



Report

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Report Status: To inform WMRMB of the recent publication of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11.	

Report Title:

Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11

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Summary:

The Fire and Rescue Service 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 and Regional Management Boards across the range of their functions.

This report summaries the National Framework and the key changes when compared to the previous 2006-08 Framework.

Recommendation(s):

WMRMB are requested to:

Note the contents of this report.

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1. Background Details:

During the latter part of 2007 Government published the consultation document - Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11, seeking responses by 6 February 2008.

Government's response to the consultation feedback was recently published (20th May 2008) and may be viewed at the Community and Local Government's (CLG) website:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/nationalframeworkresponse>

The new Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Service, which has statutory force under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The Act places a duty on the Secretary of State to consult on any changes to the National Framework.

The consultation exercise ran for 12 weeks and received 47 responses, one of which was from WMRMB. The CLG state that responses were generally positive and that Fire Authorities have welcomed the move to a three-year document which ties in with their budgetary cycles, as well as the streamlined structure – reducing from nine to four chapters.

Many of the comments made in response to the draft Framework consultation have been incorporated into the final version.

The principal differences between the new Framework and the previous 2006-08 Framework and are:

- The duration of the Framework is three years, subject to review, compared to the two-year duration of previous Frameworks, to tie in with authorities' budget cycle.
- Integrated Risk Management Plans are to contain cross-border arrangements with neighbouring authorities and a strategy for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/1541).
- Fire and rescue authorities are required to implement the electronic Incident Recording System by 31st March 2009.
- The Framework gives greater priority to the delivery of core resilience objectives such as moving to regional control centres.
- The fire and rescue authorities are expected to implement the Fire and Rescue Service's Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Regional Management Boards are expected to ensure that fire and rescue authorities consider collaboration to deliver efficiencies.

The new Framework has three key priorities for the fire and rescue service, they are:

- Delivery of an enhanced resilience capability
 - Fire and Rescue Authorities taking ownership and successfully implementing the Equality and Diversity Strategy; and
 - That in a tighter fiscal climate, Fire and Rescue Authorities meet public expectations of a modern, efficient and effective Public Service.
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The new Framework is divided into four chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Prevention, Protection and Response** – covers the core business of Fire and Rescue Authorities in analysing risks and taking action to meet and mitigate the effect of those risks.
- **Chapter 2 – Resilience** – covers the delivery of the key resilience programmes and the actions authorities need to take to ensure they are fully equipped to meet the demands of the resilience agenda.
- **Chapter 3 – Diversity and Workforce** – covers the importance of mainstreaming diversity in all levels of the Fire and Rescue Service and workforce development, training and health and safety.
- **Chapter 4 – Governance and Improvement** – covers institutions in place to support the delivery of Fire and Rescue Authority business, the new Local Government White Paper framework including Local Area Agreements, Performance Assessment and Finance.

2. Impact upon WMRMB

The draft Framework was considered within the WMRMB Review carried out earlier this year with the issues arising incorporated within the draft WMRMB Programme Plan 2008/09 presented to the Board on 13th March 2008.

Amendments to the recently issued National Framework have been duly considered and have been incorporated within the final draft version (Version 0.6) of the WMRMB Programme Plan.

A further responsibility placed upon Regional Management Boards by the National Framework is a requirement to support delivery of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 (section 5.5, page 17).

3. Legal Implications:

Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework setting out the priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities and providing guidance. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions (Part 3, Section 21 (7)).

Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1370 enables the Framework to have effect from 30th June 2008.

4. Financial Implications:

Financial implications arising to secure implementation of the Framework's requirements applicable to WMRMB are set out within the draft WMRMB Programme Plan 2008/09.

5. 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 Circular 22/2008 (issued 20th May 2008)
- Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 (issued 20th May 2008)

6. Attachments:

- Appendix: Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 (issued 20th May 2008)

accessible at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/nationalframework200811.pdf>
