



**Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
CPA Self Assessment – Direction of Travel
September 2007**

What had the Authority sought/ is seeking to achieve?

In the 2006 Direction of Travel assessment the Authority received an audit conclusion that it was improving well (3). Since then significant, sustainable progress has been made in all of the objectives detailed within the National Framework¹⁴ and CPA Improvement Plan⁴, resulting in identifiable and lasting outcomes.

The Authority's Strategic Plan 2006-2011¹ is delivering improvements for the community and is continuously refined and strengthened to meet the future needs and expectations of stakeholders. Progress against this Plan is documented in the Annual Report 2006-2007¹⁷. The Vision of "Creating the Safest Community" has been retained within the Strategic Plan 2007-2012¹⁶ which is supported by four Goals:

- Preventing loss of life and injury from fires and other emergencies.
- To respond appropriately to the risk.
- To plan and prepare for exceptional events
- To deliver a modern, effective Service, delivering value for money (revised in 2007 to evidence commitment to VfM).

To secure their delivery, the Goals are supported by seven Priorities and 36 SMART strategies. Challenging, long term targets are proactively set for improvement, many of which reflect Government PSA targets.

The Authority has consulted widely¹⁸ with local organisations and communities to ensure that its intended 'direction of travel' will achieve future sustainable improvement. Consultation outcomes demonstrate that stakeholders agree that the Authority's Goals and Priorities are appropriate and are aligned to communities needs. This is reinforced by the BV 3 score "The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the Authority" which shows significant improvement, increasing from 63% in 2003/04 to 73% this year³.

Due to the cultural and socio-economic challenges within the area, the number of emergency incidents attended continues to be a cause for concern. However, in responding to these incidents the Service has the quickest response time in the country. In the 3 years reported, average attendance time for the first appliance to a property fire was:

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
5.29 min (ranked 3 rd)	5.19 min (ranked 2 nd)	5.26 min (ranked 1 st)

Average attendance times for 2006/07, to all non-vehicle fire incidents:

- 1st pump – 4 min 37 secs
- 2nd pump – 5 min 51 secs

These achievements together with other actions have delivered the following successes in 2006/07:

- 37.5% reduction in fire deaths (all fires),
- 23.3% reduction in the number of injuries in dwelling fires,
- 10.9% improvement in the number of dwelling fires attended where a smoke alarm had activated,
- 5.9% reduction in the number of property and vehicle fires,
- 9.1% reduction in deliberate property fires,
- 12.3% reduction in deliberate vehicle fires,
- 34.8% increase in the numbers of women firefighting staff,
- 20.5% reduction in the number of days lost to sickness for operational staff.

In response to stakeholder feedback, the Authority has reviewed its structure, aligning it with local authority and police boundaries enabling increased local accountability and partnership working, in order to meet community expectations¹⁹.

Following consultation with Group Managers and Station Managers, station plans have been enhanced and are now embedded, delivering improved performance at both station and watch level. Performance is further challenged and scrutinised by Members through the Authority Committee structure. A development programme which has ensured they have the appropriate tools, skills and knowledge is in place¹¹.

A dedicated recruitment team has been established and is:

- leading on regional Firefighter recruitment against national standards,
- validating the National Firefighter recruitment process at regional level,
- leading on regional Assessment Development Centres (ADC) for Supervisory, Middle and Strategic Management levels,
- delivering a regional on-line application portal,
- developing a draft regional corporate application form,
- acting as advisors to Durham and Darlington FRS (DDFRS) and Northumberland FRS (NFRS) for retained recruitment,
- co-ordinating regional positive action programmes.

The Authority has made significant improvement in recruiting women into operational roles, including a 90.5% increase in the numbers of women firefighters between April 2006 to July 2007. Recruitment of staff from BME communities is also improving, with three individuals recently being appointed into corporate roles. A Community Recruitment and Careers Advisor has recently been appointed to strengthen recruitment links with women and BME communities evidencing the Authority's commitment to increasing representation of both women firefighters and staff from BME communities. Consequently, a programme of positive action events²⁰ aimed at these groups has been developed. Initial feedback to the first three events has been positive with several participants indicating that they will apply during the next recruitment campaign.

How is the service being delivered along with value for money?

The Authority currently contributes to all five local authority areas at LSP or LAA level, and is represented on all five CDRPs and Community Area Forums (CAF). Many activities delivered by the Community Safety Strategy⁵ are closely linked to the Respect Agenda, particularly 'Strengthening Communities', aimed at responding to "... problems that communities face today- issues like anti-social behaviour ...". Hence the Authority works collaboratively with local authorities and other agencies to deliver improvements through the Respect Agenda Action Plan. Sunderland, Newcastle and South Tyneside are 3 of the 40 Respect areas, earning the right as exemplars of the Respect programme. Gateshead Council has also launched a Partnership Respect Action Plan and the Authority embraces the Respect Agenda 'ethos' for its work in North Tyneside.

Thirteen Prevention and Education (P&E) teams (community fire station based) and the restructured Policy and Standards team have enhanced the Authority's capacity to deliver community safety initiatives including Home Fire Risk Assessment (HFRA). All community groups and partners who utilise the complimentary meeting facilities at Community Fire Stations (CFS) benefit from fire safety education. Footfall is 40,981 since April 2006. To further enhance such initiatives agreements have been successfully negotiated with:

- 'Your Homes Newcastle' enabling Community Firefighters entry to tenants homes to carry out HFRA and fit smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors where appropriate (roll out to other local authority areas is planned for the future).
- Newcastle Care Services enabling Community Firefighters to carry out HFRA and fit smoke detectors in the homes of older people who are being discharged from hospital and are expected to live alone.

In addition, SLAs have been established with all five local authority sensory support teams to supply (vibrating/ flashing) sensory alarms to people who meet the sensory support team criteria. The scheme has commenced in Newcastle and will deliver 432 smoke alarms to sensory impaired, vulnerable individuals, protecting them against the risk of fire in the home. P&E staff have proactively engaged with Jewish leaders to provide fire safety advice. As a result trust has spread throughout the community, enabling 59 HFRA to be undertaken between April and August 2006. Similarly, following the outsourcing of Gateshead Council's Homecare Services, the contractor has agreed to provide the Authority with referrals regarding clients whose properties would benefit from HFRA. Sheltered accommodation premises are monitored and targeted for HFRA, further reducing risk for these vulnerable individuals and there is an agreement with each of the local authorities to have sprinkler systems fitted in all new PPP schools.

The Authority has embraced the ethos of VfM as a continuous, cross cutting, sustainable process⁷ and as a result, is able to provide a high quality service whilst achieving efficiency gains^{21,15} through the introduction of innovative ideas and solutions. A new VfM Review Framework²² has also been developed and implemented. The Authority has increased its collaboration with NFRS through joint delivery of Engineering Services benefiting both organisations through enhanced skills, shared resources and best practice, and efficiency savings of £100k as a result of reduced overheads. Future collaboration plans include a shared Stores facility¹⁰.

A regional Learning and Development (L&D) project manager (funded by the Authority) has made excellent progress in establishing a number of regional learning and development programmes⁹, delivering VfM improvements as well as enhancing service delivery:

- The Authority has been proactive in establishing and leading a regional project to develop a regional driver training centre, generating immediate (regional) savings of £65,000.
- Regional ADC costs are shared proportionately.
- The regional Crew Manager Programme (led by the Authority) is Institute Fire Engineers (IFE) approved and based on national occupational standards. It incorporates elements from the successful 'Developing Leadership Potential' programme generating an anticipated £204,000 efficiency saving for the Authority over the 3 year programme.
- An agreement with NFRS to jointly deliver Compartment Fire Behaviour training and Positive Pressure Ventilation training is offset by financial reward and a secondee from NFRS who provides increased capacity, skills and knowledge to the L&D team and ensures best practice is shared, leading to improved firefighting skills.

Revenue from commercial training (and selling excess course capacity to other FRS) has consistently increased. In 2006/07 revenue increased by 23% to £255,873. Improvements in sickness management combined with the efforts of the Health and Safety (H&S) department and the Occupational Health Unit (OHU) has greatly reduced sickness absence:

- 20.5% reduction (from 9.52 days to 7.71 days) lost to sickness for operational staff, and
- 8.5% reduction (from 9.53 days to 8.72 days) lost to sickness for all staff. This has resulted in savings of approximately £156,000.

The H&S department continue to make significant improvements in reducing accidents at work. In the last three quarters (October 2006 – June 2007) the numbers have fallen from 33 to 26 to 22 respectively. Consequently, costs to the Authority resulting from accidents, have fallen by 62.5% to £4,810. In recognition of this success, the Authority has been awarded a RoSPA Gold Award, for the third year and is now deemed an 'exemplar employer'. The H&S department has successfully achieved Institute of Safety and Health (IOSH) accreditation enabling IOSH courses to be delivered 'in-house'. An agreement has been established with the other regional FRS to deliver 12 courses, generating efficiency savings of £9,000. The Authority's state of the art OHU provides services to NFRS under a SLA. The department has also made a positive contribution to VfM through its early intervention programme, e.g. physiotherapy, enabling employees a speedier recovery/ return to work.

The Authority is one of four participating in Performance Pact, a Performance Improvement Programme with PricewaterhouseCoopers. This programme is part funded by CLG (£12,500) and Improvement Partnership (£10,000) and aims to improve environmental efficiency and cultural awareness. The recently established Estates team is rolling out a 2 year programme to greatly enhance energy management within the Authority, reducing the carbon footprint. The installation of a building management system is the catalyst to enable the Authority to monitor, manage and adjust its energy usage. This will identify changes to deliver savings in addition to encouraging behaviour change amongst staff benefiting energy efficiency savings both at work and at home.

What has been achieved to date/ is being achieved?

Improvements to performance

In line with PSA targets there has been a 44% reduction in fire deaths and 47% reduction in deliberate fires against CLG's baselines. Within the North Tyneside LAA, stretch targets aim to reduce deliberate property (including vehicles) fires by 20% and reduce deliberate secondary fires by 15%. Using the

2001/02 baseline, the target set for 2009/10 has already been achieved and should result in a share of £6.2 million following the three year agreement. Sustained improvement over three years can be demonstrated in 19 BVPIs: BV 2b / 11a / 11b / 12a / 12b / 15b / 142ii / 143i / 143ii / 144 / 149i / 206i / 206ii / 206iv / 207 / 209i / 209ii / 209iii / 210. 12 of these relate to ‘community safety indicators’ demonstrating the Authority’s continued commitment to its Vision: “Creating the Safest Community.” Sustainable improvement can also be evidenced (over the last three quarters, September 2006 – June 2007) in the following indicators: BV 8 / 11a / 11b / 142ii / 144 / 149ii / 207 / 208 / 209i, five of which relate to ‘community safety indicators’. The Authority can demonstrate improvements in BVPIs and against local targets – in 14 of 19 ‘community safety indicators’ – ranging from 0.1% to 52% (a further two indicators showed no change) for 2006/07 compared with 2005/06. In addition, 11 of 14 ‘HR/ Personnel indicators’ have improved, ranging from 0.1% to 55.6% (one showed no change). The Authority is committed to achieving level 3 compliance with the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) in March 2008.

The IRMP² action plan for 2006/07 contains 10 improvement actions, the majority of which have been implemented and have already delivered improvements.

In addition to BV3, the Authority’s high quality service is evidenced by the “After the incident” survey results for 2006/07:

Satisfaction with:	Incidents in the Home	Non-Domestic Incidents
initial contact	98%	99%
service at the scene	99%	98%
the overall service	99%	97%

The Authority has scored higher than the family group average in 15 of the 21 indicators for ‘Incidents in the Home’ and in all of the indicators for ‘Non-Domestic Incidents’.

Improvements to performance / capacity – Value for Money (VfM)

The Authority’s Value for Money Framework sets out how the key strategies, plans and processes provide a framework to secure, demonstrate and improve VfM. The framework also provides a range of mechanisms by which the VfM of the Authority and its services are monitored and measured. This is encapsulated in the Corporate Performance Management arrangements, which include:

- Capital Investment Appraisals;
- Best Value and other Performance Indicators;
- Acting on Internal Audit findings and recommendations and external challenge.

The success of implementing VfM is measured through:

- Reports to Authority on performance monitoring, both financial and non-financial;
- Ensuring budgets, both in financial and non-financial terms are monitored and achieved, including taking account of efficiency targets;
- Establishment and review of the IRMP;
- The Gershon Efficiency targets and reviews;
- Consultation with service users.

The Authority identifies options for efficiency saving through a number of areas, including:

- Strategic developments, such as the PPP scheme (annualised efficiency saving of £866,750);
- Ongoing development of the IRMP (cumulative savings of £2.6 million in 2006/2007);
- Collaborative arrangements with partners, including the RMB;
- Budget Planning Framework, including base budget reviews.

The Authority’s Backward Looking AES for 2006/2007 identified cumulative efficiency savings of £3.5 million (6.93%), exceeding the government’s target to the end of 2007/2008 (of 5.67%) one year early. The Authority encourages all staff to identify options for efficiency savings, and maintains an efficiency log for capturing these. The Authority has a partnership policy and operates a number of highly effective partnerships such as the Arson Task Force and the Phoenix Programme. A robust system of review, audit and evaluation is undertaken on all partnerships to ensure that they align to the strategic aims of the Service and provide VfM.

Procurement and other spending decisions take account of the full long term. The MTFS spans a five year period and takes account of known cost pressures within that time-frame. The Authority undertook a long-term review of its service requirements and funding options before undertaking its PPP scheme. The Capital Investment Appraisal process requires consideration of future revenue costs in determining the business case and the Capital Strategy outlines how capital bids will be prioritised in order to meet the strategic aims of the Authority and to achieve VfM.

The Authority has a Procurement Strategy, with one of its key aims being to consider opportunities for VfM. The Authority considers the most economically advantageous bid. Specifically, VfM through procurement is demonstrated by:

- collaboration with other FRAs on uniform and PPE contracts;
- developing procurement arrangements in conjunction with the North East Centre of Excellence;
- performance targets for procurement reported to Strategic Management Team.

The increase in the Authority's precept in 2007/2008 of 2.40% was set below the national average increase of 4.23% and represented the second lowest % increase of any fire authority and the lowest for any metropolitan authority. This is in line with the Authority's strategy of limiting precept increases where conditions allow.

The 2007 VFM Report³⁰ provides a detailed analysis on the Authority's net cost per head of population (BV150), outlining that costs are commensurate with service delivery, performance and outcomes achieved when taking account of the external factors affecting the Authority. The analysis demonstrates the clear link between deprivation and risk levels (30% of the regions population is at 'above' or 'well above' average risk of being injured or killed in a fire at their home) on the number of fire related incidents. The analysis also outlines how the Authority achieves the quickest response time of any fire authority in the country, and utilises a greater proportion of two-pumping appliance stations than other authorities to respond to the level of risk. It also highlights a number of exceptional cost items and differing accounting treatments which affect this calculation. Significant improvements and action being taken to improve performance further is also detailed.

Improvements to performance/ capacity - Community Safety

The Authority has undertaken a variety of successful media campaigns to raise fire safety awareness including bonfires, smoking and kitchen fires. In 2006/07 Community firefighters and P&E staff exceeded the HFRA target of 18,000. As part of their routine duties they have completed over 18,100 HFRA (over 11,500 of these have been in those areas at greatest risk). Additionally, a targeted campaign (Operation Early Warning) to increase the number of HFRA was carried out in a three month period from December 2006. This resulted in an additional 13,252 HFRA, 17,094 smoke detectors fitted and 1,150 Deep fat fryers issued. This work has contributed to the following achievements:

- 6% increase in the percentage fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm had activated (now 60.78%).
- 23.3% reduction in the number of injuries in dwelling fires, to 5.57 per 100,000 population
- 5.9% reduction in fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted (now 31.1%).

The Authority has five ATF teams covering the whole of Tyne and Wear, resulting in significant reductions in the numbers of deliberate fires in the last three years (April 2004 – March 2007):

- 16.2% reduction in the number of deliberate property fires,
- 19.5% reduction in the number of deliberate vehicle fires.

In 2006/07 ATF and P&E work has resulted in:

- 5.9% reduction in the number of property and vehicle fires, saving £1.4 million,
- 9.1% reduction in deliberate property fires, equivalent to saving £1.27 million,
- 12.3% reduction in deliberate vehicle fires, equivalent to saving over £677,000,
- 50.1% reduction in the number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms.

The continued reduction in fire related injuries and in deliberate fires can also be attributed to P&E and ATF activities delivered through the four programmes:

- Targeted Risk Reduction
- Fire Safety Education
- Social Inclusion and Citizenship
- Fire Crime Reduction

Other recent improvements to community safety include: the Liberty Project which is one of the Authority's social inclusion and citizenship programmes, the success of which has been recognised locally and nationally and has received two prestigious awards; following a successful pilot scheme in North Tyneside a Road Traffic Collision Policy¹³ has been approved, involving a multi-agency approach to reduce the numbers of deaths and injuries on the roads.

Improvements in performance/capacity - Communications:

Implementation of a Staff Communications Strategy¹² has generated significant improvement as a result of the following initiatives: Team Talk, SMT/ line manager meetings, intranet improvements, listening events and Wildfire. The latter two of which have been shortlisted for prestigious awards. The Authority Chairman and Vice Chairman now visit all CFS regularly to discuss Authority issues with on duty personnel and listen to staff concerns. To further strengthen communication within the Service a structured Members Liaison Programme is in place.

Improvement to performance/capacity – People

The Authority was one of the first to implement Rank to Role, presenting opportunities for career development across diverse groups. Together with the notable Workforce Development Strategy and Succession Plan, this ensures that the 'right people are in the right place at the right time'. Improvements in recruitment include; on-line applications for corporate and uniformed vacancies, use of notice boards at CFS, shared community event (Stn K) and a forthcoming careers convention which the Authority is hosting. A new Corporate Development Manager has been recruited to co-ordinate corporate risk management, ensuring risk management is firmly embedded within the Service. The new ATF Researcher has enhanced the system enabling current, accurate information to be supplied down to ward level for use by ATF Personnel, Station Managers and ward councillors at CAF meetings. The Authority has recently employed a Regional Equality and Diversity Advisor who will be based at Service Headquarters (SHQ) but will have responsibility region wide. Streamlining of procurement processes has saved the Authority over £167,000.

Improvements to performance/capacity – L&D

All firefighters recruited since 2003 and Control staff are required to follow a workforce development plan resulting in NVQ Level 3, BTEC 3 or BTEC 5. Currently 25 corporate staff and 444 operational staff have achieved these awards, with a further 11 and 106 currently working towards the qualification. A partnership with University of Sunderland will enable allocation of CAT points for elements of the regional crew manager development programme, providing the opportunity for Crew Managers to complete a Foundation Degree in Management.

Improvements to performance/capacity – OHU

The OHU are improving staff well-being by providing health promotion activities, eg. smoking cessation (to date 30 people have given up and 17 are receiving support), nutrition and fitness guidance as well as health surveillance activities. Staff have also donated 84 units of blood through sessions held at SHQ. The Authority is the only FRA in England and Wales to have undertaken the HSE's Stress Survey. The findings will form a baseline for improvements.

Improvements to performance/capacity - equipment

A fire appliance (F02) has been retro-fitted with 360° CCTV, to trial upgraded equipment which can provide evidence from incidents or attacks on firefighters. A further 5 appliances have been ordered with these cameras pre-installed, upgrading current equipment. As a result of heightened awareness, there has been at least one successful prosecution in Tyne and Wear following an attack on firefighters. Appliance availability has been enhanced as a result of robust absence management. 34 defibrillators have been purchased and delivered to front line pumping appliances which have saved at least one life since their introduction in January 2007. The Authority has fully supported and delivered the Government's Resilience Capability Programme which includes special arrangements for

staffing of vehicles and purchase of a High Volume Pump (HVP) to supplement resources for national deployment during major flooding incidents. The HVP was recently deployed to South Yorkshire.

Other improvements

The Authority is an active member of the Regional Management Board and is highly supportive of regional collaboration projects including FireControl, FireLink and FireBuy. Three employees are seconded full-time to the FireControl project, in addition to a number of staff based at SHQ and Control actively contributing to workstreams. Roll out of FireLink within Tyne and Wear is starting in September 2007 and involving staff from the recently established Contingency Group.

The strategic risks faced by the Authority are constantly monitored, controlled and updated by the Corporate Risk Management Group⁸ which is chaired by the Chairman of the Authority, and now meets on a quarterly basis. In addition to this, significant progress is being made in Business Continuity Planning²³. Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority have agreed to periodically perform 'peer reviews' of the Authority's operational services.

Notable Practice/ Innovation.

The Authority has a number of areas which are considered notable practice in delivering improved service delivery including its;

- Succession Planning²⁵ (only one in UK FRS)
- CPA Improvement Planning⁴ (robust monitoring, involving Members and budget links),
- Norham Fire Team programme²⁶ (innovative behaviour changing scheme)
- Phoenix Parents programme²⁷ (empowering parents of offenders)
- SmartRisk²⁸ (only FRS to participate in this inspirational project)
- Watch Manager Empowerment programme²⁹ (encourages ownership / responsibility).

What plans does the authority have for the future?

Reducing risk will continue to be a priority and the HFRA programme will continue to prioritise those properties in high risk areas following identification using local intelligence and FSEC data. However it will also be extended to include those that are high risk but outside FSEC 'red' areas. A prioritised programme of inspections for non-domestic properties will be undertaken by watch based and specialist personnel to ensure that properties meet necessary safety standards.

The Authority will continue to act as lead on a £32 million PPP scheme with neighbouring FRS. The Asset Management Plan⁶ is fully embedded and a detailed three year Capital programme for vehicle replacement, IT equipment, operational equipment and Estates projects is being implemented. An 'Estates Development Strategy'²⁴ is in place covering 2007-12 primarily funded through earmarked reserves. An integral part of this strategy is the replacement of three existing stations with new CFS. In addition, SafetyWorks! will be relocated to a prime location within the medium-long term strategy to provide a purpose built facility. A Sustainability policy is being developed which will address the carbon footprint and support national targets for environmental efficiency.

An arrangement is being considered with a private contractor to offer 'damage limitation services' at incidents and the Authority is building an Incident Management Suite which will be used:

- to enhance manager training in Incident Command Techniques,
- as part of the role related assessment process for IPDS,
- provide managers with Bronze, Silver and Gold Command scenario based experience.

'Swift water rescue' teams are currently being resourced and will be available from October 2007 to undertake such rescues in light of recent flooding incidents in the midlands.

The Authority will continue to contribute to LAAs, working with partners to develop; local targets for improvements, local stretch targets and prepare for CAA.

An ICT based integrated Quality Assurance system will be purchased to support the evaluation of services and provide evidence for 'operational assurance'. The Authority is also seeking IIP accreditation and expects to achieve this by December 2007.

In conclusion, the Authority has made substantial progress over the last 12 months, securing strong improvement and establishing a sound basis for continued and sustained progress in the future.