

31 January 2018

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England – Government Consultation

Purpose of report

1. This paper reports on the recently published consultation on a new Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and provides a draft response for consideration.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that the draft response to the consultation (Appendix 2) be approved.

Introduction and Background

2. The National Framework sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England. Fire and rescue authorities have a duty to have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions and every authority is required to publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the Framework.
3. A new National Framework document has been drafted to replace the current 2012 version. It includes changes required to embed the Fire Reform programme and provisions in the Policing and Crime Act 2017.
4. Government are seeking comments on the six main sections of the draft National Framework: Delivery of Core Functions; Inspection, Accountability and Assurance; Governance; Achieving Value for Money; Workforce and National Resilience. Comments are also sought on a proposed new Intervention Protocol. It is clear that these themes will be explored in more details in the forthcoming HMICFRS inspections.
5. The draft Framework document and consultation is attached as Appendix 1. The consultation runs from 27 December 2017 to 14 February 2018.

Changes to the National Framework priorities

6. Essentially, the draft Framework reiterates the main priorities of the 2012 version with additional provisions in such areas as inspection, governance (including where governance is through a Police and Crime Commissioner), collaboration and workforce development.

7. For comparison, the table below lists the 2012 priorities and the proposed new priorities.

National Framework 2012 priorities for fire and rescue authorities	Proposed new National Framework priorities 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be accountable to communities for the service they provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be accountable to communities for the service they provide; • develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

Response to the consultation

8. The attached draft response (Appendix 2) sets out comments in relation to each area being consulted on. While appreciating the aims of incorporating the Fire Reform programme and the provisions of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 into the National Framework, the general response is that there needs to be more guidance and clarity in each of the areas being consulted on. Particular areas highlighted in the response include the need for more guidance on appropriate evaluation methodologies, more clarity on the judgement criteria to be used in the forthcoming inspections, more clarity on governance arrangements especially in relation to PCC fire and rescue authorities, and in terms of assessing value for money at a time of reducing resources.
9. In discussing the comments, Members should consider if they wish to add any further comments for inclusion in the response.

Conclusion/Summary

10. Government is consulting on the proposed new National Framework document, which updates the 2012 version and incorporates additional requirements following the introduction of the Fire Reform programme and the Policing and Crime Act 2017. It also sets the context for the forthcoming HMICFRS inspections due to begin in summer 2018. A response to the

consultation questions has been drafted, which Members are requested to consider and provide additional comments and/or amendments.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The draft revised National Framework sets out expectations for Fire and Rescue Authorities, which will have resource implications. The consultation document provides an opportunity to comment on key implications, especially in relation to effectiveness, efficiency, governance and human resources.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The National Framework provides guidance and direction on what Government expects of Fire and Rescue Authorities. It covers all core functions, priorities and policies including the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Statement of Assurance.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	N/A, the report sets out a proposed response to a Government consultation document.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	The Government is consulting all relevant bodies. Members of the Strategic Management Board have provided input to the proposed consultation response.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A, the report sets out a proposed response to a Government consultation document.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Fire and Rescue National Framework for England – Government consultation, 27 December 2017

Appendix 2 - Draft HWFRS response to the consultation

Background papers None

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