

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 14TH FEBRUARY 2018
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: GRAEME WORRALL

SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK
FOR ENGLAND – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides an outline of the Government's consultation on a revised Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and seeks Members' approval to submit the proposed response attached within Appendix 1 to this report.

Recommended: That

- [1] subject to Members' comments, the consultation response be approved for submission.

Background

2. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 introduced a requirement for the Secretary of State to produce a Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (the Framework) which sets priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in England in connection with the discharge of their functions.
3. The Act also requires the Secretary of State to keep the Framework under review and revise it if necessary, with significant revisions subject to consultation.

Information

4. There are several new or revised sections to the draft Framework, reflecting updates to practices and national issues since the original drafting of the 2012 Framework. This section of the report will outline the content of the draft Framework, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 2.
5. The section titled 'Delivery of Core Functions' focuses on requirements relating to prevention, protection and emergency response activity. The draft Framework outlines an expectation that prevention and protection activities will be targeted at those at risk. There is also an expectation that FRAs will make use of partnership working to support efforts to reduce risk. The importance of effective training to deal with people with complex needs and vulnerabilities, as well as ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements, are also referenced.

6. Requirements regarding operational response are provided in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.11 and include the ability to enter into mutual aid agreements where practicable and ensuring effective business continuity arrangements are in place, which should not be developed on the basis of armed forces assistance being available. The Framework also sets out requirements regarding the publication of Integrated Risk Management Plans.
7. A new section has been included regarding the establishment of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), reflecting the introduction of a new independent inspection regime. This section outlines requirements upon FRAs to cooperate with the inspectorate and give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS. The protocol for statutory intervention, if deemed necessary, is also outlined.
8. The range of existing governance models are highlighted in section 4. Specific reference is made to Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) governance models, alongside particular requirements placed upon a PCC FRA.
9. Particular reference has been made within the draft Framework to achieving value for money, including regular review to ensure that a FRA's fire and rescue service has a workforce commensurate with the risk it faces. There is also a requirement on FRAs to establish a policy on reserves, showing information for at least two years ahead and how reserves contribute to a FRA's medium term financial plan. Such information should be published in an understandable format and contain specific details as outlined in the Framework.
10. Regarding commercial transformation, the Framework states that FRAs must demonstrate and support commercial transformation programmes where appropriate. Such programmes could include aggregating procurement activity and standardising particular requirements for goods and services.
11. The Framework incorporates the statutory duty to collaborate as introduced in the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and outlines an expectation that, while subject to local determination, opportunities to collaborate should be considered. The Framework specifies that FRAs must work with each other to deliver intraoperability (between FRAs) and interoperability (with other responders). It also notes that FRAs should engage with national research and development programmes and that such activity should enable the sharing of good practice.
12. This Framework also introduces the power to trade and make a profit, providing such activities are undertaken through a trading company and that certain requirements are considered such as competition law and State Aid implications.
13. New provisions are detailed regarding workforce issues; notably a requirement for FRAs to have in place a People Strategy (and what this should cover); to implement the suite of professional standards once finalised; to comply with fitness principles contained within the Framework (carried over from the current version) and strict principles relating to the re-appointment of senior officers.

14. In regards to national resilience, the Framework outlines a requirement that all FRA's risk assessments analyse any gaps between their existing capability and that required to ensure national resilience. The strategic leadership role of the NFCC to maintain the readiness of national resilience assets is also detailed. The Framework places a requirement upon FRAs to engage with and support the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) and the NFCCs role.
15. Additional specific mention has been made in relation to responding to marauding firearms terrorist attacks (MTFA) and for those FRAs with such capability, robust business continuity arrangements should be put in place to ensure their availability.
16. As with the current Framework, the duration of the draft Framework is open ended.

Financial Implications

17. Requirements and expectations regarding financial matters are outlined within the draft Framework.

Legal Implications

18. The Authority has a statutory duty to have regard to the National Framework under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. Requirements and expectations regarding equality and diversity are outlined within the draft Framework.

Environmental Implications

20. None

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR
ENGLAND – GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**