released in 2012 with an addendum in 2014 that relates to the Firefighter fitness assessment.
- 2.6 The key differences between the 2012, 2014 addendum and the draft National Framework are detailed in 2.7 to 2.23.
- 2.7 Section 1 Introduction page 7 - Change to the priorities in the Framework for the Fire and Rescue Authorities.

2012 Framework:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

Draft National Framework 2017:

It is proposed the priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Authorities as set by the Framework are to be:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.
- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

- 2.8 Section 2 Delivery of Core Functions pages 9 – In paragraph 2.1 every fire and rescue authority must assess all risks that affect their communities. The draft document now includes ‘Terror Attacks’. This was previously omitted in the 2012 document.
- 2.9 Paragraph 2.7 expands further on the widening role that fire and rescue service personnel undertake, which includes complex needs and vulnerabilities. The FRA will need to ensure all public facing staff has the necessary skills and training to meet the Service demands. The FRA must also evaluate the impact of prevention activities to demonstrate effectively and cost efficiently on risk reduction.
- 2.10 Section 3 Inspection, Accountability and Assurance, page 11; Inspection - This allows Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to have the power of inspection given to them by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004), as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017 (PCA 2017).
- 2.11 Section 3 – Assurance and Scrutiny, page 13, introduces PCC Fire and Rescue Authorities and the scrutiny function of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on exercising their functions, acting as a critical friend.
- 2.12 Section 4 Governance, page 14 and 15 explains the model for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners.
- 2.13 Page 15 paragraph 4.12 to 4.15 explains the role of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and how they represent the sector nationally to develop strategies and policies.

- 2.14 Section 5 Achieving Value for Money, page 16. Paragraph 5.3 - The Framework specifically mentions that Fire and Rescue Authorities should publish a Medium Term Financial Strategy including funding and spending plans for both revenue and capital.
- 2.17 Page 16 paragraphs 5.5 to 5.9 explains the role of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, such as a policy on reserves held by the Authority should be established and any reserves held should be managed to balance spending and funding priorities. Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that management of their finances is undertaken with regard to published guidance, including those set out in Annex B of the document.
- 2.18 Commercial Transformation, page 17, 5.10 to 5.12 explains the need to demonstrate value for money in goods and services that the Service receives; exploring aggregation in their procurement with other FRS's and agencies such as the Police to achieve efficiencies.
- 2.19 Collaboration, page 17 paragraphs 5.13 to 5.15 highlights the changes to the Police and Crime Act 2017 and creating the statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities, Police forces and Ambulance trust to collaborate for efficiencies and effectiveness.
- 2.20 Section 6 Workforce, page 20 states that Fire and Rescue Authorities have a role in ensuring their firefighters remain fit and are supported in remaining in their employment. This was part of the 2014 addendum and is now included as part of the main body of the Framework.
- 2.21 Within the Workforce chapter (chapter 6) of the draft National Framework, the section on 're-engagement of senior officer's post-retirement' has been the subject of an earlier, separate consultation. The Government's response to that consultation is published separately. The draft National Framework includes the proposed wording following that consultation and no more changes to that section are planned following this consultation process. The proposed wording is contained on Page 20 and 21, paragraph 6.6 to 6.10.
- 2.22 Section 7 National Resilience, Response to Terrorist Attacks or Marauding Terrorist Attacks, page 23 states that Fire and Rescue Services must be able to respond to heightened threats of terrorism. The FRA are responsible for maintaining the robustness of the capability and, where they have an MTFA capability, must put in place arrangements to ensure their teams are fully available at all times.
- 2.23 Annex A of the draft Framework contains a revised 'Protocol on Central Government Intervention Action for Fire and Rescue Authorities'. Revisions of the protocol are required to be consulted on and so comments are welcomed as part of the draft Framework consultation process.

3 Summary

- 3.1 The draft Framework seeks to embed the reform programme that was announced in 2016 by the Home Office:

- 3.1.1 Transforming local governance of fire and rescue by enabling Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners to take on responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services where a local case is made.
- 3.1.2 Establishing Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as an independent inspection regime for Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- 3.1.3 Developing a comprehensive set of professional standards to drive sector improvement.
- 3.1.4 Supporting services to transform commercially with more efficient procurement and collaboration.
- 3.1.5 Increasing the transparency of services with the publication of greater performance data and the creation of a new national fire website.
- 3.1.6 Driving forward an ambitious programme for workforce reform including through enhancing:
 - Professionalism
 - Management and leadership
 - Training and development
 - Equality and diversity
 - Improved culture
 - Options for flexible working
- 3.2 The Government intends for the new Framework to come into effect in April 2018 to coincide with the commencement for the fire inspection.

4 Implications

- 4.1 The legal and Organisational issues affecting this matter are detailed within this report.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 Fire and Rescue Authority elected members acknowledge the draft National Framework document and the changes from the 2012 version and the 2014 addendum.
- 5.2 Elected members consider any response to the question areas that they would want to submit and for any response to be delegated to the Chair of the Authority to meet the required timescales.

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