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## Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

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Ged Fitzgerald  
Clerk to the Authority.

This matter is being dealt with  
By : Miss K.L. Cuthbert  
Ext. : 7881  
Direct Line : 0191 553 7881  
Your Ref. :  
Our Ref. : KLC/PG  
Date : 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2006

PO Box 100,  
Civic Centre,  
Sunderland, SR2 7DN.  
Telephone: (0191) 553 1000  
Facsimile No. (0191) 553 1810

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Authority to be held in the Main Authority Room, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Barmston Mere on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 at **11.00 a.m.** when it is proposed to transact the business set out below.

Yours sincerely,



Ged Fitzgerald,  
Clerk to the Authority.

Our Vision Statement:  
"CREATING THE SAFEST COMMUNITY"

Our Mission Statement:  
"TO SAVE LIFE, REDUCE RISK, PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT"

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**Note:**

**Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006**

The business contained in Part II of the Agenda is not for publication as the Authority is considered likely to exclude the public during consideration thereof as it involves a likely disclosure of exempt information relating to any individual or likely to reveal the identity of an individual and to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority or in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5).

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## Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Ged Fitzgerald  
Clerk to the Authority.

Minutes of the meeting of  
the TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND  
RESCUE AUTHORITY held in the  
Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Barmston Mere on  
MONDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2006  
at 10.30 a.m.

### Present:

Councillor Gibson in the Chair

Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bolland, Boyes, Cooney, Forbes, Fletcher, Huscroft, James, O'Neil, Renton and Woodwark.

### Part I

#### Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Heron and Jordan.

#### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### Minutes

53. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 – Part I (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record;

Our Vision Statement:

"CREATING THE SAFEST COMMUNITY"

Our Mission Statement:

"TO SAVE LIFE, REDUCE RISK, PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT"  
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- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2006 – Part I (circulated) be received and noted;
- (iii) the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2006 – Part I (circulated) be received and noted; and
- (iv) the minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 – Part I (circulated) be received and noted.

### **Appointment to Committees and Lead/Support Members**

The Clerk to the Authority submitted a report (circulated) advising of the current vacancies on Committees of the Authority with a vacancy, and as a Support Member on Community Engagement and Partnerships.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Clerk to the Authority reminded Members that when considering the appointments to Committees at the Annual Meeting, the Authority held vacancies open on the Policy Advisory Committee and the Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee.

There was also a vacancy as a Support Member on Community Engagement and Partnerships.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

54. RESOLVED that Councillor J. Fletcher be appointed to the Policy Advisory and Personnel Appeals Committee and as a Support Member for Community Engagement and Partnerships.

### **Regional Control Centre (RCC) Establishment of a Company**

The Clerk to the Authority submitted a report (circulated) seeking approval for the Memorandum and Articles of Association, as attached to the report.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Clerk to the Authority advised Councillors that the Memorandum and Articles of Association had been prepared in draft form and submitted to the RMB for consideration and approval.

This Authority was now requested to consider the Articles as with the other Constituent Authorities within the region, for approval.

Upon discussion, it was:-

55. RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company in the form attached hereto be approved; and
- (b) further reports be received as appropriate.

### **Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) informing Members of the Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal (FBLSGCM).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The FBLSGCM granted by Royal Warrant for all those fire brigade uniformed personnel who have “rendered long and meritorious service”. The approved period of “long and meritorious service” is twenty years.

At this juncture, the Chief Fire Officer updated the Authority in relation to the calls made over the Bonfire weekend. In doing so, he explained that 300 calls were received on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2 of which involved major incidents. On the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1,200 calls were received. One major incident occurring at Bede Industrial Estate, South Shields. Mr. Bull further explained that six attacks were made on firefighters, and the level of activity had risen in comparison to the previous years.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

56. RESOLVED that approval be given to applications being submitted to the DCLG on the appropriate dates in respect of the personnel listed who fulfil the requirements for the award.

### **Appointment of Honorary Parliamentary Adviser to the Authority**

The Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) requesting that the Authority considered establishing improved liaison arrangements with the Members of Parliament representing Tyne and Wear.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In order to improve the Authority representation and liaison with Central Government it was proposed that the Authority appoints an Honorary Parliamentary Adviser, thus providing a direct link between the Authority, Local MP's, Government and Ministers. Fraser Kemp had indicated his willingness to take on this responsibility.

This arrangement would ensure that the Authority was continually briefed in respect of Parliamentary matters and statutory proposals whilst also facilitating representation at the appropriate level, to ensure that the views, concerns and policies of the Authority are conveyed to Ministers.

A discussion ensued in relation to the potential financial implications and Councillor Woodwark queried how this fit with wider strategies. The Chief Fire Officer briefly explained the role and agreed to submit a more detailed report to a future meeting.

Upon discussion, it was:-

57. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the appointment of Fraser Kemp, MP as Honorary Parliamentary Adviser to the Fire and Rescue Authority be approved; and
- (ii) a further report be submitted to a future meeting.

#### **Fire and Rescue Service Circular 63/2006 – The Draft Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) providing guidance on how Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) would meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order ('the Emergencies Order'). It was planned to be made and take effect in Spring 2007.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The aim of the Emergencies Order was to improve national resilience to disruptive incidents such as terrorist attacks and serious accidents by giving FRAs in England statutory functions for CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear Emergencies) and USAR (Urban Search and Rescue Emergencies) emergencies.

The Emergencies Order would, on request from an affected Authority, give FRAs a statutory duty to use their CBRN or USAR resources outside of their own areas to an extent reasonable to deal with that emergency.

FRAs would only need to secure the provision of trained staff to operate specialist (New Dimension) equipment, so maintaining the effectiveness of the CBRN and USAR capabilities. FRAs were not required to secure the provision of equipment, as New Dimension has already provided it.

FRAs would also need to make arrangements for dealing with calls for help, obtaining information and ensuring reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit property damage whilst dealing with an incident.

Councillor Huscroft commented that estimated financial implications of the project would be useful.

The Finance Officer advised that as the project was still in its early stages it was too early to bring forward estimated costs. However, as soon as advice was received, a report would be submitted to the Authority for consideration. In addition to this, Members were reminded that as incidents were unpredictable, it would always be difficult to estimate costs without knowing severity and duration.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

58. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted,
- (ii) the actions to be taken by the Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer be endorsed, and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

### **Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) to update Members on the Audit Commission's Fire and Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07 and the Authority's approach to meeting its requirements and to provide Members with the final versions of the Authority's submitted Local Context Statement and Self Assessments in relation to the Operational Assurance and Direction of Travel Assessments.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer informed the Authority that the Performance Framework comprised of three broad elements;

- an Operational Assessment of Service Delivery;
- Use of Resources Assessment (including Value for Money (VFM)); and

- Direction of Travel Assessment

The operational assessment focused primarily upon service delivery but also investigated the systems that support service delivery.

The result of the operational assessment would reflect our level of operational response and would be scored from 1 – 4, broadly in line with other CPA Service assessments.

The Use of Resources assessment would be assessed via a self assessment. This was duly completed and it had subsequently enabled the Authority to demonstrate where there was particularly strong performance as well as identify areas for further action.

The Direction of Travel would determine the improvement (or deterioration) within the Authority based on intended actions and evidenced outcomes as detailed in the CPA Improvement Plan.

It would investigate how well the Authority was performing and whether or not it was continuing to improve.

Upon discussion, it was:-

59. RESOLVED that the self assessments at Appendices A, B and C be endorsed.

### **Revenue Budget 2006/2007 – Second Review**

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) advising Members of issues affecting the 2006/2007 revenue budget position and providing an updated statement of balances.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Finance Officer drew the attention of Members to the following:-

Firefighters Pension Scheme – new financial arrangements existed from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2006 for funding the costs of the firefighter pension scheme. Since the Revenue Budget was set for 2006/2007, no indication of any reversal or alteration to the new arrangements had been advised or indicated. Accordingly the planned and budgeted for contribution to the Pension Reserve in 2006/2007, of £1,027,904 was not now required.

Interest on Balances – the amount of interest that was forecast to be received in 2006/2007 exceeded the budget provision by almost £450,000. This was due to the carry forward of a relatively high level of balances at the end of the previous financial year.

In addition to this, a number of priorities had been identified for investment in the current financial year, subject to Member approval, as detailed below:-

- Revenue Contribution to Capital Programme - £730,000.
  - comprising High Volume Pumping Unit (HVPU) - £300,000
  - Fireground Radios - £180,000
- Community Safety activity - £400,000 – to establish small task groups to increase the number of Home Fire Risk Assessments conducted by the service.
- Software assurance - £130,000 – software assurance enabled owners of licences to use any version of that software for the length of the agreement, and ensured that the Authority remains up to date in terms of supported technology.
- Minor virements – as a consequence of budget monitoring, a number of items had been identified which were required to support the revenue budget.
- Firefighter Recruit Training Course - £156,588.
- Arson Task Force - £151,910.
- Arts Council Grant - £7,580.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

60. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the position with regard to the budget for 2006/2007 be noted;
- (ii) the proposal detailed at paragraph 2.6 be approved;
- (iii) the additional release of Balances to support specific activities as detailed at paragraph 2.7 be approved; and
- (iv) the balances position referred to at paragraph 3.1 be noted.

### **Procurement of a High Volume Pump and Fireground Radios**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) seeking the approval of Members for the commencement of a procurement exercise for the provision of a high volume pump (HVP) and the replacement of the existing standard and intrinsically safe fireground radios.

(For copy report – see original minutes).



Members were advised that there were now pumps on the market that could help to ensure that large-scale firefighting operations were carried out more effectively and, in respect of fireground radios, there was equipment available that would allow for more efficient communications than the existing radios, which were rapidly approaching the end of their effective operational life.

With only a limited number of the pumps available from within the central government's New Dimension programme it was determined that, in line with the results of the wide-area flood risk assessment, the two pumps allocated to the North East region should be placed with Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority and Northumberland County Fire and Rescue Service respectively. With regards to fireground radios the estimated cost of this provision would be £300,000.

It was estimated that replacing all of the current fireground radios with intrinsically safe radio sets would cost in the region of £180,000, which could be met from balances in this financial year.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

61. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the purchase of one HVP unit and 180 Fireground radios be approved;
- (ii) the funding of £480,000 was met from underspendings on Employee Expenses; and
- (iii) DCLG framework agreements be utilised for the purchase of these items.

### **Purchase of Community Safety Outreach Vehicle**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) seeking approval for the acquisition of a specialist Community Safety Outreach Vehicle, which would be included in the vehicle replacement programme for 2007/08.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

By providing an outreach vehicle that had the ability to attract audiences, and retain them, this would ensure that a large degree of fire safety education was absorbed and disseminated throughout the community.

The vehicle would not be called away for emergency calls and would be accessible to all. The Community Safety Outreach Vehicle would cost £85,000.

Upon discussion, it was:-

62. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) approval be given to the inclusion of the specialist multi-purpose Community Safety Outreach Vehicle in the vehicle replacement programme 2007/08; and
- (ii) that the appropriate tendering procedures were implemented to secure early acquisition of the vehicle in 2007/08.

### **Second Capital Review 2006/2007**

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) to review the current year's programme at Second Review stage, and reflect changes from that presented to the Authority in the First Review, on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Finance Officer brought the following issues to Members' attention:

- **Safety Works**

Expenditure of £1,202,850 had slipped into 2007/2008 and £40,000 into 2008/2009.

- **Other Revisions**

Two schemes were reporting higher than estimated costs and reprofiled costs in the New Occupational Health Unit at Barmston – there had been a marginal increase in the total scheme cost of £22,102. The profile of costs has been adjusted to reflect the payment of retention costs, which were anticipated in 2007/2008, resulting in net additional costs in 2006/2007 of £15,858.

In relation to the adaptations to Echo and Golf Stations – the initial contractor went into liquidation, and additional costs of £30,000 were estimated through the appointment and engagement of an alternative contractor, and the associated completion of site works resulting in slippage of £18,051 into 2007/2008.

- **New Capital Priorities**

Two additional schemes were proposed to be added to the Capital Programme, namely the High Volume Pumping Unit (£300,000), Fairground Radios (£180,000); and

- **Revenue Contributions to Capital Programme.**

- **Vehicle Replacement Programme**

The Vehicle Replacement Programme had been revised to reflect increased acquisition costs for five water tenders of £146,000.

Upon discussion, it was:-

63. RESOLVED that the revised capital programme for 2006/2007 be approved as set out at Appendix A of the report.

### **Fostering Network Initiative Update**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to provide the Authority with an update in relation to the fostering initiative particularly in relation to the progress made so far.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Authority was the first in the country to offer such a large scale initiative and engage with all local authorities to provide an advice and support service to Foster Care Families.

Councillor O'Neil, as a Member of a Fostering Panel commented that he welcomed this excellent initiative.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

64. RESOLVED the actions taken in relation to this initiative be endorsed and further reports be received as appropriate.

### **Reduced Accident at Play (RAP); South Tyneside Child Safety Programme**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to brief Members in respect of the most recent programme called RAP (Reduced Accidents to Play) organised in partnership with South Tyneside Primary Care Trust at South Shields Community Fire Station.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The RAP event took place from 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October inclusive and was held at South Shields Community Fire Station. The target audience was year six children, (aged 10-11), with over 1,000 children attending from 29 schools within South Tyneside.

At this juncture, Councillor Bell thanked everyone involved in the event and advised of the extremely positive feedback received from the children.

Upon discussion, it was:-

65. RESOLVED that the benefits and contribution these programmes make to the community safety agenda particularly in influencing anti-social behaviour be endorsed, and the benefits of the programme be profiled with the appropriate Lead Authority officers responsible for Community Safety.

### **Partnership Initiatives, 'Respect' Educational Comic**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) informing Members of a further edition of the comic which had been published, and had particular reference to fire safety issues relating to the dangers associated with bonfires and fireworks.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The special bonfire and firework edition had been produced by Fire and Rescue Service personnel working in partnership with Northumbria Police and South Tyneside Council Community Safety Officers.

This edition was funded jointly by the Authority and Northumbria Police and served to highlight the dangers and consequences of bonfire and fireworks misuse to all the young people in the Tyne and Wear area.

Upon discussion, it was:-

66. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the approach to publicising the dangers of fireworks and bonfires be endorsed;
- (ii) the opportunities to develop similar initiatives within their respective Local Authorities be endorsed; and
- (iii) a letter be sent to Management at the Authority commending them for their work.

### **Partnership Update**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to update members in respect of the main partnerships undertaken by this Authority.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer advised that one of the Authority's improvement objectives detailed in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan was to ensure that all partnerships are relevant, attended by the appropriate person(s) and support the Authority's vision.

Since the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan was approved by Members, considerable work had been carried out to ensure that the required changes were implemented and that the Authority's partnerships are operating effectively.

Consideration, having been given to the matter, it was:-

67. RESOLVED that the benefits and contribution these partnerships make to the community safety agenda be endorsed and further reports be received as appropriate.

### **Revision of Procurement Strategy**

The Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) to seek the approval of Members to proposed revisions to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority Procurement Strategy document.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Since the approval of the procurement strategy there had been several developments in the procurement arena that need to be incorporated into the document in order to ensure that it remains current.

Undertaking this work would help to ensure that Value for Money continued to be at the forefront of procurement activity through the refinement of procurement processes and procedures in order to maintain best procurement practice. This work would, in turn, help to support the organisation's strategic objectives and also strengthen the organisation's ethical responsibilities as a public sector organisation.

It was:-

68. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) the revisions to the Authority's procurement strategy be approved; and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

## **Disability Equality Scheme**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (circulated) advising Members of the Disability Equality Scheme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised the Authority that with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2006 the Authority was required to have a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in place. The aim of this Disability Equality Scheme was to facilitate the removal of barriers for all disabled people with regard to service delivery and employment.

Upon discussion, it was:-

69. RESOLVED that the final publication of the Scheme be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer and further reports be received as appropriate.

## **Employment Equality (AGE) Regulations 2006**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (circulated) advising Members of the Employment Equality (AGE) Regulations 2006

(For copy report – see original minutes).

It was:-

70. RESOLVED that the report from the Human Resources Committee be received and noted.

## **Conference – Contingency Planning for Safer Communities**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) advising Councillors that the conference entitled 'Contingency Planning for Safer Communities' was scheduled to take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2006, at the Thistle Victoria Hotel, London.

It was anticipated that the Fire Minister, Angela Smith MP would address the event. The programme also included speakers from the Local Government Association, the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Retained Firefighters Union and fire rescue authorities themselves. This conference would provide an occasion for lively, informed and constructive dialogue to support authorities in taking forward this critical issue.

Upon discussion, it was:-

71. RESOLVED that the Chairman attend the Conference and that no further Member representation was seen as appropriate.

### **Occupational Health Unit**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to inform the Authority of completion of the works and invite Members to view the facilities at the conclusion of the meeting.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer was pleased to announce that the new Occupational Health Unit, located on the Service Headquarters site, had now been completed and staff took up occupation in September, 2006.

The new facility ensured that the Authority provided a specialist and comprehensive service, which provided all employees with the appropriate medical and welfare support.

The Chief Fire Officer invited Members on a guided tour of the facility at the conclusion of the meeting.

Upon discussion, it was:-

72. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the completion of the new Occupational Health Unit be noted; and
- (ii) a tour of the Unit be undertaken at the conclusion of the meeting.

### **Correspondence List**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a list of items of correspondence that have been received since the last meeting of the Authority, and were not subject to a separate report.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

73. RESOLVED that the Correspondence List be received for Information.

## **Urgent Item**

At this juncture, in accordance with Section 100B of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, it was agreed that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency.

### **Firebuy Corporate Plan 2006/08 and Business Plan 2006/07 Member's Agreement**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (circulated) to provide an opportunity for the Authority to comment on drafts of Firebuy's Corporate and Business Plans and the Members' Agreement.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Corporate Plan set out what Firebuy Limited aimed to achieve, its key priorities and how it would deliver them in the period 2006-08.

All of the costs and expenses would have to be found by the Members, although they would be met by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) until 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008. There were indications of subsequent costs and these needed to be clarified before any agreement was signed.

Upon detailed discussion, it was:-

74. RESOLVED that a letter be sent from the Chairman of the Authority to the Chair of Firebuy:-

- (i) Welcoming the Corporate and Business Plans as bringing clarity to the aims and key priorities of Firebuy, which would enable Fire and Rescue Authorities to better assess how it would impact on the work of FRA's and Regional Management Boards;
- (ii) Stating that the Member's Agreement, required clarity on the financial impact of Firebuy Limited on individual Fire Authorities and Tyne and Wear in particular and requesting that the views of the Fire Lawyer's Network be taken into account as part of the consultation process; and
- (iii) Further reports be received as appropriate.



## **Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006**

75. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it is considered to involve a likely disclosure of information relating to any individual or likely to reveal the identity of an individual and to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4).

(Signed) P. GIBSON,  
Chairman.

### **Note:**

The above minutes comprise those relating to items of business during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.

**North East Fire and Rescue Regional Management Board**

**BOARD MEETING**

**PART I**

**At a meeting of the  
North East Fire and Rescue  
Regional Management Board  
held in the Collingwood One  
Room, Longhirst Hall,  
Longhirst, Morpeth on  
FRIDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2006  
at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor C. Magee in the Chair

Councillors Mrs B Forster, T. Mawston, P. Porley (substitute for J Jones), N Cooney (substitute for Mrs H Pearson), T Forster, R. Pye (substitute for S Harker), P. Hillman, M Scullion, J Wright (substitute for I Hayes), T. Cooney, P. Gibson, K. Jordan (substitute for Mrs M Forbes) and R. Renton.

**In Attendance:-**

Chief Officers Mr J Doyle, Ms. S Johnson, Mr B Hesler, Mr. R. Bull, Mr R.C Rayner, Clerk to the Board and Mr S. Crowe, Treasurer to the Board. Mr J Burke (Cleveland Firecontrol), Mr S Stokoe (DCLG) Liz Barron (Firebuy) and Terry Brewer (Firebuy)

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors J Jones, Mrs H Pearson, S Harker, Mrs M Forbes, I Hayes, and W Brooks.

## **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Minutes**

8. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2006, Part I (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **Matters Arising**

Councillors J Wright and T Reid had been appointed as Members of the RCC at Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authority and were therefore no longer substitutes to the RMB.

Councillors Pye and Porter had been appointed as Members of the RCC at Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority, therefore Councillor T Carole replaced Councillor Pye as a substitute to the RMB.

Councillors P Porley and G Dunning were substitutes for Councillor Mrs B Foster and J Jones from Cleveland Fire and Rescue Authority.

9. RESOLVED that the changes in membership be approved.

## **Firebuy Ltd.- National Procurement for Fire and Rescue Services**

Ms S Johnson Chief Executive submitted a report (circulated) to update Members on the issues relating to Firebuy Limited prior to the attendance of Liz Barron, Chair, Terry Brewer Chief Executive and Les Byrom, North East Regional Representative of Firebuy Limited of whom would deliver a presentation to the Board.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Members of the Board were reminded that Liz Barron, wrote to the then Chair of the Regional Management Board on 8<sup>th</sup> March expressing a desire to meet all of the Chairs of R.M.B's. The Chair of the R.M.B replied welcoming the request and also proposing that Liz Barron meet with the R.M.B.

In addition to this, members were informed that Firebuy became an executive Non-Departmental Public Body on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2006. With an aim to deliver the National Procurement Strategy for the service and to lead procurement arrangements for vehicles and equipment, respiratory protection equipment, the integrated Clothing project and the standardisation of acquisition procedures.

At this juncture, the Chief Executive introduced Liz Barron and Terry Brewer to the Board who delivered a presentation on Firebuy. The presentation provided Members with information in relation to the following:- The Board composition, funding arrangements, national procurement, the projects delivered, the efficiency review and the importance of communication.

Members of the Board were then afforded the opportunity to ask any questions or comment upon the presentation.

Councillor T Forster questioned what the costs would be to individual Fire Authorities? He was advised that this may be in the region of £25,000 per Authority.

Councillor Hillman commented that he welcomed the appointment of a Director and hoped the issue of monopolies would be addressed.

Councillor B Forster questioned the duration of the contracts and was advised that this depended upon the product and contractual commitments. Some fast moving products had one/two year contracts whilst the clothes for example may have a ten year contract.

Members then commented that the presentation was very informative and thanked representatives of Firebuy for their attendance.

It was:-

10. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be noted.

### **RMB Expenditure and Income for 2005/06**

Mr. S. Crowe, Treasurer to the Board submitted a report (circulated) to provide Members with information on the expenditure and income for the Regional Management Board (RMB) and to obtain approval for the accounts for 2005/06.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Treasurer advised Members of the requirement of smaller relevant bodies to prepare annual accounts and an annual Statement on Internal Control in the form of an annual return. This return must be completed and returned to the Audit Commission by 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2006.

The balance on the RMB account had increased by the £52,000 excess of income over expenditure during 2005/06. When added to the opening balance of £35,000 the left a closing balance of £87,000 to carry forward into 2006/07.

Upon discussion, it was:-

11. RESOLVED that the accounts be approved for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2006.

## **Appointment of Clerk to RMB**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to request approval for change of the appointment of the Clerk to the RMB.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer reminded the Board that the Clerk to the RMB was presently Mr. R.C. Rayner from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority. It was now considered appropriate that the Clerk was appointed from the Authority whose representative was chairing the RMB. Consequently it was proposed that Mrs. L.A. Davies from Durham and Darlington be appointed as Clerk to the RMB.

It was further proposed that, in the future, as the Chair of the RMB changes, the appointment of Clerk rotates to that particular Authority. This was the practice of the majority of RMB's nationally.

At this juncture, the RMB thanked Mr. Rayner for all his hard work and effort.

In addition to this, the Treasurer to the Board would be rotated in two years.

Thanks were also expressed to Mr. S. Crowe and his staff.

Upon discussion, it was:-

12. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Mrs. L.A. Davies, Clerk to Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority, be appointed as Clerk to the RMB;
- (ii) the position of Clerk rotated with the appointment of Chair to the RMB; and
- (iii) that the position of Treasurer be also rotated to the appropriate Officer at Cleveland.

## **Regional Control Centre – Project Manager**

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) for the RMB to give further consideration to the role and appointment of the Project Director.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Due to the increasing complexity of this project, the work associated with the establishment of the Local Authority Company, the issues regarding future staffing arrangements and other operational and administrative issues it was considered essential that there was on-going support and continuity given to this particular role.

Having reviewed the work programme and business control issues surrounding this project it was essential in continuity terms that the experience, knowledge and general awareness of the present project offer was not lost at this stage. The Chief Officers therefore proposed that the constituent authorities of the RMB retain the services of the present Project Director (Mr. J. Burke – Cleveland) from 1<sup>st</sup> February – 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2007 and the financial year 2007/08.

The costs of funding this post for the remainder of the financial year 1<sup>st</sup> February – 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2006 would be approximately £11,508 - £2,877 per authority.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

13. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the constituent authorities were requested to approve the appointment of a Project Director for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February – 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2007 and for 2007/08;
- (ii) each of the constituent authorities be requested to provide further funding for the post in the region of £2,877 per authority for 2006/07 and £17,262 per authority for 2007/08 (subject to pay awards) plus travel and subsistence incurred.
- (iii) agree to further written representations being made to the DCLG regarding financial support for the post of Project Director, with copies being sent to MP's seeking their support.

### **FiReControl/Firelink Project Update**

The Chief Fire Officer, R. Bull, submitted a report (circulated) to outline for the information for the information of Members, progress within each of the projects i.e. RCC and FiReLink. Additionally, to seek approval for financial resources in 2007/08.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Both the FiReControl and Firelink projects were progressing steadily. In particular, the best and final officer (BAFO) stage of the infrastructure services contract for FiReControl closed on 14<sup>th</sup> September, with bids being received from each of the three primary contractors. Work was also progressing steadily on setting up the governance structure for the RCC to outline for the information of Members, progress within each of the projects i.e. RCC and FiReLink. Additionally, to seek approval for financial resources in 2007/08.

DCLG had circulated a summary of answers to questions posed at the regional project seminars held during May and June this year. The Summary included answers to specific questions posed during the north east seminar of 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2006. The Regional Project Team was reviewing the contents of the Q&A document to identify any areas where further clarification needed to be sought.

Publication of the business case as it currently stands was imminent and following this DCLG was offering to provide seminars for Members.

Staff had been recently informed of DCLG's work on indicative staffing numbers that had been determined for planning purposes. Subject to this process, it was anticipated that DCLG would issue guidance on minimum staffing levels for the Directors of the LACC to consider when determining the number of staff they require.

The RCC building was scheduled for practical completion in March, 2007. This was the first to be finished and Members were requested to consider whether a formal ceremony would be appropriate to mark this event.

Representations would continue to be made for full project costs to be supported by DCLG, however, contingency provisions needed to be considered in the event that sufficient funding was not provided.

Due to the intrinsic links between FiReControl and Firelink and the requirement for Firelink to be operational as a pre-requisite for the RCC to go-live, overall co-ordination of the two projects was being undertaken by the FiReControl Project Team. The structure now needed to be formalised and FRS resources available for Firelink delivery confirmed. Members were therefore requested to consider the requirement for each FRS to provide a Firelink day-to-day contact on a full-time basis, with effect from April, 2007 and for this resource to be supplemented by additional staff as workloads very and endorse the co-ordination of Firelink work via the FiReControl Regional Project Team.

The Chief Fire Officer, R. Bull, proposed that the Regional Project Team continue to take an end to end approach to project management and delivery. This would ensure that each workstream continues to deliver complete activities, project resources are used to maximum efficiency and the RCC was viewed from the start as an integral part of the FRSs on a final note, Members of the Board commented that they would find a visit a valuable experience. Due to this, the Chief Fire Officers agreed to arrange this in the new year.

Upon detailed discussion, it was:-

14. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) a celebration event be arranged, at a later date, to mark the completion of the RCC building with commemorative marking;
- (ii) as required, the RMB net balance of £87,000 be utilised to fund the project costs outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report;
- (iii) it be recommended that the constituent authorities consider the appointment of a full-time Firelink day-to-day contact from April, 2007 and make provision in their budget for 2007/8 for additional Firelink resources identified in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 above; and

- (iv) the Project Management Structure be approved outlined in Section 5 above and appendix C.

### **Regional Control Centre (RCC) Establishment of a Company**

The Clerk to the Board, Mr. R.C. Rayner submitted a report (circulated) seeking approval of the Articles of Association and Memorandum.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Clerk to the Board advised that Legal advisers of each authority had been consulted and that copies of the proposed Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association were annexed to the report.

Eversheds who had been working with the Fire Lawyer's Network were also instructed to vet the drafts and minor amendments had been made in response to their comments.

These costs of obtaining the above advice would be reimbursed.

Due to this, it was:-

15. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of this report be approved and noted; and
- (ii) It be recommended to the constituent Fire Authorities that approval be given to the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company in the form attached hereto.

### **North East Regional Human Resources Management Strategy**

The Chief Fire Officer, J. Doyle, submitted a report (circulated) to request the endorsement of the RMB of a Regional Human Resources Management Strategy for the North East Fire and Rescue Service.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members of the Board were reminded that in order to fully meet the Government expectation, the RMB needed to enhance its existing Human resources framework to maximise the prospective efficiency improvements.

The establishments of a collaborative approach to people management had brought forward a regional HR strategy. The aim of this strategy was to recognise that our people were critical to our success and enable the respective authorities to maximise its capacity and performance so as to deliver an improved service.



Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

16. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of this report be noted; and
- (ii) the Human Resources Management Strategy be endorsed for the North East Fire and Rescue Services and recommend to constituent authorities the strategy for implementation.

### **North East Regional Equality and Diversity Strategy**

The Chief Fire Officer, J. Doyle submitted a report (circulated) to endorse the Equality and Diversity Strategy, "Strategy into Action 2006/09", for the North East Fire and Rescue Service.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The RMB were advised that equality recognised that we should treat everyone fairly and equally and that everyone should have equality of opportunity. Whilst diversity recognised and valued the differences of individuals, seeking to understand and promote these differences and treat everyone as an individual.

The North East Fire and Rescue Services were committed to the principles of equality and diversity and constantly strive to meet a high standard and consistent approach to equality and diversity.

This strategy enabled the North East Fire and Rescue Services to be able to respond appropriately to the needs of their local communities and, by attracting the best people within our local communities, they may be better placed to deliver the best services they could offer.

It was:-

17. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of this report be noted; and
- (ii) the Equality and Diversity Strategy, be endorsed for the North East Fire and Rescue Services and recommend to constituent authorities the strategy for implementation.

### **NEFRA Project: Report on Progress and Project Review Group Approval**

The Chief Fire Officer, R. Bull, submitted a report (circulated) to inform Members about the NEFRA Projects path through the Treasury; Project Review Group (PRG) the subsequent approval and the Minister's decision to uplift the PFI credits.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members of the RMB were reminded that the Government's PFI Programme was subject to a number of detailed 'scrutiny' processes, each one designed to confirm the viability of the Project, the overall management of the project and the progress the project is making compared to the approved timetable and budget.

With the NEFRA Project achieving PRG approval and with the accompanying uplift in PFI Credits, the OJEU Notice (Official Journal of the European Union) was duly published on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2006, and included details of the Open Day which was planned for 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2006.

For the information of Members 20 'expressions of interest' for complete 'build and manage' enquiries or combinations of elements of the FM requirements of the Project were received over the first 48 hours of publishing the OJEU Notice, and over 90 representatives attended the Open Day.

Upon discussion, it was:-

18. RESOLVED that approval be given to uplift PFI credits to £37.9m and endorse the approval of progress made in respect to the bidding process.

### **NEFRA Project: 4Ps Gateway Review 2 – Procurement Strategy**

The Chief Fire Officer, R. Bull, submitted a report (circulated) to inform Members regarding the outcome of the most recent Gateway Review, the recommendations of the Review Team and the initial responses and proposals to address them.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Chief Fire Officer R. Bull advised that the principles behind the Gateway Review process were for a team of independent individuals, with experience in project delivery, to speak with key players involved in the particular project and with stakeholders to consider whether there were any actions or activities that could enhance the projects probability of success.

The Gateway Review 2 was conducted Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2006. Most of the interviews were conducted face to face with only a few interviews needing to be conducted by telephone.

Members may consider that all the recommendations are relatively procedural. However, to ensure the NEFRA Project continued to attract the considerable support of DCLG and PRG, it was considered important that the recommendations are actioned.

As Gateway 3 would not be programmed until the end of the procurement stage, and before financial close, which on the current programme would be March 2008, that an interim one day review or health check could be carried out probably at the end of the first 'Invitation to Participate in Dialogue' phase.

Consideration having been given to the matter, it was:-

19. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposals for action as detailed in this report be approved;
- (ii) an interim Review/health check at an appropriate time be approved;  
and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

(Signed) C. Magee  
Chairman



## Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

Ged Fitzgerald  
Clerk to the Authority.

### PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the  
PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE held  
in the Fire Authority Rooms, Fire and Rescue  
Service Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston  
Mere, Sunderland on MONDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup>  
NOVEMBER, 2006 at 11.30 a.m.

#### Present:

Councillor R. Heron in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Cooney and Renton.

#### Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gibson and Huscroft.

#### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### Minutes

4. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Review Committee held on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2006 be confirmed and signed as correct record.

Our Vision Statement:

"CREATING THE SAFEST COMMUNITY"

Our Mission Statement:

"TO SAVE LIFE, REDUCE RISK, PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT"

## **Statutory Audit Report on 2006 Best Value Performance Plan**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a report (circulated) regarding the recent audit the Authority underwent on the 2006 Best Value Performance Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer outlined the report to Members advising it was a positive report as the Auditor did not identify any matters and had no recommendations to make on procedures in relation to the plan for the Authority.

Having given consideration to the report it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be endorsed and noted.

## **Introduction of Performance Manual**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a report (copy circulated) proposing the issuing to Members of a Performance Manual to provide comprehensive performance management information and to enable enhanced reporting and management of the performance of the Authority.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer distributed the manual to Members and Chris Maude, Performance and Information Officer, provided an outline to Members.

Members were informed that the manual contained performance from the last six quarters and would be updated after each further quarter. Members were advised that after each quarter a performance report would be made available and an additional copy would be provided at each Performance Review Committee meeting for insertion into the Performance Manual. It was stated that it was the responsibility of each Member to ensure they brought their manuals along to each meeting and to ensure that they were kept up to date.

Councillor Bell stated that the manual would prove to be a very useful tool for Members as it would be helpful at other meetings when issues relating to the Authority were raised, as Members would now have all the information needed to hand. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the manual was the most viable way to ensure that performance was moving forward and invited Members to request any further information they thought might be relevant.

Following a query from Councillor Renton a discussion ensued regarding whether the reports should be printed in colour. It was agreed that the different options would be considered and a decision would be made next year.

The Chief Fire Officer proceeded to outline the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Performance Indicators that were contained in the report, paying particular attention to the following categories:-

**Number of Accidental Fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings [BV142iii]**

Due to a slight improvement in Quarter 2 and with continued improvement the target would be achieved. Communication of community safety and holistic fire safety messages via home Risk Assessments would continue to be used in an attempt to improve the figures.

**Number of deliberate secondary fires (excluding deliberate secondary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population [BV206iii]**

Members were advised that events over the bonfire weekend combined with the increase detailed in the report meant that the target was in danger of not being achieved. It was hoped the figure would improve over the winter and also through the number of 'wheelie bin uplift' initiatives that were in place with Local Authorities.

**Number of deliberate secondary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population [BV206IV]**

Work was ongoing with Local Authorities to remove abandoned vehicles in an attempt to achieve target.

**Number of deaths from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population [BV143i]**

A media campaign was about to begin on ITV attempting to reduce the number of deaths through chip pan fires with hard hitting advertisements. Councillor Cooney advised that he had recently seen an advertisement which was broadcast around 11.00 p.m. which he thought was the ideal time for it to be shown. The Chief Fire Officer stated that he anticipated the performance to improve further in this area as it had done consistently for the past ten years.

**Number of malicious false alarm calls not attended per 1,000 population (BV146i)**

Although currently short of the target, it was expected through the continued implementation of 'call challenge' that the figure would reduce and the target would be achieved.

**Number of false alarms due to automatic fire detection in non-domestic properties per 1,000 properties [BV149i]**

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the worst offenders were being targeted and high level meetings were being sought. He advised that this would take time for improvement but was a step in the right direction. A robust process to address the situation was being looked at as an increase would have an impact on not only the Authority's resources but also on meeting other targets.

Having given consideration to the report it was:-

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the introduction of the Performance Manual be considered and approved;
- (ii) the Committee endorsed the content and received regular updates at each meeting; and
- (iii) the performance outcomes detailed in the appendices to this report be considered and comments provided accordingly.

### **Best Value Review 2006/7**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a report (copy circulated) outlining the Authority's current approach to service review and updating Members regarding progress made to date against the current Best Value Review Programme.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer outlined the report to Members advising that there was no longer a statutory requirement to carry out reviews over a five year rolling programme but there was still a requirement to carry out Best Value Reviews. In formulating the CPA Improvement Plan the Authority agreed to undertake Best Value Reviews in three areas: Internal and External Communications, Diversity in the Workforce and Knowledge Management.

It was stated that although the reviews were not formal the recommendations as implemented would bring about significant improvements in each of the three review areas. Any further reviews would be determined by the CPA or other audit processes. The focus of those reviews would be based upon areas that were reported as weaknesses or priorities and the aim of the subsequent reviews would be to improve performance and Value for Money in those areas.

Having given consideration to the report it was:-

7. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the outcomes and actions taken in respect of the management reviews detailed in the report be endorsed; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

(Signed) R. HERON,  
Chairman.

MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006

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**SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: PART 1 - STAFF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2006-2009****JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY AND FINANCE OFFICER.**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the improvements to the Authority's communications processes. The Communications Strategy will comprise of three parts namely, Part 1 Staff Communications Strategy 2006-09 (see Appendix 1). Part 2 A Members' Communications Strategy and Part 3 An External Communications Strategy.
- 1.2 The Members' Communications Strategy will outline current communication processes involving Members and how these can be improved. In particular it will seek to prioritise and maximise communications between Members, Authority staff, other elected Members and MPs.
- 1.3 The External Communications Strategy will review existing external communications and outline improvements to the way the Authority communicates with the public and key stakeholders. It will prioritise the audiences, identify the key messages to be communicated and recommend communications mechanisms for the Authority to ensure effective external communications.
- 1.4 Parts 2 and 3 will be presented to the Authority at a future meeting for consideration and approval. Both strategies will be supported by detailed action plans.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Over the last three years the fire and rescue service nationally has experienced significant organisational change as part of the modernisation and reform process, following the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It is important that any change programme is supported by effective communications, internally and externally.
- 2.2 As a result a dedicated professional Corporate Communications Team, consisting of two whole-time equivalents, has also been established to enhance and support the Authority's communications processes and resources.
- 2.3 The first priority has been to develop internal communications with staff. As a result a Staff Communications Strategy 2006-09 has been produced and is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and approval by Members.



## **3 STAFF COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2006-09**

3.1 The Staff Communications Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan. The key action points are to:

- Review Strategic Management Team (SMT) meetings
- Implement a programme of SMT 'Listening Events' – where all departments/locations/watches are visited by a SMT member who is there to listen to their views.
- Introduce formal corporate team briefing
- Produce and implement a communications skills course for all line managers
- Pilot a rumourline – which staff can ring/email a rumour to and have it checked out by an authoritative source
- Introduce a quarterly Strategic Management Team (SMT) meeting with all line managers – to communicate key issues affecting the Service and providing an opportunity for line managers to raise issues/suggestions directly with SMT
- Introduce a staff recognition scheme – to reward staff for their contribution
- Re-launch the staff publications – a fortnightly newsletter to replace the Gazette, a new colour quarterly staff magazine, improvements to the Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin.
- Carry out an annual staff survey to evaluate staff views and the staff communications strategy

3.2 The Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that significant progress has already been made, including:

- The introduction of an annual programme of SMT Listening Events from September 2006
- A re-launch of the staff newsletter, the Gazette in September
- Launch of a new quarterly staff magazine, Wildfire – first edition in October 2006, next in January 2007
- Launch of a three month team briefing pilot from November 2006 within Community Safety and at South Shields Community Fire Station
- A Communications skills training event pilot in January 2007
- Review of SMT meetings
- Establishing a Strategic Communications Group to oversee developments in communications, chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. First meeting took place in October 2006.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 As part of a number of audits undertaken staff were consulted on the Service's internal communications. Many of the suggestions made by staff have been included in the Staff Communications Strategy.

4.2 All staff were consulted on the Strategy during August 2006. The responses to the consultation have been taken into account in the Strategy.

## **5. STRATEGIC PLAN LINK**

- 5.1 An effective Staff Communications Strategy underpins the Strategic Plan.
- 5.2 The Authority's Strategic Plan 2006-2011 states that in achieving its objectives the Service must ensure it:

- is well managed
- aims for excellence in service provision taking into account of stakeholders views, and
- works in effective partnership with the communities it represents, and external organisations

Effective communications, especially with staff, is key in making all of these happen. They also play a key role in achieving the Service's strategic goals and organisational objectives, specifically ensuring we deliver a modern, effective Service (Strategic Goal 4) and providing a well managed, proactive, efficient and effective service through highly developed people and systems (Level 2 Priority).

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are financial implications from the introduction of the Staff Communications Strategy, including the enhancement and support of communication processes. The majority of these costs are in relation to staffing requirements and other publications. Provision has been made with the revenue budget for 2006/07 and included in the revenue estimates for 2007/08.

## **7. EVALUATION**

- 7.1 The Staff Communications Strategy will be evaluated through a number of mechanisms, including an annual staff survey. Implementation of the Strategy will be overseen by a Corporate Communications Group chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, with departmental representatives. A formal annual update of performance against the strategy will be presented to SMT on an annual basis and reported to the Authority as appropriate.

## **8. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Equality and fairness issues are addressed in the Staff Communications Strategy.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) endorse the Staff Communications Strategy 2006-09 attached in Appendix A, and
  - b) receive further reports as appropriate

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The undermentioned Background Paper refers to the subject matter of the above report:

- Staff Communications Strategy, 2006-09, August 2006

**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
*"Creating the Safest Community"*

**Staff Communications Strategy**  
**2006-2009**

**August 2006**

## 1.0 Executive Summary

Over the last three years fire and rescue authorities nationally have experienced significant organisational change as part of the modernisation and reform process, following the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It is important that any change programme is well managed and that there are effective communications.

Four audits of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFR) undertaken over the last 18 months have shown a clear need to improve communications with staff. The results have been reviewed by the Strategic Management Team (SMT) and led to the development of a Staff Communications Strategy to address these issues. A dedicated professional Corporate Communications Team has also been established to enhance and support communication processes and resources.

TWFR's two main communication channels are a weekly staff newsletter, Gazette, Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin, and on the stations the 28 day file. Research shows staff prefer to receive regular communications face-to-face from their line manager\*, supplemented by communications from senior management.

This Strategy, supported by a detailed action plan, sets out how the Authority is planning to improve communications with staff over the next three years, focusing particularly on face-to-face communications. The high priorities are to:

- Review Strategic Management Team (SMT) meetings
- Implement a programme of SMT 'Listening Events' – where all departments/locations/watches are visited by a SMT member who is there to listen to their views.
- Introduce formal corporate team briefing
- Produce and implement a communications skills course for all line managers
- Pilot a rumourline – which staff can ring/email a rumour to and have it checked out by an authoritative source
- Introduce a quarterly Strategic Management Team (SMT) meeting with all line managers – to communicate key issues affecting the Authority and providing an opportunity for line managers to raise issues/suggestions directly with SMT
- Introduce a staff recognition scheme – to reward staff for their contribution
- Re-launch the staff publications – a fortnightly newsletter to replace the Gazette, a new colour quarterly staff magazine and improvements to the Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin.
- An annual staff survey to evaluate staff views and the staff communications strategy

The Strategy will be evaluated through a number of mechanisms, including the annual staff survey. Implementation of the strategy will be overseen by a Strategic Communications Group chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, with departmental representatives. A formal update of performance against the strategy will be presented to SMT on an annual basis and to the Authority as appropriate.

## **2.0 Purpose**

This Staff Communications Strategy has been produced to show how the Authority plans to improve communications with its staff. It also includes details of how progress will be monitored.

## **3.0 Background/Context**

### **3.1 Current Climate/Culture**

Over the last three years fire and rescue authorities nationally have experienced significant organisational change as part of the modernisation programme, following the Fire and Rescue Authority Act 2004. Such organisational change has an impact upon staff and it is important any change programme is well managed and supported by effective communications.

Our Authority is also seeking to increase the empowerment of managers and staff in order to further improve the Authority and to ensure all staff are involved and participate in the decision making process.

### **3.2 Strategic Plan**

Effective staff communications are key to ensuring we achieve our vision and objectives. It is important staff understand, and have feedback on, how their role affects what we are trying to achieve.

The Authority's vision is

“Creating the safest community”

and its mission is

“To save life, reduce risk, provide humanitarian services and protect the environment.”

If the Authority is going to achieve its aims it is crucial they are communicated to staff and that staff understand and buy into them.

The Authority's Strategic Plan 2006-2011 states that in achieving its objectives the Authority must ensure it:

- is well managed
- aims for excellence in service provision taking into account of stakeholders views, and
- works in effective partnership with the communities it represents, and external organisations

Effective communications, especially with staff, is key in making all of these happen. They also play a key role in achieving the Authority's strategic goals and

organisational objectives, specifically ensuring we deliver a modern, effective service (Strategic Goal 4) and providing a well managed, proactive, efficient and effective service through highly developed people and systems (Level 2 Priority).

### **3.3 Why communicate with staff?**

Effective internal communications lead to:

- A motivated and empowered workforce
- Commitment from staff
- Increased effectiveness
- Continuously improving service for customers/clients/residents
- Enhanced reputation of TWFR
- Attracting and retaining staff
- Effective industrial relations

Our staff are our greatest resource and our greatest ambassadors. How well an organisation communicates with its staff has a direct impact on how it performs and how it is perceived externally. Our highly trained staff already have the skills in order to carry out their duties. Effective communications will build on this to ensure they have the information and an understanding of what they are doing and why. They are often the source of great ideas for developing and improving the services we provide.

Much research has been undertaken over the years about the importance of internal communications and it is widely reported that staff are aware of what is happening in their organisation, and their role within it, are able to carry out their duties effectively as they are informed and motivated.

Effective internal communication will also help staff feel part of a team and proud of the organisation they work for.

Many management experts view internal communications as more important than external communications, although in reality good communications internally and externally impact on each other.

Many residents and prospective employees will form their views of the Authority from what our employees tell them about the Authority and how they are treated. It is crucial that our staff are well informed about the Authority, its objectives and its activities, as well as feel valued for their contribution. The Authority needs excellent communication with its employees.

### **3.4 Communication Reviews**

Over the last 18 months four audits of TWFR have shown a need to improve communications with staff.

In February 2005 a pilot exercise looking at improving communications at station level was carried out at two stations.

In March 2005, along with other fire and rescue authorities across the country the Authority received its first Comprehensive Performance Assessment, carried out by the Audit Commission. It examined how well the Authority was run corporately, not how well it responded to incidents. The report, published in July 2005 resulted in a 'Fair' rating for the Authority, which showed the Authority as performing well and being consistently above minimum requirements in five out of the nine areas it was assessed against. It highlighted a number of areas the Authority performed well in, as well as a number where improvement was needed.

In July/August 2005 an internal communications audit was carried out by consultants. The audit involved interviews and focus groups with a cross-section of 120 staff across the Authority. It reviewed existing communications channels and tools, as well as the communications culture. The report and recommendations were published in October 2005.

A staff survey was also carried out in November/December 2005. The survey looked at a whole range of issues including communications, equality and fairness, the work culture and job satisfaction. The survey had a 51% response rate. The results were published in February 2006. This identified a need to improve communications with staff.

Staff are any employer's most valuable resource. Effective employee communications are vital for any organisation and should be at the heart of the Service. This Staff Communications Strategy complements the Authority's aims and objectives and takes on board the findings and recommendations made within the four audits mentioned above.

Separate strategies for improving communications with Elected Members and for external communications will be produced which will link to this strategy.

### **3.5 Current internal communication mechanisms**

The Authority currently communicates with staff in a number of ways. These are listed below:

- Strategic Management Team (SMT), Functional Management (FMT) and Departmental Management Team meetings/Watch Manager Meetings
- Specific committees e.g. Health and Safety
- Gazette newsletter
- Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin
- Performance Development Review (PRDs) interviews
- Departmental/Authority newsletters
- Email
- Noticeboards
- 28 day file
- Adhoc visits
- Letter
- Chief Fire Officer (via email, or open door policy)
- Trade Unions
- Grapevine



Recommendations as to how the Authority can build and improve on its communications with staff are mentioned under Section 8 on page 9.

## 4.0 Objectives

It is important that the Authority measures the effectiveness of this Staff Communications Strategy. An annual staff survey is a key evaluation tool in achieving this. The targets set out for improvement in the annual staff survey below are based on a number of criteria, including the potential shift in attitude and behaviour amongst staff, the level of change, the communications activities planned as well as the resources available.

- 1 To produce and agree a Staff Communications Strategy by the end of August 2006.
- 2 To implement the Staff Communications Strategy from August 2006 and complete by March 2007.
- 3 To achieve the following results through the annual staff survey:
  - To increase the percentage of respondents to the survey who said they had regular team meetings from 39% to 65% within two years.
  - To increase the percentage of respondents who agree that their ideas, views and concerns are listened to from 27% to 50% within two years.
  - To increase the percentage of respondents who feel valued as employees of TWFRRA from 21% to 45% within two years.
  - To increase the percentage of respondents who are satisfied with their present job from 54% to 65% within two years.
  - To reduce the percentage of respondents who are currently looking for another job from 23% to 18% within two years.
  - To reduce the percentage of respondents who say contact with their line managers is one of the least satisfying aspects of working for the Authority from 26% to 18% within two years.
  - To increase the percentage of respondents who feel well informed about their personal performance from 27% to 35% within two years.
  - To increase the percentage of respondents who feel their line manager communicates well with the team from 61% to 75% within two years

- To increase the percentage of respondents who feel that senior management informs them about changes that are happening from 35% to 50% within two years.
- To increase the percentage of respondents who feel that senior management are interested in how they think and feel about work from 23% to 40% within two years.
- To increase the percentage of respondents who feel that the Authority:
  - consults staff on the Authority's plans from 32% to 45%
  - recognises good work from 38% to 50%, and
  - encourages staff to say what they think from 28% to 45%
  - is open from 36% to 49%
  - is honest from 43% to 59%, within two years

## 5.0 Audiences

In communicating with staff the Authority needs to consider how it is going to segment and target its staff. This can be done in a number of ways:

- a) Hierarchical – using the traditional line management structure from the Chief Fire Officer to frontline staff
- b) By departments
- c) By location – according to where they work
- d) By work patterns - full time, part time, office hour staff, staff working shifts
- e) By what motivates them and their values and beliefs

Staff are motivated by different things. 42% of staff are motivated by a sense of achievement, 34% by recognition\*. Other staff may be motivated by status. It is important in targeting communications that we consider what motivates our individual staff. Many staff in the Authority work for the organisation because they believe in the Authority and want to create the safest community.

In communicating with staff we will use a combination of ways to segment and target staff e.g. hierarchical for middle managers, location and department as appropriate for specific issues e.g. new community fire station, and values and beliefs for significant and Authority-wide communications.

By far the most successful way to communicate specific issues to staff is by grouping staff according to what motivates them and targeting the message appropriately.

When communicating with staff on important issues it is useful to identify and work with champions - these are the early enthusiasts who can help persuade and bring

along the majority of the workforce. Most effort should be spent on communicating with the enthusiasts.

### *Diversity*

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service has 1,236 employees, 913 of which are firefighters. As the majority of staff are firefighters who work shifts only 25% of the Service's staff are at work at anyone time. Male employees outnumber female employees by six to one.

Employees who have described themselves as having a disability form 1.2% of the workforce, and 1.2% of the workforce are from black and minority ethnic groups.

The Service currently has 107 firefighters over the age of 50 with 74 corporate staff being over 50 years.

Diversity should always be taken into account when communicating with staff. The Authority should be seen to lead the way in how it communicates to ensure inclusion. All staff publications will be available in different formats, including large format, and languages upon request. The language and images used within staff publications will also be in line with our equality and diversity policy and representative of our workforce.

Diversity issues are central to this Strategy and will be overseen by a Strategic Communications Group. The Group will also monitor progress and review best practice.

## **6.0 Key Messages**

The key messages of the Staff Communications Strategy are:

- Managers are trying to improve communications
- Managers communicate in an open and honest way
- Managers do want to hear what staff have to say
- Managers do listen
- Managers do act on the views of staff where they can and where they can't they explain why
- Managers provide feedback
- Staff have the opportunity to give their views and suggestions in a safe and blame free way
- Staff do make their views, concerns and ideas known to managers
- Staff views do influence the Authority's work
- Staff are valued

Effective communication is everyone's responsibility. Managers are responsible for communicating effectively with their staff and staff have an obligation to participate in communication initiatives as well as to make their views, comments and ideas known and to seek relevant information out when it is not readily available.

## **7.0 Strategy**

Research into internal communications shows that staff prefer to gain information about the organisation face-to-face and from their line manager.\*\*

The strategy aims to improve two-way face-to-face communications with staff and to position managers as the authoritative source for information about the Authority.

This also involves creating more productive opportunities for staff to be listened to by managers and to receive feedback on the issues raised.

## **8.0 Communications Mechanisms**

The new Corporate Communications Team will be responsible for driving improvements in communications with staff. However it is important that all members of staff see it as their role to help improve communications internally.

The Corporate Communications Team will set up formal mechanisms, help to share best practice and carry out formal evaluation - however all staff have a part in ensuring improvements are implemented. The Team will also provide an advisory service to all staff on any communications issues they may require help with.

Senior management will be leading by example and driving through the improvements. A detailed action plan has been produced setting out in more detail how the Authority will improve communications with staff. This has been categorised according to the communication priorities identified in the audits referred to earlier, the effectiveness of the communication activities and the resources available. A copy is available on request.

High priority areas include:

### 8.1 Strategic Management Team Member 'Listening Events' Programme

An annual programme of 'Listening Events' involving a visit by a SMT member to all watches and departments will be set up to provide staff with a direct opportunity to discuss issues with senior management and increase the visibility of SMT members amongst staff.

Approximately 80 visits over a year will be needed to cover the entire Authority. These will be divided between the SMT members with one SMT member conducting each 'Listening Event'. Action points will be taken at each event and fed back to SMT with responses and feedback given back to the area visited and an overall summary produced for staff. SMT members will visit areas other than their own.

These 'Listening Events' will begin in September and be evaluated using questionnaires, focus groups and the annual survey.

## 8.2 Formal Team briefing

To help establish line managers as the main authoritative source of information and to communicate corporate messages consistently, a formal team briefing system will be implemented.

Team briefing will be the prime focus of improving face-to-face communications with staff. Ideally, it should take place monthly and begin at the top of the organisation with SMT agreeing the corporate items to be briefed (the core brief) and team briefing starting at SMT. It should then be disseminated down the organisation using the existing line management structure, through FMTs and their line management structure. Existing team meetings should be aligned with, or set up to take place in line with, a formal team briefing timetable. This should ensure that all staff are involved in regular team meetings.

Team briefing should last for 30 minutes. The core brief should account for 30% of the information being briefed to staff. The remainder should be news from directorates, departments and the team which is compiled as the team briefing is disseminated throughout the Authority.

Team briefing should be completed within a couple of weeks of the core brief being issued. Feedback reports should be sent back up the line management structure to individual SMT Members. From this a corporate feedback report should be presented back to SMT. A Q&As sheet should be included each month with the main queries raised by staff from the previous team brief identified and a corporate response given. The effectiveness of team briefing should be audited annually.

To ensure the effective implementation of team briefing it is important that all team briefers receive appropriate training and that SMT members ensure that the formal team briefing occurs.

Community Fire Safety and South Shields Community Fire Station have agreed to pilot team briefing for three months. This would involve initial training for the whole of SMT and then specific training for line managers within the pilot areas. It is recommended that the pilot begins in September for three months. Following a review of the pilot a proposal for introducing team briefing Authority-wide will be developed.

## 8.3 Communications Skills Training

Effective communication is often taken for granted, particularly in busy environments, however communicating well is a skill and as such should be part of every member of staff's training and development plan. It is also the responsibility of every line manager to communicate with their staff. Commitment for effective communication has to stem from the top of the Authority.

Communicating effectively is a skill and requires training. A communications skills course for all line managers, including SMT, will be developed. A pilot will take place with SMT. Establishing this as part of management development, and

communications being clearly indicated as part of a manager's role should help to improve communications with staff.

The course will include modules such as listening skills, empathy, personal presentation skills, verbal questioning, interpersonal skills and providing constructive feedback.

Managers should also be evaluated on their communications skills. Any job specifications involving managing staff should include the need for excellent communication skills.

#### 8.4 Rumourline

Whilst staff prefer to receive information from their line managers, sometimes they may find it difficult to ask them or do not feel it is appropriate. This can lead to misinformation and rumours circulating. Periods of organisational/Service change can cause concern amongst staff and a quick, safe and reliable response to queries can reduce the impact of staff concerns.

In response the Authority will pilot a 'Rumourline' for six months. It will be operated by the Corporate Communications Team. Staff can either phone or post a rumour via the intranet with their name, or confidentially, and then receive reliable information about their concerns. This is also a good way of SMT being aware of any key concerns/issues staff may have and authoritative responses can be fed back to all staff.

The rumourline is not used to circumnavigate normal management processes.

A formal evaluation of pilot will take place.

#### 8.5 Quarterly Line Managers Meetings with SMT

Line managers are the key to successful staff communications. They are responsible for communicating the Authority's key messages to staff and engaging with staff. Without their commitment and support communications will not improve.

They are viewed by SMT as key staff within the Authority and it is important that they are treated as such. They must have access to SMT and SMT must communicate well with them on a regular basis to keep them engaged. They must also be involved in making key decisions.

An annual programme of quarterly meetings between SMT and line managers (crew managers and above) will be organised. The meeting will be two way. It is an important opportunity for SMT to update managers on key issues affecting the Authority as well as an opportunity for managers to question and discuss issues with SMT. Action points will be made following the meetings and feedback given to those who attended. The meetings will also be evaluated.

#### 8.6 Employee Recognition Scheme

It is important that staff feel valued at work. This can be helped by:

- improving communications between teams and their line managers
- communications skill training for line managers, which includes how to make staff feel valued
- focusing on staff and their achievements/contributions in staff publications
- praising staff who have done a good job,
- and launching a staff awards or recognition scheme.

A proposal for an Employee Recognition scheme is being developed and will be presented to the Authority for consideration and approval.

### 8.7 Staff publications

The audits have shown that staff like the Gazette and Chief Fire Officer's Bulletins, however improvements can be made.

Four focus groups were held and ten watches were consulted regarding the staff publications. The main recommendation was to have three staff publications:

- A regular email bulletin – similar to the Gazette in terms of distribution but with improvements to the content and design to make it more news focused.
- A new staff magazine – full colour, well designed, good use of photos, professionally printed and people/staff focused stories with staff contributions
- Chief Fire Officers Bulletin – continue but make the content more relevant, more current and more user friendly

The email bulletin will be produced fortnightly starting in September and the magazine quarterly, with the first issue in October. The Chief Fire Officer's Bulletin will continue to be adhoc.

The focus groups have agreed to reconvene after two issues of the magazine to evaluate the new staff publications. Other evaluation methods will also be considered, including readership surveys.

### 8.8 Intranet

The Intranet was successfully launched in July to all staff with 1,600 hits a day in the first week. The Intranet has been developed following research on best practice and focus groups with staff. It will help to improve the information available to staff and should reduce the number of 'all staff emails' being sent out.

The Intranet will be continuously developed. An ongoing marketing campaign will be produced to encourage staff to use the Intranet. The Intranet will be also be regularly evaluated.

Whilst the intranet is an important communications tool it is rated by staff as only the seventh most effective way to communicate with staff, with face-to-face communication being the preferred method.\*\*\*

### 8.9 Employee Survey

The first Authority staff survey took place in November/December 2005. An annual staff survey is good business practice and will enable the Authority to have reliable data about the views, feelings and opinions of the workforce.

The survey will predominately contain the same questions each year to enable it to be benchmarked but should also seek to ask more questions about communications to review progress.

A marketing campaign is needed to promote the survey and it is vital that the results are fed back to staff and that detailed action plans are produced. Performance against the action plan should be monitored and communicated to staff to ensure staff feel as though senior management do value their opinions and will act on them where possible.

## **9.0 Resources**

A Corporate Communications Department has been established with dedicated and professional resources. This constitutes two full time communications professionals. The new department is also responsible for managing the Media Resources Unit.

The Department's priority is to improve communications with staff. The Department is also responsible for media relations.

Many of the recommendations within this Staff Communications Strategy will be implemented by utilising the existing staff and some additional financial resources. Some support will be from the new Resources and Events Assistant and Admin Services.

The established revenue budget for each financial year will include appropriate provision to underpin the Staff Communications Strategy.

## **10.0 Evaluation**

Evaluating the success of this Staff Communications Strategy and Plan will be carried out in a number of ways with each specific activity having evaluation built into the proposal. Examples include:

- Annual staff survey
- Against the objectives
- Against budget
- Hits on the intranet site
- Feedback on the intranet



- External inspections
- Telephone survey
- Questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Feedback from team briefing training
- Team briefing feedback
- Staff contributions and feedback on the staff newsletter and magazine
- Number of staff newsletters and magazines issued
- Readership surveys
- Calls to Rumourline – number and type
- Attendance at organised events e.g. SMT Listening Events Programme, SMT and line managers meetings, invited forums to meet the Chief Fire Officer
- Number of entries/nominations for the Staff Awards/Recognition Scheme
- Staff retention rates

Overall performance against the strategy will be monitored by the Authority through a Strategic Communications Group. The Group will meet quarterly to review progress and will report back to the Strategic Management Team on an annual basis. The Group will be chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer with a senior representative from each department.

#### References:

\* Herzberg

\*\*MORI 2004 & MORI Trust & Mistrust at Work Survey 2003

\*\*\* Fraser Hardy, Blue Rubicam

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY****MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

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**SUBJECT: FiReControl/FIRELINK PROJECT UPDATE****JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The FiReControl and Firelink projects have increased in pace over recent months. FiReControl is engaged in evaluating the BAFO returns and the national team are confident that contract award will be made in the New Year.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to provide the Members of the RMB a progress report in terms of the national projects and the establishment of Local Authority Controlled Company.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Firelink is now moving towards achievement of milestone 1 with O2 Airwaves, which will enable the release of further information on the regional rollout plan. The planning and preparation for the start of due diligence visits across the North East has also commenced this month. The outcome of the due diligence visits will be an Individual Detailed Design document (IDDS) for each Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 2.2 DCLG has advised that additional funding is to be made available for financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08. A Fire and Rescue Circular is expected shortly confirming the funding amounts and project activities it is designed to support. It is expected that the additional funding will include an amount to cover the set up costs of the LACC as well as supporting transition activities during 2007/08.

**3 FiReControl BUSINESS CASE HEADLINES**

- 3.1 The FiReControl draft final business case was published on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2006. This version of the business case aims to provide an update on the latest assumptions. DCLG have also published the business case in response to the select committee report findings on the FiReControl project. DCLG acknowledge that this version will not address all of the concerns expressed by FRA's, particularly those relating to the financial aspects of the project. Final cost details can only be determined after the infrastructure services contract award. A complete version of the business case will be released in spring 2007 after IS contract award.
- 3.2 A copy of the Business Case is available on request from the Chief Fire Officer. The publication of the Business Case is welcomed as it provides further analysis and information in respect of the FireControl national project.

There are however a number of issues which require further clarification and confirmation, these include:-

- The appendices to the Business Case which provide detailed analysis of the assumptions and costs underpinning the business case have only recently been published and will require detailed analysis before a response can be made.
- Detailed information in respect of the efficiency savings available for reinvestment requires further clarification.
- The cost of savings apportionment model has not yet been determined. There are direct concerns here for the North East due to the small number of Authorities utilising the resources provided as compared to the South West for example.
- Deployment of specialist resilience equipment and core fire and rescue resources requires further consideration and clarification.
- Further consideration needs to be given to the statutory functions of individual Authorities, as against its role and function in the RCC for example issues arising from IRMP's.

3.3 The Business Case remains as a draft, therefore there is an opportunity to submit comments, questions, and requests for further information and clarification prior to the final business case being published. The Authority is therefore requested to consider whether or not it would wish to provide a further detailed response to the published business case.

## **4 LACC/RCC GOVERNANCE**

4.1 Good progress has been made in establishing the LACC for the North East and various documents are in the process of being finalised for submission to Companies House for consideration and acceptance.

4.2 At its meeting held on the 13 July 2006 the RMB received a report which included issues regarding the Governance of the RCC. Following consideration of the report, the RMB approved the recommendations which included the establishment of the Local Authority Controlled Company (Minute No 7(i)-(vi) refers). It was also proposed that following the formation of the Shell Company that before the company becomes a "live" operating organisation, the following issues should be fully considered and submitted to the constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities in the region for approval:-

- Final version of the Memorandum and Articles of Association +
- The Members Agreement
- The funding regime and funding flows (included in the Members Agreement)
- Interim accounting system arrangements
- Interim HR system
- Interim IT network for office support



- Interim Financial Regulations
- Interim Scheme of Delegations
- Interim External Audit arrangements
- Insurance arrangements
- Interim Treasury Management Statement
- Interim Organisation/Structure Chart

4.3 Each of the constituent authorities have now received and approved the final version of the Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is proposed therefore to hold an informal meeting of the nominated Directors to consider the issues detailed in 4.2 above, in accordance with DCLG guidance outlined in Fire Circular 44-2006. A range of options for each of the issues will be presented to the RMB for consideration and to each of the constituent authorities for approval.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There will be financial implications for the Authority to consider in respect of FiRelink and FiReControl (RCC), these are presently being analysed particularly in light of the attached business case. Further reports will be presented for consideration in the near future.

## **6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

## **7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Authority is requested to note this report and consider;
- a) That the RMB submits a response to the draft business case on behalf of the Constituent Authorities of the RMB

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- FiReControl Project Full Business Case Volume 1 (second draft)

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TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS AND BONFIRE INCIDENTS – 5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2006

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The period leading up to and following November 5<sup>th</sup> is always a difficult time for the Fire and Rescue Service with increased activity in relation to incidents attended, intervention programmes and the occurrence of anti-social behaviour. In addition the storage and use of fireworks in relation to particular celebrations also continues to give rise to concerns in respect of public safety.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide for consideration a progress report for Members in respect of the activity levels, intervention programmes, incidence of anti-social behaviour and the use of fireworks.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The night of, and the period leading up to November the fifth is traditionally a busy time for the Fire and Rescue Service and this year was no exception. Additional measures were taken to ensure that the Authority had the capability and resources to deal with the increase in calls to anti social fires whilst also maintaining operational capacity to respond effectively to life threatening calls or major incidents.
- 2.2 During this period staffing levels were increased to provide additional capacity and arrangements established to deal with “spate” conditions to ensure the maintenance of a strategic reserve to attend life threatening incidents.
- 2.3 Additionally this year a number of intervention programmes were initiated in terms of risk reduction including a high profile campaign – “GET WISE” a partnership with Northumbria Police, Local Authorities and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.4 The Authority together with other agencies has a range of statutory enforcement responsibilities in relation to the storage, sale and use of fireworks, these are outlined below for the information of Members.

## 3 STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Government introduced new laws in 2004 in relation to fireworks; in which three Authorities have responsibility for different aspects of the law. The Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for the storage of fireworks, the Local Authority for the sale of fireworks and the Police for the possession, behaviour and use of fireworks.

## **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

- 3.2 Suppliers of fireworks are required to either register or hold a licence. The Fire and Rescue Authority grant licences and hold registrations. The Authority must refuse a licence unless the applicant complies with legal requirements concerning the keeping of fireworks, and may refuse a licence (or revoke a licence previously granted) if the applicant has committed any fireworks related offence, (See appendix A).
- 3.3 The license allows the holder to supply fireworks on the first day of the Chinese New Year and 3 days immediately preceding it, on the first day of Diwali and 3 days immediately preceding it, from 15 October to 10 November and 26 December to 31 December. Traders wishing to supply at any other time must obtain a separate licence. This year the Authority issued 18 licences and registered 235 other retailers, all premises are inspected by fire service officers.
- 3.4 The sale of fireworks is the responsibility of the Local Authority, this particularly relates to the illegal sale of fireworks to persons under 18 years of age.
- 3.5 Northumbria Police have enforcement responsibility for issues in terms of possession, behaviour and use of fireworks. It is an offence under section 80 of the Explosives Act 1875 to throw or set off fireworks in any highway, street, thoroughfare or public place. The power to enforce this section of the Act rests with the police. Anyone found guilty is liable to pay a fine of up to £5,000. Penalty notices for disorder (on-the-spot fines) can also be issued for this offence, attracting the upper tier fine of £80.
- 3.6 In Regulations made under the Fireworks Act 2003, it is also an offence for the under 18s to possess fireworks in a public place and for anyone to let fireworks off during night hours (11pm to 7am). As from 11 October 2004, police also have the power to issue penalty notices for disorder for these offences. Again, the offence attracts the upper tier fine of £80.
- 3.7 Under section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 it is an offence to cause any unnecessary suffering to any domestic or captive animals. The penalty on conviction is a fine of up to £20,000 or up to 51 weeks imprisonment, or both. Enforcement of this section of the Act rests with Trading Standards, the Police or the RSPCA as appropriate

## **4 'GET WISE' CAMPAIGN 2006**

- 4.1 The 'Get Wise' campaign involved a partnership between Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Northumbria Police, Local Authorities and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. 'Get Wise' was a hard hitting campaign with the intention of highlighting the dangers of building illegal bonfires and buying illegal fireworks in the lead up to bonfire night.

The main objectives of this campaign were to:

- Reduce the number of bonfires built prior to and on November 5
- Reduce bonfire and fireworks related crime
- Reinforce the message of danger in the misuse/abuse of fireworks
- Reinforce the message that it is illegal to buy or possess fireworks if aged under 18 years

## **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

- Communicate that all fireworks sales should be from reputable/authorised retailers
  - Communicate police, fire service and local authority working in partnership
- 4.2 During the six-week campaign, advertising appeared on buses, police vehicles, fire appliances and in local media to reinforce the messages that illegal bonfires will be removed and fireworks should only be bought from reputable dealers. Additionally there was a direct mail campaign to local shopkeepers warning them not to sell fireworks to anyone who is under 18 years of age.
- 4.3 In order to target teenagers community safety staff worked with local schools to deliver important fireworks and bonfire safety messages and a special comic book, produced in collaboration with South Tyneside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, was also used to convey the safety message across to 100,000 pupils aged 11-16 across the region. Questionnaires were distributed in schools to evaluate the impact of the campaign on children aged between 11 and 15 years. The results of this questionnaire are not complete at this stage, and will be reported to the Authority in the near future.
- 4.4 Northumbria Police have actively targeted those that sell illegal fireworks. A number of raids have taken place and they recovered around 4/5 tonnes of illegal fireworks. Officers worked with colleagues from Tyne and Wear Fire Service, made the scene safe.
- 4.5 This year all Local Authorities had bonfire uplift schemes operating throughout the bonfire campaign. These schemes involved the removal of fuel such as refuse, furniture etc therefore reducing the opportunity to set fires. Fire Service Control had direct 24 hour phone numbers for all five Local Authorities where they could report bonfires and refuse which needed uplifted during the initiative. Initial statistics show bonfire uplifts increased from last year to over 400 uplifts by the five Local Authorities.
- 4.6 Additional feedback indicates potential offenders were storing their bonfire materials to prevent them being taken away, and only building the bonfires prior to lighting them.
- 4.7 During the period leading up to and on the 5<sup>th</sup> November there was an increase in the number of bonfire incidents. It is believed that two main factors contributed to these increases; firstly, the fine dry weather had a dominating factor. Secondly, due to the success of the marketing/ advertising campaign the public showed increased vigilance, thus actively called incidents into the control room.
- 4.8 Injury statistics from local hospitals indicate there were 17% fewer injuries across Tyne and Wear compared to the previous year. Additionally, for the second year running there were no injuries at the incidents attended by TWFRS over the bonfire weekend. The North East Ambulance Service received only five calls to fireworks or bonfire-related accidents over the bonfire weekend.
- 4.9 A full evaluation of the campaign against its objectives is progressing in conjunction with Northumbria Police and Northumberland Fire and Rescue



## **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

Service. The outcomes of the 'Get Wise' campaign will be subject to a separate Authority Report early in the next year.

### **5 INCIDENT DETAILS**

- 5.1 The number of calls received in the 24 hours, covering 5 November is primarily dependant on the prevailing weather conditions. A combination of wind and rain normally reduces the number of calls received. This year the weather was fine and subsequently the number of calls increased.
- 5.2 The number of calls received by Fire Service Control are shown in the table below further details can be found in appendix B

Date	Calls taken by Control	Incidents attended
5/11/2002	503	333
5/11/2003	633	335
5/11/2004	608	331
5/11/2005	539	298
5/11/2006	1214	480

- 5.3 It can be seen from the table above that there has been an increase in both the number of calls received and the number of incidents attended. In order to cope with this increase in calls and the number of incidents, special arrangements were established to ensure the maintenance of the capability to attend immediately to life threatening incidents.
- 5.4 The Chief Fire Officer will consider the issues surrounding the increase in calls and incidents and continue preventative initiatives aimed at reversing these trends.

### **6 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS**

- 6.1 Attacks on Firefighters are unfortunately an all too frequent occurrence which increases in the approach to 5 November. The figures for attacks on firefighters are shown in the table below;

Date	No of Attacks	Date	No of Attacks	Date	No of Attacks
1/11/04	1	1/11/05	1	1/11/06	2
2/11/04	0	2/11/05	1	2/11/06	1
3/11/04	2	3/11/05	0	3/11/06	3
4/11/04	0	4/11/05	0	4/11/06	3
5/11/04	1	5/11/05	5	5/11/06	12
6/11/04	1	6/11/05	2	6/11/06	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

- 6.2 It can be seen from the table above that the attacks on fire fighters peaked on 5 November with 12 attacks being reported, some of which are highlighted below;

- Dixon Street, Bensham – Occupier threatened to set his dogs onto fire crews and fireworks were fired at appliances



## **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

- John Street, Boldon Colliery – Youths launched fireworks at fire crews and the appliance
- Bede Industrial Estate - Missiles were thrown at fire appliance
- Blenheim Walk, Town Centre, South Shields – Crews subjected to verbal abuse from a number of youths
- Portmeads Road, Birtley – Missiles were thrown at fire appliance
- Trinity Walk, High Shields – Crews subjected to verbal abuse and threatening behaviour.

6.3 In the seven months from 1 April 2006 until 1 October 2006 57 attacks on firefighters were reported, this is an increase on the previous two years figures which were 22 for 2004 and 30 for 2005 for the same period.

6.4 For information Royal Assent was recently given to the Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Bill. The new law will extend the protection to emergency workers which has recently come into force in Scotland, making it a specific offence to obstruct or hinder emergency workers such as firefighters. It will also clarify the law and make it easier to prosecute for obstructing or hindering fire crews dealing with emergencies.

6.5 The Act is not yet in force and requires the making of a commencement order, the responsibility for which rests with the Secretary of State. In the normal course of events, this would take around 2 months, at the end of which the new Act would become law. There is the potential, however, that the Home Office, given pressures of work, may not deal with this matter as speedily as possible, which could delay enactment for many months.

6.6 Members may wish to consider that given the rise in attacks on firefighters it would be appropriate for the Authority to write to the Home Office urging them to bring the new Act into force as soon as possible.

## **7 ACCIDENT STATISTICS**

7.1 Fortunately there were no injuries sustained to fire fighters as a result of fireworks or bonfires in the period leading up to 5 November.

7.2 There are no formal data sharing facilities with the local hospitals or care trusts, approaches are now being made with the intention of rectifying this problem. However as reported above there were 17% fewer injuries across Tyne and Wear compared to the previous year.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

8.1 Whilst the reduction in accidents related to fireworks and bonfires is to be welcomed the increase in the number of bonfire incidents is a worrying factor. The number of bonfire uplifts prevented an even worse night in terms of calls and incidents and the assistance given by the five Local Authorities is to be applauded.

8.2 Safety issues surrounding fireworks still gives rise to concerns particularly with regard to the storage, use and sale of these explosive devices. A particularly

## **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

worrying trend is the availability of illegal fireworks which are invariably stored without license and in unsafe conditions.

8.3 The increase in attacks on firefighters is unacceptable. The Chief Fire Officer intends to examine all possible avenues to reverse this intolerable trend.

### **9 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

### **10 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Health and safety of our staff is a primary concern of this Authority and the attacks on firefighters are to condemned.

### **11 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

### **12 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

### **13 RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) write to Northumbria Police and the five Local Authorities to thank them for their assistance in the 'Get Wise' campaign and to seek support for similar initiatives in the future ;
- b) consider writing to the Home Office to urge them to bring the Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act 2006 into force as soon as possible ;
- c) consider whether the Fire Authority should have a formal policy in relation to the storage and use of fireworks ; and
- d) receive further reports.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:



**RETAILERS**

- Fireworks can only be sold with a fireworks license/registration on the first day of Diwali and 3 days immediately preceding it, from 15 October to 10 November and 26 December to 31 December. An additional fireworks license is required for those who wish to sell fireworks at any other time
- Retailers must register or obtain a licence to store fireworks.
- Retailers must store fireworks safely.
- Retailers must display a large notice reminding customers about the law with regard to underage sales and possession.
- Retailers must not sell fireworks to anyone who is under 18 - even if they appear to be older (it is recommended that proof of age is sought).
- Retailers must not sell caps, cracker snaps, novelty matches, party poppers, serpents and throwdowns to anyone who is under 16.
- Boxes of fireworks must not be split and sold separately.
- All fireworks for the public must comply with the British Standard (BS 7114).
- If Retailers don't comply with these rules you could be fined £5,000 or imprisoned for 6 months.
- All fireworks not intended for supply to the general public (category 4) must indicate this by way of a mark.
- All category 3 fireworks (display fireworks) must not exceed 120 decibels.
- Licensing authorities can ask to see information relating to transactions of fireworks exceeding 50kg of net explosive content.

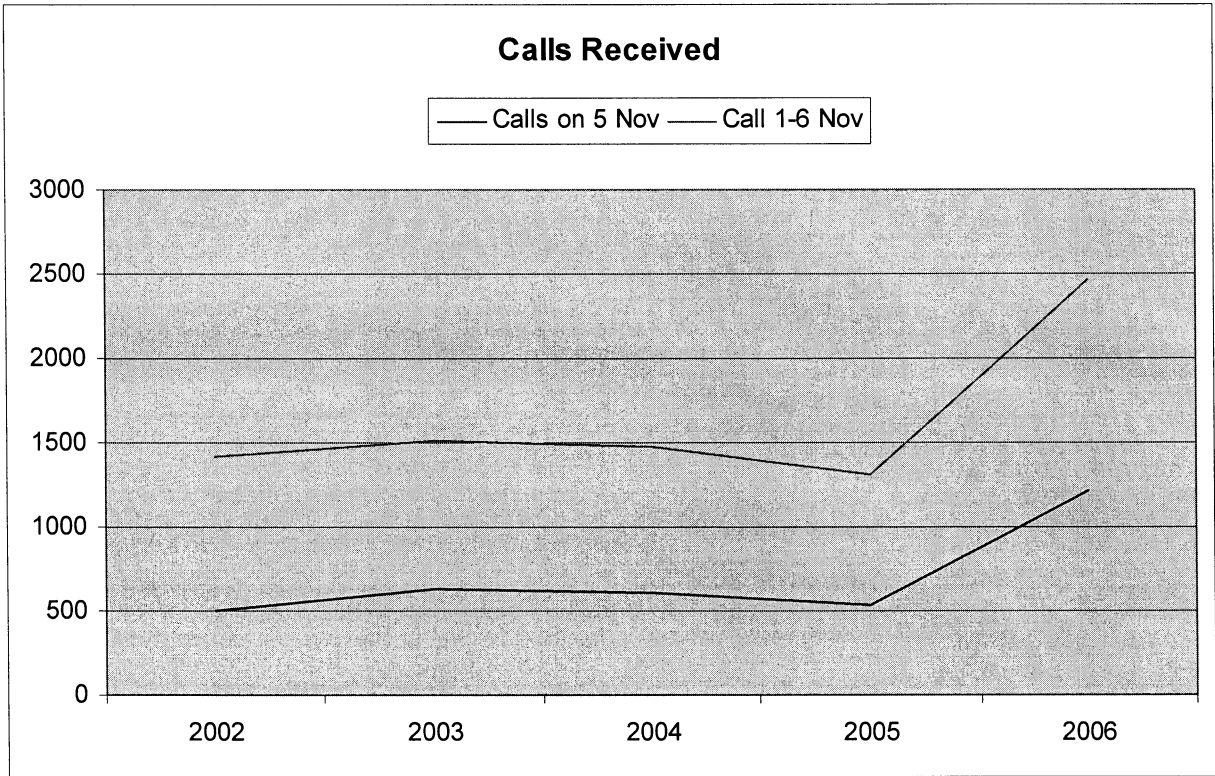
**NOTICES**

Suppliers of adult fireworks must display a notice stating that it is a criminal offence to supply adult fireworks to those under the age of eighteen, and for those under eighteen to possess such fireworks. Fireworks suppliers' must provide a local licensing authority with information about fireworks in circumstances where the total net explosive content of fireworks supplied in a single transaction exceeds 50 kilograms.

**Number of Incidents attended by Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Service**

	FDR 1	Secondary	Chimney	FAM	FAGI	FAA	SS (E)	Grand Total
05-Nov-93	36	92	0	26	76	9	4	243
05-Nov-94	38	94	0	27	101	6	9	275
05-Nov-95	45	263	1	22	122	19	9	481
05-Nov-96	31	121	1	13	115	17	6	304
05-Nov-97	27	90	0	12	100	20	10	259
05-Nov-98	34	83	0	8	74	13	9	221
05-Nov-99	20	50	0	6	64	15	9	164
05-Nov-00	29	176	0	9	104	17	8	343
05-Nov-01	37	202	0	6	131	19	3	398
05-Nov-02	33	143	0	8	122	21	6	333
05-Nov-03	42	163	0	11	93	23	3	335
05-Nov-04	32	132	0	4	141	16	6	331
05-Nov-05	21	116	0	3	120	29	9	298
05-Nov-06	38	274	1	6	139	13	9	480

Produced by Statistics & Information Department





**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE FUNDING OF FIREBUY LIMITED**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of Members in respect of the consultation exercise being undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the future funding of Firebuy Limited. The deadline for responses being midday on 6th February, 2007.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Firebuy was established to deliver Fire and Rescue Service procurement at a national level and to drive the National Procurement Strategy (NPS) 2005 – 2008 forward.
- 2.2 The then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) provided initial funding for set up costs in 2005/2006. Originally it was intended that the costs would be met by Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's), via a transfer of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), as Firebuy Limited would be a Company undertaking procurement on behalf of the Service. This approach, could not, in the event, be adopted as the savings that Firebuy Limited were to generate to offset the reduction in RSG would not have accrued immediately, leaving an unfunded pressure on FRA's.
- 2.3 To ensure the establishment and early operation of Firebuy ODPM made funding available for the financial year 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. The NPS included a reference to the fact that public consultation would be carried out on the future funding mechanism that would need to be established post March 2008. A copy of the consultation paper is available on request from the Chief Fire Officer.

**3 CONSULTATION PAPER**

- 3.1 Within the paper is a section described as the consultation background and includes the following references:-

**3.1.1 POSSIBLE PROCUREMENT SAVINGS**

This sub-section refers to the size of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) spend on procurement and the way in which savings can be achieved by undertaking joint procurement exercises under the auspices of Firebuy.



### 3.1.2 VALUE FOR MONEY

Best Value is a statutory duty for FRA's and the fact that the DCLG will deem the duty of best value having been discharged through the Firebuy arrangements, is emphasised in this part of the report.

### 3.1.3 FIREBUY LIMITED'S ROLE IN FRA PROCUREMENT

The role of Firebuy is to make the procurement process more effective and to generate procurement and cost gains for FRA's. Firebuy will take the lead negotiating call-off contracts, dealing with contract management and service level monitoring. Firebuy will also support FRA's in achieving standardisation, inter operability and ensuring that goods and services meet the needs of the Service.

### 3.1.4 BENEFITS ALREADY BEING DELIVERED

According to the document Firebuy has already delivered over £1m savings for FRA's since 2005, by for example arranging smoke alarms, vehicle and operational contracts. A number of software and data base solutions have been rolled out to FRA's at zero cost to the Authorities.

### 3.1.5 EXPECTED FUTURE BENEFITS

The benefits are expected to increase and are calculated to accrue savings of over £10m over the next five years. Additions to new procurements include respiratory equipment, personal protective equipment, insurance, technical services and electronic tendering.

## 4 FIREBUY LIMITED BUDGET REQUIREMENTS 2008/2009 TO 2012/2013

4.1 Firebuy Limited estimates that the budget requirement from 2008/2009 onward should not increase, other than for inflation, much beyond the current level of £2m per annum and proposes that it will be £2.1m in 2008/2009 and £2.3m in 2012/2013. The expenditure mainly relates to staff costs, the Board's expenses, external project costs, accommodation and corporate costs.

4.2 The main funding options are income generation and the contributions to be made by FRA's. Firebuy will seek to generate income in the following ways:-

4.2.1 Through a management charge added to goods and services purchased from framework agreements put in place which would be levied on the supplier. Views on this method of collecting management charges are sought;

4.2.2 Through management fees for services provided to other countries/bodies e.g. the devolved Authorities, Ministry of Defence. Consultees are asked to suggest any other ways Firebuy Limited could charge for the work;

4.2.3 Through the provision of consultancy services and questions are asked as to whether Firebuy Limited should extend this remit to provide a consultancy arm and whether there are further areas which should be explored as possible

sources of additional income.

4.3 There are two options proposed for collecting contributions from F.R.A.'s:-

4.3.1 Top slice from RSG which would ensure all F.R.A.'s contribute. It is simple to establish and ensures a reliable income stream. One serious disadvantage of top slicing is that Firebuy Limited would be liable for V.A.T. on contributions. This would mean an increased cost to FRA's. Further disadvantages include the lack of transparency and a possible disincentive to operate efficiently, it also disguises the true cost to FRA's;

4.3.2 Subscriptions are more visible but leave open the possibility of FRA's 'opting out', however it would ensure a continuity of funding and would therefore be able to provide a degree of certainty to its staff.

4.4 There is, within the document, two worked examples, one with all 47 Authorities paying the same and one which takes into account the type of Authority. In this scenario County Councils pay the least and LFEPA the most and Combined Fire Authorities and Metropolitans are in between the two.

The question to be addressed on contributions is would transferring (top slicing) or stakeholder subscription payment method be the preferred option?

Further questions for consultation include:-

- i. if the preferred option is the stakeholder subscription payment which payment method would be the preferred option and why?
  - ii. are there any other alternative contribution methods that you would like considered including details on how the method would work and can be calculated?
- 4.5 Firebuy intends to increase its income so that the need for FRA's funds can be reduced over time. Firebuy's preferred method of funding until that position is reached is to meet the majority of the costs through a management charge and the remainder through subscriptions. There are best case and worst case scenarios outlined in the document to further exemplify the proposals.

The questions included for consultation in this part of the report are:-

- i. Given the impact on the level of subscriptions by increasing the management fee from 1% to 2% what is your view on the appropriate level of management fee?
- ii. Of the options in this paper what would be your preferred funding option?
- iii. Are there options which are not covered in the paper that you would like us to take into consideration?

4.6 The Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) of the proposal is outlined, the full Regulatory Impact is expected to be published during 2007. The questions for consultation under this section are:-

- i. these are initial risk assessments and views would be welcome on the assessments, for example – are there further risks yet to be identified?
- ii. these are initial costs assessments – are there further costs yet to be identified?
- iii. these are initial benefit assessments for example – are there further benefits yet to be identified?

## **5 SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

5.1 Please find listed proposed questions for consideration in the consultation:-

- Q1. What are your views on Firebuy Ltd collecting management charges for use of their framework agreements?
- Q2. Can you suggest any other ways that Firebuy Ltd could charge for its work?
- Q3. What are your views on Firebuy Ltd extending its remit to include a consultancy arm?
- Q4. Are there any further areas you think Firebuy Ltd should explore as possible sources of additional income?
- Q5. Would transferring (top slicing) or stakeholder subscription payment method be your preferred option?
- Q6. If you prefer the stakeholder subscription payment which payment method would you prefer and why?
- Q7. Are there any other alternative contribution methods that you would like us to consider including details on how the method would work and can be calculated?
- Q8. Given the impact on the level of subscriptions by increasing the management fee from 1% to 2% what is your view on the appropriate level of management fee?
- Q9. Of the options in this paper what would be your preferred funding solution?
- Q10. Are there options which are not covered in the paper that you would like us to take into consideration?

## Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment

Q11. These are initial risk assessments and we would welcome your views on this assessments, for example – are there further risks that we have yet to identify?

Q12. These are initial costs assessments and we would welcome your views on these assessments, for example – are there further costs that we have yet to identify?

Q13. These are initial benefit assessments and we would welcome your views on this assessments, for example – are there further benefits that we have yet to identify?

## 6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 If it was accepted that Firebuy Ltd would be funded through both the generation of income and by subscriptions from FRA's based upon a budget contribution of £1 million from all 47 FRA's the cost would be:-

- A straight division between 47 FRA's would mean each Authority would pay £22,000.
- Divide it by Authority type with a weighting for each type of Authority so they pay proportionate shares of the funding. There are four Authority types; County – 1 share, Combined – 2 shares, Metropolitan – 3 shares and LFEPA's – 4 shares. This gives a total of 86 shares, for example, the cost to Tyne and Wear would be £36,000 as compared to Northumberland at £12,000 and Durham and Cleveland at £24,000.
- Split by population at the lowest end this would cost £43 per annum for the Isles of Scilly ranging up to £148,000 per annum for London.
- Divided by number of FRS staff, at the lowest end this would cost £1,000 for Isles of Scilly ranging to £138,000 for London.

## 7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

## 8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

**9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Members are requested to:

- a) consider the questions listed in section 5 of this report and provide comments as appropriate, and
- b) in the light of a) above agree that the Chief Fire Officer in conjunction with the Clerk and Finance Officer responds to the consultation exercise on behalf of the Authority.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:



**SUBJECT: THE LIBERTY PROGRAMME****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER****1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members in relation to the Liberty project in Gateshead, which the Authority supports by seconding a member of personnel to the project.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Birtley Young People's Club (BYPC) provides a stable, supportive environment for hundreds of young people to engage in sport and gain essential life skills such as self-discipline, respect for others and leading a healthy lifestyle. The BYPC recognises the leading role it can play in supporting a multi agency approach to improving services for young people, encouraging citizenship values, addressing social exclusion and promoting community cohesion.
- 2.2 Whilst providing a vital support service to some of Gateshead's most disadvantaged young people the Club also has the potential to provide a sustainable environment for many more young people. The aim of the Club is to link strategically with the Youth Engagement Service, Schools, the Council and the Primary Care Trust to support hundreds of young people through engagement in sport, health promotion and citizenship education.
- 2.3 The concept of the LIBERTY Programme is simple and based on national intervention models such as Positives Futures and Youth Inclusion Programmes. Utilising the facilities, skills and experience of BYPC the LIBERTY programme will operate targeted initiatives and generic programmes to improve the quality of life of young people in Gateshead. The project will run as a pilot initiative for three years from 2006/09.
- 2.4 Targeted intervention work is delivered in partnership with the Youth Engagement Service and other agencies that work with vulnerable young people at risk or involved in the criminal justice system. The LIBERTY Project is a referral initiative for young people in need of a structured supportive environment that helps them to build self-esteem and address negative risk factors in their lives. Each individual is engaged on the programme for a minimum of six months and benefits from:
- An individual Personal Development Plan which helps the young person to improve their life opportunities with the support of BYPC and partner agencies.
  - A dedicated Club Mentor to support the individual in progressing through the programme.

## **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

- Established linkages to health, education, training, leisure and social care professionals.
- Monitored progress towards the achievement of goals and targets culminating in a Sustainability report which considers the impact of the programme on improving personal life opportunities with agreed outcomes and targets for further personal development.

2.5 This targeted intervention work will aim to reduce arrest rates amongst young offenders, reduce risk factors that increase the likelihood of a young person being drawn into persistent crime or anti-social behaviour and reduce risk factors that prevent young people from reaching their full potential.

### **3 PRO ACTIVE COMMUNITY WORK**

3.1 This began with a “Skip for Life” scheme that has been applied in local schools and community settings to encourage healthy lifestyles in children aged 5-11. With obesity levels rising in children of all ages the Club recognises the positive contribution it can make in providing and encouraging fun exercise options for children. As a core element of the Clubs training programmes skipping provides an enjoyable activity that can be highly effective in improving overall fitness and which is easily accessible with only a minimum equipment requirement.

3.2 A “Kid Gloves” scheme has been developed to support the need for structured activity programmes for young people in school holidays. The general lack of alternative activity is often referred to by young people as a factor leading to anti social behaviour in holiday periods. Kid Gloves will not only provide an alternative activity to some of those at highest risk of becoming involved in anti social behaviour but will also be delivered in an environment that places a high value on respect and community values. Above all however, Kid Gloves is delivered as a fitness programme open to all young people in the area.

3.3 The LIBERTY Programme is delivered by BYPC working in partnership with public sector organisations. The programme will be coordinated by a Project Manager and supported by Club Mentors. Duties include liaising with referral agencies, negotiating service level agreements, organising programmes, delivering activities, working with schools, press and promotional work and providing support to young people engaged on the programme. Club Mentors act as positive role models and support workers, assisting in the delivery of activities, providing advice, guidance and encouragement to the young people and supporting the Project Manager in coordinating the overall programme.

3.4 An officer at Birtley Community Fire Station currently provides extensive support to the Liberty programme in the role of Club Mentor and fitness coach. The Chief Fire Officer proposes that the Authority continues to support the project and the support given by the staff at Birtley Community Fire Station.

### **4 TARGETED INTERVENTION**

4.1 The targeted intervention programme is on a referral based. Close liaison with the Youth Engagement Service, Police, Fire Service and the Council will ensure that the programme is offered to some of the most vulnerable young people in

the area.

- 4.2 Although flexible enough to meet the needs of the individual, in general the programme provides three hours of intervention support to each young person on a weekly basis for a period of six months. Each young person is supported in developing their own Personal Development Plan. The Personal Development Plan identifies areas for the young person to work on. It could be as simple as aiming to get fitter or lose weight but it might also include staying out of trouble, cutting down on alcohol, giving up drugs or trying to get a job/training. Whatever it is the key element is that each young person will set themselves a number of personal goals to achieve over the next six months. A permanent goal for everyone will be regular attendance at the Club with associated fitness targets.
- 4.3 The Club Mentors undertake baseline assessments with each young person which forms the basis of their Personal Development Plan. The assessments seek to establish how the young person views their life situation in terms of risk factors affecting their personal opportunities and how they view themselves as members of society e.g. are they happy at home, satisfied with their health, involved in drugs, influenced by peers etc. The Mentors will receive training in completing the assessments and Personal Development Plans from the Project Manager.
- 4.4 The assessment process will not be onerous or time consuming but is important as it will provide vital baseline information and evidence of impact as the Liberty programme develops.

## **5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

- 5.1 The Liberty Programme is committed to making a positive impact towards improving the lives of young people. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation will be built into all three elements of the programme. The most comprehensive evaluation will be undertaken on the targeted intervention work where perception measurement of risk factors will be included alongside impact on arrest rates and compliance with intervention programmes.
- 5.2 The evaluation of the Liberty Project will take several complimentary forms:
- 'Onset attitudinal change surveys for all students
  - Gateshead Youth Engagement Service will measure the impact on the individuals involved including recidivism rates
  - Pre and post questionnaires for all participants, where literacy skills permit, in 'kid's gloves' and skip for life
- 5.3 The Liberty programme will produce an annual evaluation report detailing the work undertaken and the impact upon beneficiaries.



**6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

**7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

**8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

**9 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

**10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) endorse the benefits and contribution these programmes make to the community safety agenda particularly in influencing anti-social behaviour: and
- b) receive further reports as appropriate.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Report to Authority Community Safety Initiative: Birtley Young People's Club 31 October 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document 2006-2008

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY****MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

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**SUBJECT: ECO RANGERS 2006****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The purpose this report is to update to Members in relation to the most recent ECO Rangers initiative in Sunderland.
- 1.2. ECO Rangers is a project designed to provide an innovative approach to environmental education. It involves a multi-agency approach to Environmental Education for year five (9 to 10 year old) primary school children. Each organisation or agency which takes part hosts an Environmental Challenge for the children to attend. Partner organisations for 2006 included Sunderland City Council, the Wildlife Trust, Northumbria Water and Sunderland PCT. The children are on site for two hours and rotate around each organisation. Each child receives a certificate and workbook for follow-up work.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. ECO Ranges was introduced to Sunderland's primary school children in 1999. It has proved to be very successful during the eight years it has taken place with over 12,000 children having attended.
- 2.2. This year the event took place from the 16-26 May and was again held at Herrington Country Park. Over 1800 children from 39 schools attended the event, including two of the city's special needs schools.

**3. FUNDING**

- 3.1. This year's event was funded by the six Sunderland Area Framework committees and Barclay's Bank.

**4. AWARDS AND NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

- 4.1. Since the initiative began it has received a number of awards. In October 1999 it received the National Society of Clean air's award for Innovation in Sustainable Development in the Environmental Health and Sustainability Category. In July 2000 the initiative won a Gold Green Apple award for Environmental Best Practice. In February 2001 it received a Queen Mother's Special Mention Birthday Award. As a result of winning these awards a number of articles have been published in national magazines and periodicals. A number of other local authorities have sent representatives to the ECO

Rangers with a view to adopting the initiative into their areas.

## 5. IMPACTS OF THE INITIATIVE

- 5.1. The initiative was developed to raise environmental awareness amongst children of primary school age, to enable the children to take those messages home to other members of their family and the community. As children are part of the community and are the community for the future then it is important they learn as much as possible about their environment and the importance of saving energy, recycling etc, at an early age so it becomes second nature as opposed to making a special effort.
- 5.2. In addition it enables the schools to take on board these messages and implement environmental auditing of the classroom, have recycling bins installed in the school grounds and give them a taste of Environmental Education.

## 6. EVALUATION

- 6.1. Evaluation is a key element in determining the success of any event and also an important tool in highlighting any areas for improvement or changes. Letters and evaluation forms were forwarded to all 39 schools who participated, 21 forms were returned giving a response rate of 54%. The returns have been summarised below.

### 6.1.1. **How appropriate was the Fire Service zone, chemical hazards, to the needs of your pupils?**

- Good visual demonstration which held the children's attention
- A very interesting way to learn – fun and educational
- A good visual and practical activity
- Children enjoyed this activity
- Very practical. Children loved using the hose
- Well presented
- The Firemen were really good with our students and got their message across well.

### 6.1.2. **How worthwhile was the experience overall?**

- The children found the experience enjoyable and educational. This will be the topic of their class assembly for parents and other children.
- A dreadful day weather wise but the children were kept busy and interested. The two hours flew by and the children thought it was a great afternoon and remembered lots of the facts and figures after the visit.
- Children's awareness was raised knowledge improved and they had fun. Thank you.
- My year 5's enjoyed it last year as well. Thank you.

- The children enjoyed the event and learnt lots of important information from the day. Many thanks to all the organisations that participated in this event.
- The children were happy to do follow up work – they remembered facts and enjoyed the work books.
- I think it is a really valuable experience and the students do enjoy it and get a lot from it.

## **7. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

7.1. There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

## **8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

## **10. RISK MANAGEMENT**

10.1. There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1. The Authority is recommended to:

- a) endorse the benefits and contribution these programmes make to the community safety agenda,
- b) ensure that the benefits of the programme are profiled with the appropriate Lead Authority officers responsible for Community Safety, and
- c) receive further reports as appropriate.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Defence Authority Strategic Plan
- The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document 2006-2008



TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No.10

MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006

SUBJECT: HOME FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT UPDATE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the results of a recent survey which was posted to 2000 households within Tyne and Wear who had received a free Home Fire Risk Assessment.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Authority will be aware of the Governments target "to reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home by 20% averaged over the 11-year period to March 2010".
- 2.2 As has been previously reported in the IRMP process this target will be achieved by driving down the risk from fire to those members of the public who have been identified as being at a greater risk from fire in their home.
- 2.3 Within Tyne and Wear 114,000 properties have been identified as being at significant risk from fire.
- 2.4 The risk in these households will be reduced considerably by carrying out a free Home Fire Risk Assessment in each property, offering practical safety advice to the residents, installing smoke alarms, discussing what to do in the event of a fire and agreeing an escape plan with the occupiers.
- 2.5 Home Fire Risk Assessments (HMRA) are now integrated into station workloads and are a key element in the Authority's goal of "preventing deaths and injuries from fire and other emergencies" and in making Tyne and Wear 'The Safest Community'.

**3 RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

- 3.1 The survey conveys a positive picture in terms of our staff with 91% of respondents stating that firefighters were professional. With 81% saying they were courteous.
- 3.2 The majority of people had changed their behaviour as a result of the HFRA, 69% answered an open question where respondents were able to enter free text. A selection of the answers are shown below:

- Smoke alarms – installation of new ones and maintenance of existing ones
- Changed chip pan for deep fat fryer
- Close all doors at night time
- Switching off unused electrical equipment
- Taking mobile phone to bed
- Use a multi-plug extension rather than a block adaptor
- Keep all exits clear
- Empty ashtrays
- Don't leave candles burning when not present.

3.3 The full survey can be found as an appendix to this report.

#### **4 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

#### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

#### **6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

#### **7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

#### **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Authority is recommended to :-

- (a) recognise and endorse this excellent initiative between the Authority and the positive work undertaken by station personnel; and
- (b) receive further reports as appropriate.

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#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Civil Defence Authority Strategic Plan.
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Civil Defence Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan.

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
HOME FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT FOLLOW UP SURVEY  
OCTOBER 2006**

**ROUND UP**

In July 2006 two thousand questionnaires were sent to random households in the Tyne and Wear area who have had a Home Fire Risk Assessment (HFRA) completed in their property since the programme began. The closing date was 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and as of this date we had received 685 completed questionnaires.

**RESULTS**

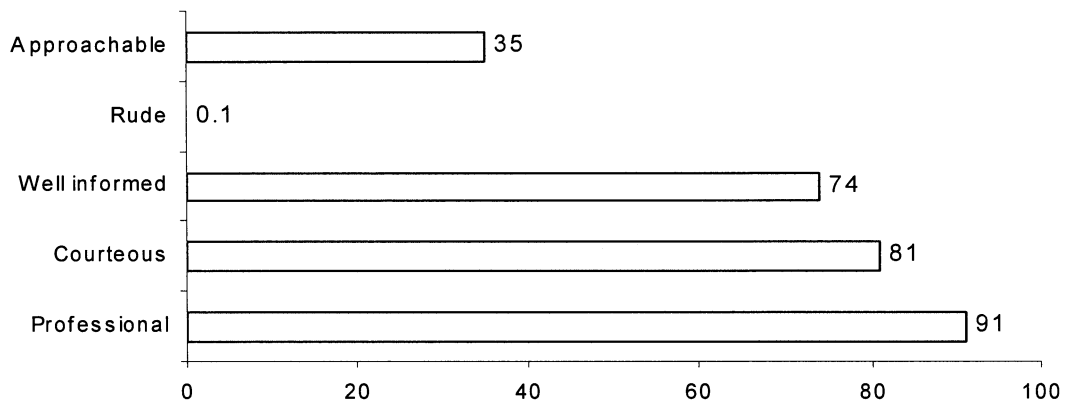
**Part 1 – The HFRA**

1. *Were you present during the HFRA?*

98% answered the question, of those 98% said YES and 2% said NO

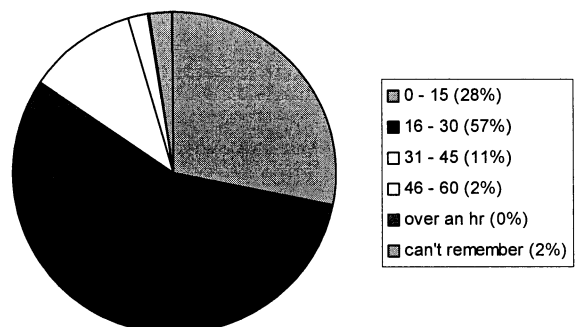
2. *Which of the following do you think applies to the FRS personnel who visited your home?*

99.9% answered the question where more than one option could be selected.



3. *For approximately how long were the FRS personnel in your home?*

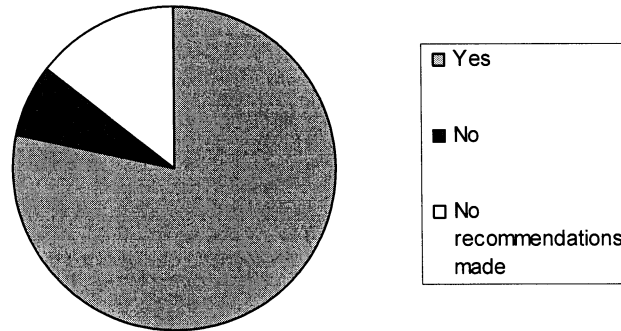
99.4% answered the question.



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4. Since the HFRA do you use any of the fire safety measures recommended to you by the Firefighters?  
 94.6% answered the question.



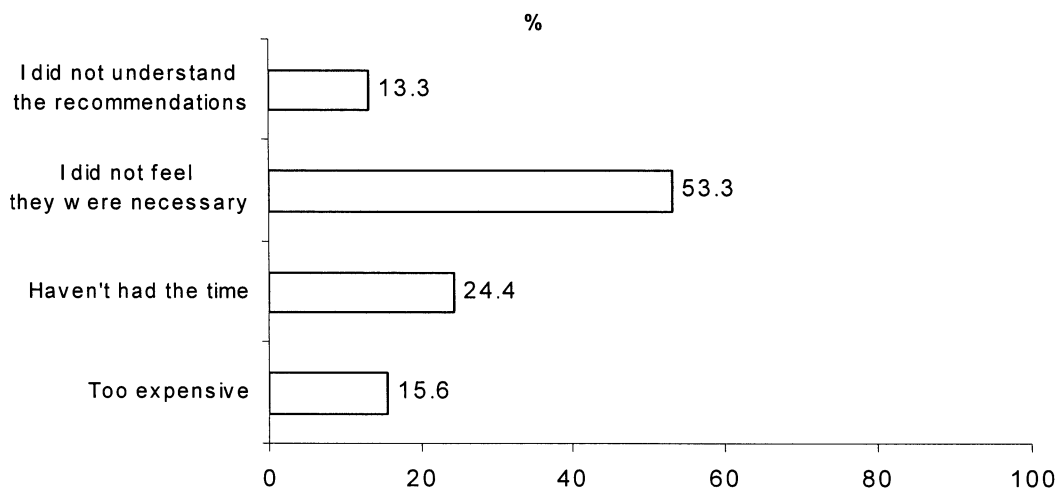
4b If yes, which measures have you adopted?

69% answered this question. This was an open question where respondents were able to enter free text. A selection of the answers are shown below:

- Smoke alarms – installation of new ones and maintenance of existing ones
- Changed chip pan for deep fat fryer
- Close all doors at night time
- Switching off unused electrical equipment
- Taking mobile phone to bed
- Use a multi-plug extension rather than a block adaptor
- Keep all exits clear
- Empty ashtrays
- Don't leave candles burning when not present

4c If no, why have you not adopted any of the measures?

7% answered this question. Respondents could select as many of the answers as they wished.



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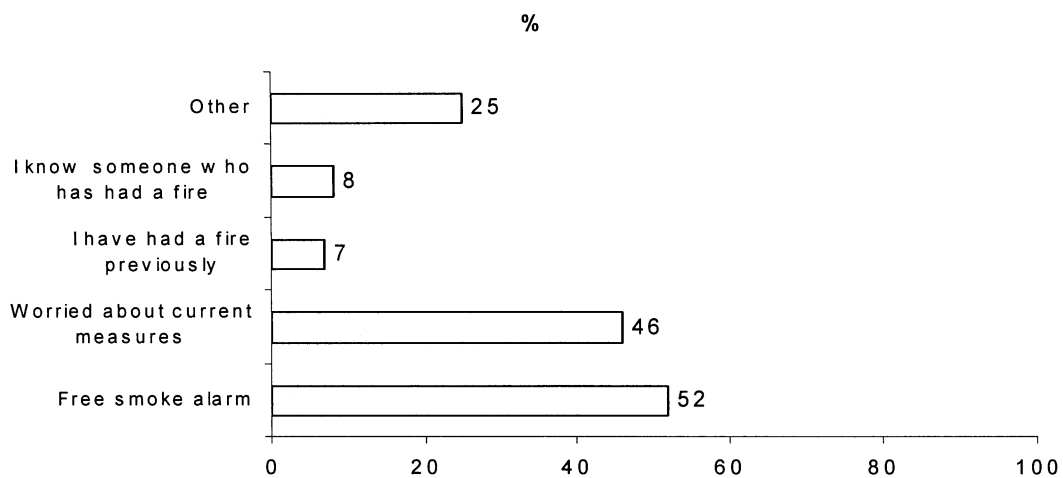
5. *If you requested a HFRA, how did you find out that the HFRA was available to you?*

22% answered this question. This was an open question where respondents were able to enter free text. A selection of the answers are shown below:

- Leaflet
- Firefighters knocked on door
- Advert in local newspaper
- Local event
- Previous fire

6. *Why did you agree to/request a HFRA?*

52% answered this question. There were 4 standard choices and also a free text box. A selection of these are listed after the chart.

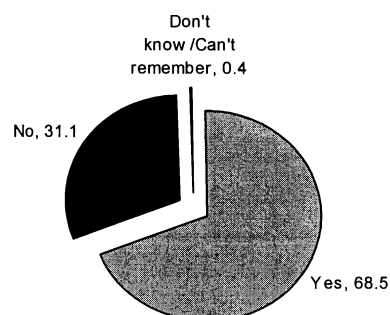


Free text answers:

- Thought adequately safe but better to have professional advice
- Having visited fire station and found out about HFRA
- For peace of mind
- To be on safe side, I have 2 small children
- Why not?

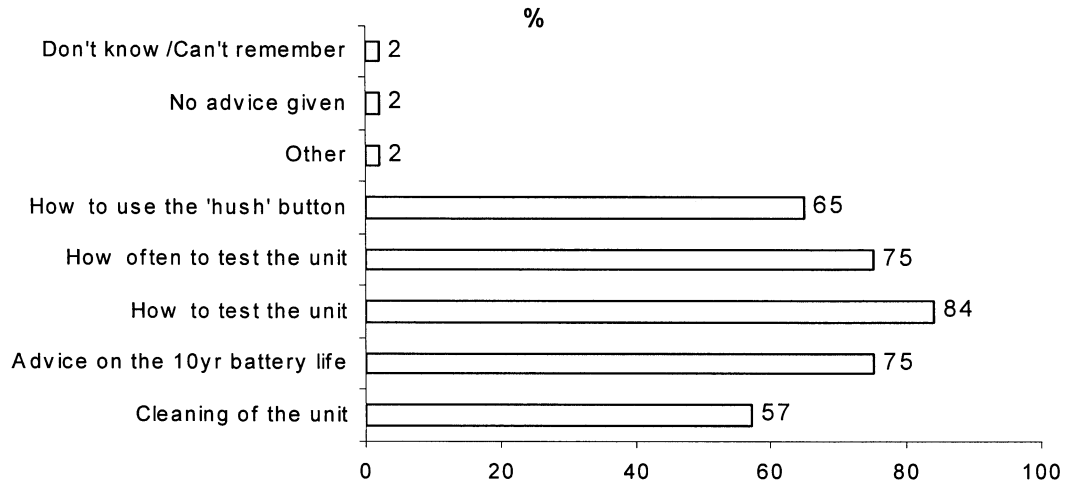
7. *During the visit did the FRS personnel fit any new smoke alarms in your home?*

99% answered this question.



8. During the visit, did the FRS personnel give any of the following advice regarding the smoke alarm(s) fitted in your home?

83% answered this question and could tick as many of the options as they liked. One option was a free text box – some of these answers are listed below:

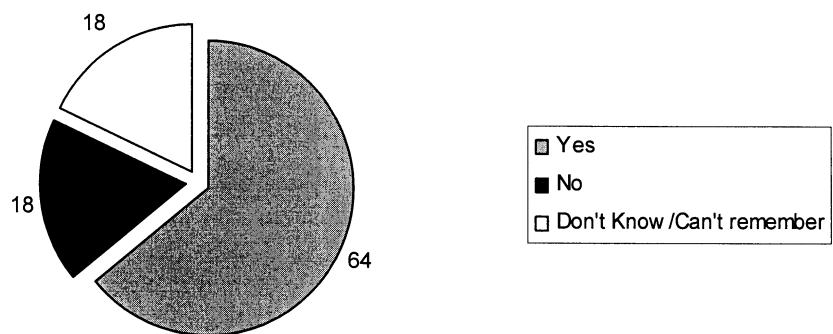


Some of the 'other' answers:

- Full demonstration and test carried out
- Alarm is controlled centrally
- He gave me the smoke alarm, explained its function and I fitted it
- How or where to fit other smoke alarms should they be needed

9. Were the smoke alarm manufacturer's instructions left with you?

75% answered this question.



10. Were you left any fire safety leaflets or further information?

98% answered the question

Yes ..... 65%  
 No ..... 20%

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Don't know/Can't remember \_\_\_\_\_ 15%

11. Those who answered yes to Q.10 were asked '*Did you read any of the leaflets left for you?*'

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ 85%

No \_\_\_\_\_ 5%

Don't know/Can't remember \_\_\_\_\_ 10%

12. Those who also answered yes to Q.11 were asked '*How did you find the fire safety leaflets?*'

	% Yes	% No	% Slightly
Helpful	90	0.2	0.7
Informative	70	0.2	0.5
Easy to read	73	0.2	1.2
Contained plenty of information	70	0	0.9

13. *What information did you find most useful from the fire safety leaflets?*

46% answered this question. This was a free text question, some of the answers are listed below:

- Planning how to get out of the upstairs if fire downstairs
- Chip pan safety
- Check smoke alarms regularly
- All of it
- Switching off electrical equipment when not in use
- That we were already quite safety conscience
- Maintenance of fire alarms
- Candles
- Never leave cooking devices unattended

14. *What information did you find most useful from the visit?*

64% answered this question. This was a free text question, some of the answers are listed below:

- All of it
- Be more aware when cooking
- Unplug electrical equipment when not in use
- Have a fire plan
- What to do in case of fire
- Don't use chip pan anymore
- How to break windows
- How to test fire alarm

- Don't put tea-towels on oven handle
- Overloading plugs

15. *Do you have any other comments that you feel may improve the HFRA?*

12% answered this question. There were various comments made in general about the professionalism of the firefighters who carried out the assessments. Some of the comments relating to improvements of the HFRA are listed below:

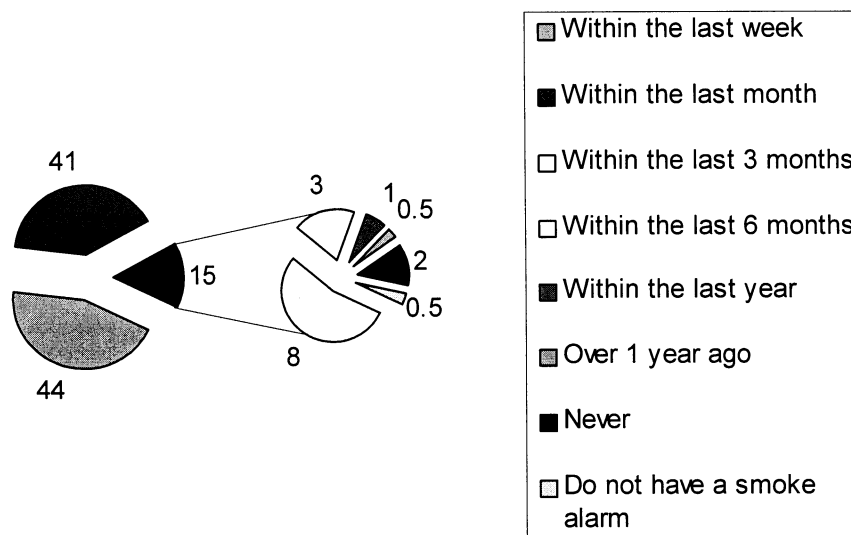
- Advertise the availability of the HFRA
- Have a second party present during visits to the elderly so that the advice given can be explained again afterwards if necessary.
- Try to get younger children involved.
- Issue precaution leaflets
- Regular visits – 6 monthly, yearly?
- Remove old smoke alarms and fit new ones with screws
- Write recommendations down for older people or those with memory problems
- This should be compulsory
- Supply the aged with fire guards
- More visits to elderly, disabled, handicapped

**Part 2 – After the HFRA**

16. *When did you last check if your smoke alarm(s) was/were working?*

98% answered this question.

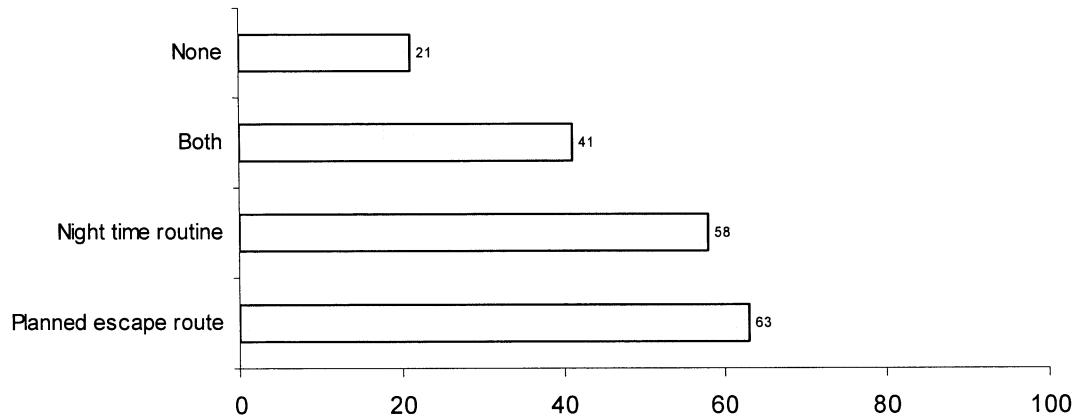
85% of the answers were either within the last week or within the last month. The remaining 15% was split between the other options as shown in the chart below:



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17. Do you have any of the following?

As this question was tick if you have any of these fire safety measures, those without ticks were still counted as being a question answered; therefore 100% answered this question.



18. Since the visit, have you had a fire on these premises?

98% answered this question

Yes	_____	1%
No	_____	99%

Questions 19 – 23 were designed for those who answered yes to the above question. The answers have been pooled together below.

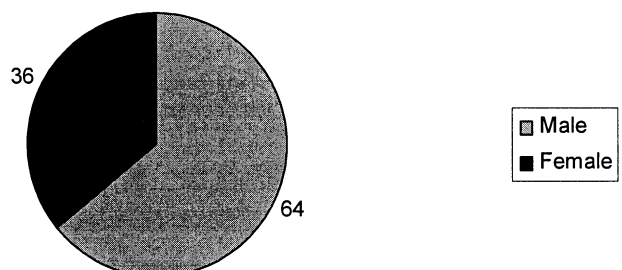
The 1% who answered yes to question 18 was actually 8 responses. Of those, 6 fires started in the kitchen, 1 in the lounge and 1 didn't state.

The causes of the fire were chip pan – 4; grill pan – 2; faulty appliances – 1 and children playing with fire – 1. Only one person was injured in the fire (smoke inhalation). 7 were present when the fire took place, 1 didn't answer. 6 of these fires were dealt with by the individuals and 2 called the fire service.

**Part 3 – About You**

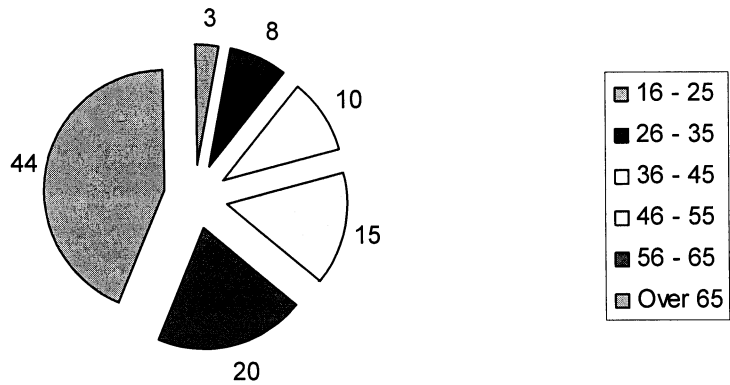
24. Are you Male or Female?

98% answered this question.



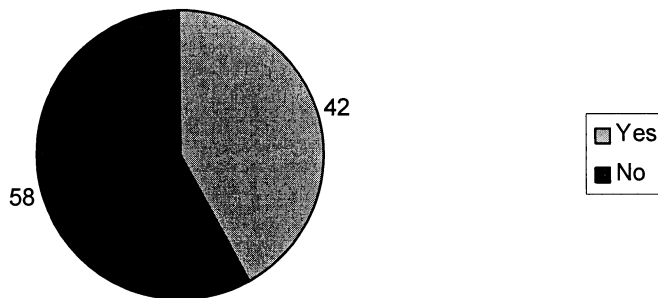
25. *What was your age on your last birthday?*

99.9% answered this question



26. *Does anyone in your household smoke?*

97% answered this question



27. *Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?*

96% answered this question

Yes	52%
No	48%

28. Those who answered yes to Q. 27 were then asked if their illness or disability limits their activities in any way. 72% said yes and 28% said no.

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29. *What is your ethnic origin?*

91% answered this question.

White British	96.4%
White Irish	0.3%
White Other	0.2%
Asian/Asian British Indian	0.2%
Asian/Asian British Other	0.5%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0.2%
Mixed White & Black African	0.5%
Mixed White & Bangladeshi	0.2%
Mixed White & Asian	0.2%
Mixed Other	0.8%
I do not wish to declare my ethnic origin	0.5%

30. *Is your home..?*

99% answered this question

Owned by you	35%
Rented from the council	45%
Rented from a Housing Association	14%
Rented privately	6%





**SUBJECT: ARMISTICE DAY 2006 – MENIN GATE - YPRES****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER****1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As in previous years, the Chairman of the Authority had the honour and privilege to represent the Authority at the annual Armistice Day celebrations held in Ypres, Belgium.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to outline, for the information of Members, the Authority's involvement and representation at this prestigious event.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The annual Armistice Day celebrations are held on 11<sup>th</sup> November every year at the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium. There are three main events, one on 10<sup>th</sup> November at 2000 hours; the main event at 1100 hours on 11<sup>th</sup> November and again at 2000 hours. Each event commences with a full parade through the streets of Ypres and is well supported by the Belgian public as well as the many visitors from the United Kingdom and other countries of the world.
- 2.2 Since the end of the First World War the 'Last Post' ceremony has been conducted every day at 2000 hours at the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium in remembrance of those comrades who gave their lives in the name of freedom and justice. The only time the ceremony was suspended was during World War Two.
- 2.3 Until the 1950s, the ceremony was conducted by the Belgian Military, however since that date the ceremony has been undertaken by buglers from the Ypres Fire and Rescue Service, and indeed the Fire and Rescue Service are now the recognised leaders for this event. Since 1986, members of the United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Services have also attended and participated in the ceremonies on Armistice Day.

**3 ARMISTICE DAY 2006**

- 3.1 The Chairman represented the Authority and members of the United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service at the Armistice Day Ceremonies this year. Also in attendance were the Ceremonial Squads and Pipe and Drum Bands from Devon FRS, Staffordshire FRS, Cornwall FRS, London Fire Brigade, Kent FRS and the Devonport Naval Contingent as well as the Tyne and Wear Ceremonial Squad and Pipe Band.

- 3.2 The main parade was held at 1100 hours on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2006 and on parade were well over 400 people including representatives from the United Kingdom Police forces, Army, Navy and Air Force as well as representatives from the Belgian and other European Armed Forces. In addition, the small market town of Ypres played host to numerous visitors from the United Kingdom, Belgium and other countries of the world.
- 3.3 The Chairman laid a wreath on behalf of fallen comrades and was joined at the Menin gate by Government representatives from across the world, including Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium and other commonwealth countries. The Chairman commented that this was a 'moving and humbling experience' and that he was 'pleased to have received the invitation to lay a wreath on behalf of all people who gave their lives in times of conflict'.
- 3.4 The Tyne and Wear Ceremonial Squad and Pipe Band are also deserved of recognition as they give their own time to attend these and other Ceremonies representing the Authority and the Fire and Rescue Service.

## **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Authority is requested to:-
- a) Endorse the representation at this event in future years and;
  - b) Convey appreciation to the members of the FRS Ceremonial Squad and Pipe Band for their professionalism in representing the Authority at the event.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Strategic Plan 2006-2011

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT –MID YEAR UPDATE****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND FINANCE OFFICER****1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the contents of the Annual Efficiency Statement – Mid Year Update submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government, in accordance with Fire Service Circular 59-2006. (see appendix 1 & 2)

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As Members will recall the Gershon Review of public spending formed part of the Government Spending Review 2004. Its main aim was to examine areas of spend such as procurement, back-office functions and productive time, in order to determine whether there was scope for detailed efficiency savings that would help to ensure that additional investment to the public sector could be utilised in the most effective manner possible.
- 2.2 The key outcome of this work, for fire and rescue services, is the requirement to achieve a total efficiency gain of £105 million gross cashable efficiency savings, or 5.67%, in 2007/08 when compared to the net current revenue expenditure (provisional out-turn) in 2004/05. This sum being part of the global £6.45 billion efficiency gain target set for local government as a whole.
- 2.3 It must be noted that the efficiency target is not meant to be interpreted as a reduction in spend. Rather, it is stressed that the overall aim of the initiative is an intention to raise productivity and enhance value for money in the public sector. Consequently, efficiency gains realised in one area of the service can be re-invested in other areas of the service which require further development.

**3 REPORTING THE EFFICIENCY GAINS**

- 3.1 In determining what efficiency gains have been achieved the Fire Service Circular has provided a global milestone to report against for 2006/07. This equates to £75 million gross cashable savings and is estimated to be equivalent to 4.12% of the 2004/05 fire service net current expenditure (provisional out-turn).
- 3.2 The Authority is required to submit a mid year statement comprising a backward looking statement for the first 6 months of 2006/2007 and a forward looking statement of planned efficiency gains planned for the second half of the year.

- 3.3 The statement requires a brief outline of the strategy for securing efficiency gains in 2006/07, the gains that are expected to be delivered as a result, and finally, the "quality cross checks" that will be carried out to ensure that the efficiencies that are delivered are true efficiencies that have not resulted in a reduction in service standards.
- 3.4 In determining what efficiency gains can be delivered, fire and rescue authorities must attempt to make the maximum contribution possible towards the global target and be able to demonstrate that they have adopted such an approach.

#### **4 TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY'S CONTRIBUTION**

- 4.1 Taking into account the all of the guidance contained in the relevant Fire Service Circular 14-2006, the efficiency gains forecast by this Authority have been set out in the attached appendices.
- 4.2 However, the two key areas of note are those relating to crewing levels and the Strategic Review of Fire and Rescue Cover.
- 4.3 Taking all of the initiatives into account this Authority expects to be able to realise cashable efficiency gain of 5.62% by the end of 2006/07. The milestone that was set for 2006/07 was 4.12%. This Authority therefore expects to exceed the target set for the current financial year.
- 4.4 In monetary terms the cumulative efficiency gains made by the Authority are expected to total £2.89 million for the three year period covered by the returns made to date. (2004/05 to 2006/07).
- 4.5 As indicated earlier these efficiency gains are available to Authorities to re-invest in their existing services as appropriate. As a result, and as part of the approved approach to both the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, this Authority has used the efficiency gains to re-direct resources into Community Safety services whilst ensuring that the financial impact of the firefighters pay award has not been passed onto the Council Tax payer.

#### **5 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Annual Efficiency Statement Mid Year Update, as set out in Fire Service Circular 59-2006, has been produced and was submitted to the ODPM with the timescale set by that document.
- 5.2 The statements contain the information relating to the individual efficiencies gain thus far and those that are expected to be realised during the second half of the 2006/07 financial year.
- 5.3 A further return will be required to be submitted relating to the backward looking efficiency savings for the full 2006/07 in July 2007, and will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

**6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

**7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

**8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Members are requested to:

- i) Endorse the contents of the report, and
- ii) Receive further reports as required.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The undermentioned background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Fire Service Circular 59-2006

## **TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

### **EFFICIENCIES PLANNED FOR OCTOBER TO MARCH 2006/07**

#### ***General Note IRMP***

Tyne and Wear IRMP is a comprehensive and fully costed Programme of actions, which demonstrates, over a period of 6 years ending in 2009/10, how Tyne and Wear FRS will generate sufficient efficiency savings to fund the pay award, without passing any effect on to the Council Tax Payer, and also working to meet the objectives of the Fire Service modernisation and reform agenda. Each action within the plan has been fully costed and the savings generated are being monitored to ensure that they are being realised. It must also be clearly understood that, as intended, the savings generated are being utilised to support other actions within the Plan which contributes to Tyne and Wear FRS achieving our Vision of "Creating the Safest Community".

#### **Revised shift Systems/ crewing arrangements (IRMP)**

Following extensive analysis of rescue and routine incidents, the crewing levels of appliances at 2 pump stations will be established at a level of 4 + 4, unless local risk assessment determines otherwise. The action has 4 phases; each being implemented over 2004/05 and the following 3 years. The savings achieved are as a result of reducing staffing levels, some of which have been and will continue to be re-directed to Community Safety Initiatives; the remainder are being used to minimise the effect of the pay award on the level of Council Tax.

OCC - BVPI 144 (% of accidental fires in dwellings confined to the room of origin) 95% in 2004/5 and currently at 94.76%, BVPI 143(i) (No of Deaths from accidental fires per 100,000 population) 0.47 in 2004/05, and 0.27 for the year to date, & (ii) (No of injuries arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population) 14.81 injuries in 2004/05, and forecast at 7.49 for the current year. Quarterly Health and Safety Statistics for Fire-fighters also used. Monitoring and Review meetings held between Representing Body and the Fire Authority Chairman to monitor progress.

#### **Other IRMP savings**

##### **Targeted Response to Automatic Fire Alarms**

The savings shown result from a reduction in the numbers of attendance at AFA's. This has led to the crews having increased capacity to carry out Home Risk Assessments. The savings on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs have therefore been re-allocated to Community Safety for this purpose.

OCC - BVPI 207 (No of fires in non-domestic premises per 10,000 population) in 04/05 was 40.1 fires; 06/07 forecast is 38.3. This action is not affecting the performance against this BVPI detrimentally. Operations Department also carries out reviews of response standards to AFA's and adjusts as necessary, based on risk assessments.

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#### **Pre-determined attendance**

Savings have been achieved by reviewing the number and type of appliances sent to incidents. Risk Assessments determine when additional resources are needed. This has resulted in a reduced number of "blue light" journeys, increasing the capacity for crews to undertake Home Risk Assessments. The savings on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs have therefore been re-allocated to Community Safety for this purpose.

QCC - BVPI 207 (reduced from 40.1 fires to 38.3). BVPI 144 95% in 2004/05 and currently at 94.76%. BV 143(i) 0.47 in 2004/05, and 0.27 for the year to date & (ii) forecast reduction from 14.81 injuries in 2004/05 to 7.49 in the current year.

#### **Review of Special Appliances**

The provision, positioning, and staffing of all special appliances is being fully reviewed. Initial focus surrounds Aerials, Heavy Rescue Units, and Emergency Tenders. The review is yet to be fully completed, however an early outcome of the review was the introduction of dual staffing on an aerial platform and the subsequent savings estimated represent a reduction of 8 members of staff.

QCC - Local Measure - Number of occasions on which 2 or more Aerial Platforms are used operationally at incidents. A Special Appliance review was undertaken which demonstrated that the limited operational workload meant that the number of appliances could be reduced without affecting operational effectiveness.

#### **Restructure of Legislative Fire Safety Department**

The review of establishment was based on life risk, inspection regime and Agency workloads. Some elements of the work have now been transferred to the Emergency response staff, and some work is now carried out by corporate post-holders. The savings have been applied to partly fund increases in the Community Safety Teams on Fire Stations.

QCC - Monitoring of complaints - local measure reported to DCLG. This ensures that there is no increase in complaints as a result of efficiencies made in this area. No complaints relating to the work of the legislative fire safety department have been received during 2005/06.

#### **Foam Provision and Related Strategy**

A regional collaborative foam plan is being developed that has seen standardisation of foam use across the Services of the North East. This has produced some small savings for Tyne and Wear with regard to the cost of foam storage.

QCC - Progress monitored through operational exercises to ensure effectiveness of the revised strategy.

#### **Sickness Reduction**

The Absence Management Strategy of the Fire Service was reviewed and revised in September 2005. As a result of the changes and training for managers, reductions in absences have been realised.

QCC - BV 12a (No of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee - wt uniformed staff) is forecast to reduce from 9.69 in 2004/05 to 7.52 days/shifts in 2006/07, BV 12b (No of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee - all staff) from 10.26 to 8.38 days/shifts lost



## **Other HR Savings**

### **Control Staff Overtime**

On occasions when Control Operators are needed to work overtime on a night shift, the covering staff work a shorter shift of 7 rather than 15 hours. This results in a more efficient use of overtime to cover peak periods only rather than the entire shift  
QCC - No increase in call pick up times on shifts where this system is in operation.

### **Better Procurement**

The efficiency gains reported have arisen from tendering processes, which have resulted in contracts being awarded for a price lower than that initially estimated.  
Further efficiencies have arisen from negotiation on terms for carriage and delivery of goods purchased  
QCC - Procurement procedures for specifications, whole life costing, etc are monitored and adhered to in all procurement activity.

### **Corporate Services**

#### **Media Resource Unit - review of Management Structure**

Following a review of the roles and responsibilities within the Media Resource Unit, the post of Manager has been deleted from the establishment to be replaced by a MRU Assistant; the managerial responsibility for the Unit will be the responsibility of the Corporate Communications Officer.  
QCC - Local Measure. The role of the MRU is to supply artwork/printing/ multi media communications material for the FRS. Quality, timescales and deadlines continue to be met for all work requested

#### **Corporate Planning - Review of Risk Management**

Following a review of the Risk Management Function within the Corporate Planning Department, the efficiency mainly arises from the replacement of the Group Manager A post (RMP) with that of the Deputy Corporate Development Manager (Risk Specialist).  
QCC - Risk management will become further embedded in the organisation; success will be measured by the CPA score on Risk Management

**Other Initiatives**

**PFI**

The saving quoted above is the annualised saving arising from the 25 year PFI project that is currently being implemented in Tyne and Wear. Service Commencement occurred at one location during 2004/05, while the remaining sites were handed over in 2005/06. The full savings accrued in each of the 25 years will be paid into an equalisation reserve, and an annualised saving will be applied in each financial year to even out the impact on Local Tax levels over the lifetime of the project. The savings are being generated mainly due to a reduction in the number of Stations by 2, and more specifically the resulting reduction in the establishment of the service by 48 posts.

QCC - Strategic Review of Fire Cover and Business case for the PFI Project. BVPI 144, BVPI143(i) & (ii), and monitoring of attendance times to building fires.



## TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

### EFFICIENCIES IDENTIFIED FOR APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2006/07

#### *General Note /IRMP*

Tyne and Wear IRMP is a comprehensive and fully costed Programme of actions, which demonstrates, over a period of 6 years ending in 2009/10, how Tyne and Wear FRS will generate sufficient efficiency savings to fund the pay award, without passing any effect on to the Council Tax Payer, and also working to meet the objectives of the Fire Service modernisation and reform agenda. Each action within the plan has been fully costed and the savings generated are being monitored to ensure that they are being realised. It must also be clearly understood that, as intended, the savings generated are being utilised to support other actions within the Plan which contributes to Tyne and Wear FRS achieving our Vision of "Creating the Safest Community".

#### Revised shift Systems/ crewing arrangements (IRMP)

Following extensive analysis of rescue and routine incidents, the crewing levels of appliances at 2 pump stations will be established at a level of 4 + 4, unless local risk assessment determines otherwise. The action has 4 phases; each being implemented over 2004/05 and the following 3 years. The savings achieved are as a result of reducing staffing levels, some of which have been and will continue to be re-directed to Community Safety Initiatives; the remainder are being used to minimise the effect of the pay award on the level of Council Tax.

QCC- BVPI 144 (% of accidental fires in dwellings confined to the room of origin) 95% in 2004/5 and currently at 94.76%, BVPI 143(i) (No of Deaths from accidental fires per 100,000 population) 0.47 in 2004/05, and 0.27 for the year to date, & (ii) (No of injuries arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population) 14.81 injuries in 2004/05, and forecast at 7.49 for the current year. Quarterly Health and Safety Statistics for Fire-fighters also used. Monitoring and Review meetings held between Representing Body and the Fire Authority Chairman to monitor progress.

#### Other IRMP savings

##### **Targeted Response to Automatic Fire Alarms**

The savings shown result from a reduction in the numbers of attendance at AFAs. This has led to the crews having increased capacity to carry out Home Risk Assessments. The savings on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs have therefore been re-allocated to Community Safety for this purpose.

QCC - BVPI 207 (No of fires in non-domestic premises per 10,000 population) in 04/05 was 40.1 fires; 06/07 forecast is 38.3. This action is not affecting the performance against this BVPI detrimentally. Operations Department also carries out reviews of response standards to AFAs and adjusts as necessary, based on risk assessments.

### **Pre-determined attendance**

Savings have been achieved by reviewing the number and type of appliances sent to incidents. Risk Assessments determine when additional resources are needed. This has resulted in a reduced number of "blue light" journeys, increasing the capacity for crews to undertake Home Risk Assessments. The savings on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs have therefore been re-allocated to Community Safety for this purpose.

QCC - BVPI 207 (reduced from 40.1 fires to 38.3). BVPI 144 95% in 2004/05 and currently at 94.76%. BV 143(i) 0.47 in 2004/05, and 0.27 for the year to date & (ii) forecast reduction from 14.81 injuries in 2004/05 to 7.49 in the current year.

### **Review of Special Appliances**

The provision, positioning, and staffing of all special appliances is being fully reviewed. Initial focus surrounds Aerials, Heavy Rescue Units, and Emergency Tenders. The review is yet to be fully completed, however an early outcome of the review was the introduction of dual staffing on an aerial platform and the subsequent savings estimated represent a reduction of 8 members of staff.

QCC - Local Measure - Number of occasions on which 2 or more Aerial Platforms are used operationally at incidents. A Special Appliance review was undertaken which demonstrated that the limited operational workload meant that the number of appliances could be reduced without affecting operational effectiveness.

### **Restructure of Legislative Fire Safety Department**

The review of establishment was based on life risk, inspection regime and Agency workloads. Some elements of the work have now been transferred to the Emergency response staff, and some work is now carried out by corporate post –holders. The savings have been applied to partly fund increases in the Community Safety Teams on Fire Stations.

QCC - Monitoring of complaints - local measure reported to DCLG. This ensures that there is no increase in complaints as a result of efficiencies made in this area. No complaints relating to the work of the legislative fire safety department have been received during 2005/06.

### **Foam Provision and Related Strategy**

A regional collaborative foam plan is being developed that has seen standardisation of foam use across the Services of the North East. This has produced some small savings for Tyne and Wear with regard to the cost of foam storage.

QCC - Progress monitored through operational exercises to ensure effectiveness of the revised strategy.

### **Collaboration**

The Learning and Development Department of TWFRS has implemented a revised process for the training of Personnel on courses which usually involve travelling to the Fire Service College. In collaboration with other North East FRSS, where it is more cost effective, the course has been provided locally at our Service Training Centre at Barnston, using either the Fire Service College Trainers or an alternative provider. The non cashable element of the efficiency arises from reduction in compensatory leave allowed for each attendee. The cashable element arises from the saving in accommodation, travelling and subsistence costs.

QCC - All attendees on training courses complete a pre-learning agreement, and a post training questionnaire. These are monitored to ensure that the training provided is at a standard equal to that provided at the Fire Service College. Where the trainer is not provided by the Fire Service College, the course content and delivery are monitored by appropriately qualified officers from within TWFRS.

### **Sickness Reduction**

The Absence Management Strategy of the Fire Service was reviewed and revised in September 2005. As a result of the changes and training for managers, reductions in absences have been realised.

QCC - BV 12a (No of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee - wt uniformed staff) is forecast to reduce from 9.69 in 2004/05 to 7.52 days/shifts in 2006/07, BV 12b (No of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee - all staff) from 10.26 to 8.38 days/shifts lost

### **Other HR Savings**

#### **Control Staff Overtime**

On occasions when Control Operators are needed to work overtime on a night shift, the covering staff work a shorter shift of 7 rather than 15 hours. This results in a more efficient use of overtime to cover peak periods only rather than the entire shift

QCC - No increase in call pick up times on shifts where this system is in operation.

#### **Better Procurement**

The efficiency gains reported have arisen from tendering processes, which have resulted in contracts being awarded for a price lower than that initially estimated. Further efficiencies have arisen from negotiation on terms for carriage and delivery of goods purchased

QCC - Procurement procedures for specifications, whole life costing, etc are monitored and adhered to in all procurement activity.

### **Corporate Services**

#### **Media Resource Unit - review of Management Structure**

Following a review of the roles and responsibilities within the Media Resource Unit, the post of Manager has been deleted from the establishment to be replaced by a MRU Assistant; the managerial responsibility for the Unit will be the responsibility of the Corporate Communications Officer.

QCC - Local Measure. The role of the MRU is to supply artwork/printing/ multi media communications material for the FRS. Quality, timescales and deadlines continue to be met for all work requested

#### **Corporate Planning - Review of Risk Management**

Following a review of the Risk Management Function within the Corporate Planning Department, the efficiency mainly arises from the replacement of the Group Manager A post (IRMP) with that of the Deputy Corporate Development Manager (Risk Specialist).

QCC - Risk management will become further embedded in the organisation; success will be measured by the CPA score on Risk Management

## Other Initiatives

### PFI

The saving quoted above is the annualised saving arising from the 25 year PFI project that is currently being implemented in Tyne and Wear. Service Commencement occurred at one location during 2004/05, while the remaining sites were handed over in 2005/06. The full savings accrued in each of the 25 years will be paid into an equalisation reserve, and an annualised saving will be applied in each financial year to even out the impact on Local Tax levels over the lifetime of the project. The savings are being generated mainly due to a reduction in the number of Stations by 2, and more specifically the resulting reduction in the establishment of the service by 48 posts.

QCC - Strategic Review of Fire Cover and Business case for the PFI Project. BVPI 144, BVPI143(i) & (ii), and monitoring of attendance times to building fires.

**FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY NAME:**

Efficiency gains achieved in the first six months of the financial year 2006/7

		All figures £'000						
Category	Quality cross-check (QCC) met (see note 1)	One off or recurring?	Capital	Revenue	Annual Cashable Efficiency Gain (see note 2)	Cumulative Cashable Efficiency Gain (see note 3)	Annual Non-cashable Efficiency Gain	Cumulative Non-Cashable Efficiency Gain
Revised shift systems / Crewing arrangements (IRMP)	BV 143,144	Recurring		305	305	1,333		
	BV	Recurring				510		
Other IRMP savings	207,143,144	One off		6				
	See narrative	Recurring						
Collaboration		One off		49		30		19
	See narrative	Recurring						
Reduced ill-health retirements	BV15	One off		-				
		Recurring						62
Sickness reduction	BV12	One off		62				105
	See narrative	Recurring						
Other HR savings		One off		6		6		
	See narrative	Recurring						
Better procurement (see note 4)		One off		7		7		
	See narrative	Recurring						
Corporate services		One off		-				
	See narrative	Recurring						
Other	BV143,144	One off		-		670		
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>435</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>2,568</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>124</b>

**Notes**

1. Please list quality check used. If not a BVPI then include a description of the quality check in your narrative.
2. Report actual efficiency gains achieved in the first six months of the financial year
3. All savings recorded in column (E), plus recurring savings from previous years 2004-05 and 2005-06.
4. Please specify which are Firebuy gains

Supporting Narrative

Please include a separate brief document (one or two pages), explaining how the efficiency gains were achieved. Include in your narrative details of quality cross-checks used (other than BVPI). All information submitted may be published.

To be signed by:

Chair of the CFA (pse sign and date)	Chief Fire & Rescue Officer (pse sign and date)	Chief Financial Officer (pse sign & date)

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MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) REGULATIONS 1997: NOTIFICATION OF INTENT – ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (AVCs) AND TRIVIAL COMMUTATION****JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Authority has received notification from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that it is their intention to amend the regulations in respect of the purchase of AVCs and to raise the current limits for trivial commutation. DCLG have also invited comments to be received no later than 26<sup>th</sup> January 2007.
- 1.2 The notification signifies the start of the statutory consultation on the proposal.

**2 ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (AVCs)**

- 2.1 The amendments made on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006<sup>1</sup> to Regulation 16 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997, incorporating changes flowing from the simplification of tax rules, removed the 15% limit on contributions which could be paid and on which a member would receive tax relief.
- 2.2 The new tax regime does not operate with such limits; instead it has limits on how much individuals can put into a pension scheme in any one year and receive tax relief. Within the LGPS at present this annual allowance is the only limiting factor. However, within this framework, if left unaltered it would be possible for an individual to achieve benefits in an AVC scheme which would negate the need for the individual (if an enhanced lump sum were the objective) to commute any of the LGPS pension to a lump sum. This would have the effect of removing anticipated savings arising from the commutation of pension, which have been taken in to account in assessing the financial implications of all changes being made to the LGPS. In the light of this potential flaw in the existing arrangements, it is proposed to introduce a limit on the amount of salary individual members can put into the LGPS AVC of choice in relation to individual and combined employment. This limit will apply from the 2006/2007 tax year and will be 50% of pensionable pay for those wishing to contribute to an AVC.
- 2.3 This reflects the fact that AVC payments are intended to be deductions from salary and that principle should be retained. It also deals with the issue whereby members receive 40% tax relief and can then take as cash from the total value

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2006 – SI 2006/966)

of the accrued benefit rights, an equivalent cash return without any tax liability. Such a facility is not permissible within other public service unfunded pension schemes and creates presentational issues of members receiving significant tax-free lump sums.

- 2.4 The new regime will allow members of pension schemes to take up to 25% of the capital value of pension rights on retirement as a tax-free lump sum. Until April 2006, members were limited to the automatic 3 x pension. It was assumed that the facility to commute pension to increase the tax-free lump sum would be taken up by 50% of membership. This assumption, since it reduces the liability to pay ongoing pensions, provides a saving for the scheme, however if members maximise that tax-free lump sum via an AVC rather than commuting their accrued pension rights then this saving may not be provided and costs may subsequently fall to employers.

### **3 TRIVIAL COMMUTATIONS**

- 3.1 Currently, retirement benefits may be commuted where the annual rate of benefit amounts to no more than £195 (or £260 in the case of survivor benefits). Following tax simplification, a lump sum may be payable if the aggregate amount payable to that member or following that death is less than 1% of the standard lifetime allowance.

### **4 DRAFT REGULATIONS**

- 4.1 DCLG intend to circulate the draft regulations covering these and other minor tax-related amendments before the end of 2006. The existing notice of intention regarding AVCs has been circulated in advance as it is intended to apply the 50% limit for AVCs retrospectively to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006, and Authorities are advised to inform members accordingly.

### **5 COMMENT BY THE FINANCE OFFICER**

- 5.1 The amendments contained within this report are necessary following the simplification of the tax regulations and Members are advised that these may provide a greater degree of protection for individual employees and also some savings may be accrued following their introduction.

### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from these amendments.

### **7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

### **8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

**9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report:
  - b) Endorse the proposed amendments and request the Chief Fire Officer to respond to the consultation accordingly;
  - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.
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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Local government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997: Notification of Intent – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2006.



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No.14**

**MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT (EARLY TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT)  
(DISCRETIONARY COMPENSATION) (ENGLAND AND WALES)  
REGULATIONS 2006**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 As a result of the age discrimination regulations which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 and the continuing review of the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Government is revising the powers available to local authorities to make discretionary one-off lump sum payments (commonly referred to as severance payments) or award compensatory added years to employees where their employment terminations on the grounds of redundancy, efficiency or in ending a joint working arrangement (not to be confused with job sharing arrangements).

1.2 This report is to advise Members of the changes.

## **2 THE NEW REGULATIONS**

2.1 The new Regulations were published on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2006 and came into force on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2006 with retrospective effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006.

2.2 In essence, the new Regulations provide that:

- The Authority will no longer be able to award compensatory added years to employees. However, under existing regulations employers can still augment pension (i.e. award additional membership to an employee at the termination of their employment – the report states: *The award of added years to scheme members aged between 50 and 64 on the termination of their employment in accordance with Regulation 52 will be considered on an individual basis and a decision made on the merits of each case. Normally, however, an award will only be approved where it can be demonstrated to be in the employers' interests to do so, unless there are special factors which justify a departure from such a policy – Adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1999 (Minute 5 of 1999 refers).*

Members will be aware that for certain employees previously employed by the Tyne and Wear County Council specific historical conditions of service need to be considered in exercising the above discretions and will need to be considered in establishing any new policies in due course.

- The Authority will be able to make, if it so chooses, a one off lump sum payment of up to 104 weeks pay to employees. This will need to be made in

accordance with an Authority policy, which will need to be equality proofed and considered and approved in due course.

- The Authority will be able to make redundancy payments based on actual weeks pay, again this will need to be in accordance with an Authority policy to be considered in due course.

2.3 The new Regulations also provide for transitional arrangements for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007. Members are advised that no requests for early retirement have been made for this time period.

### **3 EXISTING POLICIES**

3.1 The Authority's existing policies will require amendment in accordance with the new Regulations. Currently, the Authority:

- Does not calculate redundancy payments on an actual weeks pay.
- In a redundancy situation the Authority would award a one off lump sum of up to 66 weeks severance-payment based on service and age related formula for employees between age 18 and up to an including age 49.
- Awards a maximum of up to 6 2/3 added years to employees aged 50 or over with at least 5 years service who are made redundant, subject to satisfying the financial implications of the management of early retirement policy.

### **4 IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Clearly the new Regulations have implications for the Authority in terms of policies that are currently based on age. The Chief Fire Officer in conjunction with the Finance Officer is currently developing a revised policy framework and it is envisaged that a report will be made to the Human Resources Committee meeting scheduled for February 2007.

4.2 In the interim, it is proposed that the transitional arrangements provided for by the regulations be utilised and the Authority's existing policies as outlined in paragraph 3.1 should apply until they are replaced with the revised framework.

### **5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

### **6 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

### **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report;

- b) Approve the retention of the existing policies as outlined in paragraph 3.1 until a new policy framework is developed;
  - c) Receive further reports as appropriate.
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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Strategic Plan 2006-2011
- Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation)(England and Wales) Regulations 2006.





**SUBJECT: AUTOMATIC WATER SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS (AWSS)****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of recent guidance relating to the practical applications of installing sprinkler systems, and Automatic Water Suppression Systems (AWSS).

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Members will recall the extensive campaign undertaken by the Authority to promote the installation of sprinkler systems in those premises and occupancies that are identified as being most vulnerable from accidental or deliberate fires.
- 2.2 The AWSS guide, supports the Authorities commitment to saving life and property through the application of sprinkler systems and other water suppression systems, in particular further supports the considerable successes that Members achieved in the promotion of sprinkler systems in schools.
- 2.3 The business case for water suppression systems is compelling as AWSS saves lives, reduces injuries, protects property, heritage, the environment and sustains business all at a competitive and reduced cost.
- 2.4 The latest official figures estimate that the total cost of fire to the country was £7.03bn, with the average cost of a domestic fire put at £34,000 and for a commercial premises fire £147,500. For local authority buildings that are often the target for arsonists the financial loss for the community is often compounded by the loss of civic amenities this directly affects community cohesion especially when it is a school that is the target.
- 2.5 In buildings that are fully protected by sprinklers statistics have shown that sprinklers alone controlled 99% of fires, and sprinkler systems designed for new build three bedroom semi-detached property are now being installed for around £1000.
- 2.6 The guide has been produced with the practitioner in mind and is aimed predominantly at those Officers with responsibility for fire safety to promote and offer advice on AWSS.
- 2.7 A copy of the guidance will be available at the Authority meeting.

**3. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

3.1. There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

**4. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1. There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

**6. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

6.1. There are no risk management implications in respect of this report.

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Authority is recommended to:

- a) further support the Fire Authority's support of water suppression systems within the members own Authority; and
- b) receive further reports as appropriate.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

**A GUIDE TO AUTOMATIC WATER SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS AND THEIR PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

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**SUBJECT: MONITORING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA) IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY AND THE FINANCE OFFICER.**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the CPA Improvement Plan Progress Report for the information of and comment by Members.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Plan contains ten Improvement Outcomes and associated actions / targets. New actions are added following each Audit visit and completed actions are removed following progress reports to the Authority.
- 2.2 Improvement Outcomes are subject to frequent rigorous monitoring within the annual planning process by Officers and Members as appropriate.
- 2.3 Additionally a CPA Programme Board has been established, consisting of Chairman, Chief Fire Officer, Principal Officers and the Corporate Development Manager. The Board meets quarterly to monitor progress of improvement actions against target, reporting as appropriate to the Authority at regular intervals.
- 2.4 Nominated lead members/ officers meet as appropriate to discuss work in progress and to scrutinise actions taken to ensure achievement of the designated outcomes within the agreed timetable.

**3. PROGRESS REPORTS**

- 3.1 The CPA monitoring sheets (see Appendix A) outline progress made to date on each of the ten Improvement Outcomes. Additionally information regarding milestones, likelihood of achieving the target completion date and comments from the responsible Officer are contained in the progress report.
- 3.2 The column titled 'Cost / Savings' has recently been added to evidence efficiency savings and contribution towards delivering Value for Money. In many cases this is incomplete however the current budget setting process will facilitate its population.

3.3 The Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report satisfactory progress against the Improvement Plan. Those areas of particular note are as follows:

- The Chairman has successfully completed Risk Management training and now chairs the Corporate Risk Management Group. Risk Management has also been included in the Member development programme in order to secure future member involvement in corporate risk issues.
- A Consultation policy has been developed which is underpinned by the recently established Consultation steering group who will support Corporate Development in the co-ordination of all consultation activities within the Authority. The policy has already been implemented with some consultation activities already successfully completed.
- The local Human Resources Strategy has been implemented with regularly updates and has now been approved by the Human Resources Committee.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Members are requested to:

- (a) scrutinise the Improvement Plan Progress Reports and provide comments accordingly and,
- (b) receive further Improvement Plan Progress Reports on a regular basis.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Fire and Rescue Comprehensive Performance Assessment for Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority.
2. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority CPA Improvement Plan.
3. Self Assessment: Operational Assurance
4. Self Assessment: Direction of Travel

# **PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

## **CPA Improvement Plan**

This CPA Improvement plan is updated on a monthly basis by the responsible Officers following discussion with their respective responsible Members.

The CPA Improvement Plan is then reviewed on a quarterly basis by the CPA Programme Board which involves all responsible Officers, the Chairman of the Authority, the Corporate Development Manager and the Development and Review Manager.

Following review by the Programme Board, progress against the plan is reported to the next scheduled meeting of the full Authority. Any completed actions are then removed from the document.

New actions are added to the CPA Improvement Plan following each Audit visit based upon areas that require strengthening. This document contains actions arising from various audits since the commencement of CPA, and are referenced as follows in the first column of the action plan to enable differentiation of origin:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Audit</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CA</b>	<b>Corporate Assessment</b>	<b>March 2005</b>
<b>DoT</b>	<b>Direction of Travel (Pilot)</b>	<b>July 2006</b>
<b>UoR</b>	<b>Use of Resources</b>	<b>October 2006</b>
<b>OA</b>	<b>Operation Assurance (Self Assessment)</b>	<b>August 2006</b>

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# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

**Improvement Outcome 1:**

Members are able to make full, valuable contributions to key strategic issues facing the Authority.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Measured by:**

Documented evidence of contributions

**Responsibility:** CFO Richard Bull  
Cllr Gibson

	Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Implement a learning and development programme for Members	Review Member Development Programme	Jan 07		Complete	2007/08 Review commenced 28 August 2006. Report to Authority due January 2007.	Authority Minute 127
DoT		Undertake full Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for Members			Complete	Survey sent out August 2006. Due to be reported January 2007.	
DoT		Identify and deliver appropriate training for Members			Ongoing	Programme for 2006/07 in place and progressing. 2007/08 programme to be reported in January 2007.	
CA		Evaluate impact of Training and development	Mar 07			Questionnaire to be distributed to Members in Feb 2007.	

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Involve Members in Risk Management				The Corporate Risk Management Group is now chaired by the Chairman of the Authority who has been formally trained in risk management. Risk Management is also included in the Member development programme. Regular risk reports and Corporate Risk Profile updates to go to P&R Committee	
UoR	Carry out full Ethics Audit				Similar Audit to that carried out in Sunderland city council	
UoR	Perform Audit	June 07			Audit Commission have agreed to undertake the audit in the first quarter of 2007.	

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# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

**Improvement Outcome 2:**

The structure of the organisation supports delivery of the Service in the most effective way.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Measured by:**

Increase in community engagement (including use of Community Fire Stations) and improvement in BVPIs

**Responsibility:** CFO Richard Bull  
Cllr Bollands

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Costs / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA Review organisational structure to improve service delivery	Implement outcome of review of restructure	Phased Implement from April 2007		Ongoing	Initial report to Authority September 2006. Specific principles agreed. Further reports to Authority to finalise structure Feb 07.  Consideration of impact of single status / job evaluation due December 2006. Report to Authority January 2007.	Consideration by SMT October 2005 Action Point 13. Special SMT meetings 20/06/05, 30/09/05, 12/12/05, 27/02/06  Minute No 49 (i-v) refers
CA	Ensure the right managers are in the right place for the most effective delivery of service	Phased Implement from April 2007		In progress	Station Manager Pilot commenced in November 2006.  Station Managers approved in principle, phased introduction 2007/08	Minute No 49 (i-v) refers
UoR Develop Asset Management approach for non-PPP buildings						

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### Improvement Outcome 3:

Managers feel empowered, show strong leadership in delivering the corporate message and take full responsibility for decision making in their areas of work.

Report Number : 13

Date: October 2006

### Measured by:

Focus group with managers involved in pilot at Station Quebec and result of 2006 employee survey. Managers tighter control and spending contained within estimated budget headings.

Responsibility: ACO John Hindmarch  
Clr Boyes

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA Enhance overall management capacity through greater delegation of decision-making authority	Develop strategy to devolve budgets	Commence Review April 07		April 08		
CA Develop a comprehensive understanding and acceptance of leadership responsibilities of managers	Evaluate DLP Management Course to establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term impact</li> <li>• Long-term performance</li> </ul>	Oct 06		Ongoing	Evaluations are ongoing (results are expected late 2006/early 2007)	Sample currently too small to make judgement although feedback very positive.
OA Provide Clear direction for managers developing and formulating policy	Develop and publish guidance document	Dec 2006		Complete	Guidance Document complete and scheduled to be presented to SMT in December 2006.	

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# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

**Improvement Outcome 4:**

Internal and external stakeholders are engaged and fully informed. Service delivery and decision making takes into account their needs and views.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Measured by:**

Results of surveys and focus groups.

**Responsibility:**

DCO Iain Bathgate  
Cllr Renton

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA Improve internal communications mechanisms to support changes in the decision-making levels of the service and to enhance ability to meet the Authority's strategic objectives	Implement relevant findings of Communications review.	October 06			Internal Communications Strategy 2006-2009 to Authority December 06. External Communications Strategy to follow in February 2007.  The Staff Communications Strategy has a three-year action plan.  Chairman to commence Station Liaison meetings December 2006 with questionnaire evaluation.  Strategic Communications Group set up to oversee improvements in communications. First meeting took place on 31 October 2006	Staff Communications Strategy 2006-2009  Strategic Communications Group agenda and minutes
CA Evaluate improvements through focus group consultation with staff as part of the Staff Communications Strategy.	Evaluate improvements through focus group consultation with staff as part of the Staff Communications Strategy.	Jan 08		Ongoing	Evaluate impact of Communications Strategy to date via focus groups in November 2006 and through an Employee Survey in November 2007.  Individual actions within the Staff Communications Strategy will be separately evaluated.	SMT Listening Events Evaluation/Progress Report to SMT November 2006

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Consultation meetings with senior managers of the top 20 organisations in Tyne and Wear	December 2006		Complete	Chief Fire Officer carried out a face-to-face consultation with the top 20 organisations in October 2006 to feed into the Service's Strategic plan 2007/8 Report to SMT in December 2006	
CA	Undertake 2006 Member survey	March 07		Ongoing	Member and Ward Councillors survey to be undertaken in January 2007 into the perceptions of the fire service. This will be replaced by focus groups in November 2006 to evaluate improvements in communications.	
CA	Undertake 2006 employee survey	May 07		Not yet started	A full employee survey will take place in November 2007	
DoT	Enhance levels of external communication and consultation with the communities.	Ongoing			Contact has been established with all Local Authorities and attendance / input to each strategy group agreed. Contact made with Sunderland Youth Parliament.	
DoT	Coordinate all consultation activities centrally within organisation.	Dec 2006		Complete	Database set up and Consultation Steering Group established.	

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# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
DoT	Use citizen panels in order to consult with communities regarding the services we provide.	Mar 2007		Complete - ongoing	Police Authority have agreed to the Fire Service using their citizen panel for focus group consultation.	
DoT	Develop strategic approach for communications with community including hard to reach groups.	Mar 2007		Ongoing	Best Practise methods adopted and incorporated in Policy document. Policy and Progress report to SMT and Authority in December 06. Proposal to work with Community Advocates regarding hard to reach groups.	

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### Improvement Outcome 5:

Accurate and timely information is available at all levels within the organisation. Employees are able to access services and information more quickly and effectively.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

### Measured by:

Employees more informed. Reduction of emails and telephone queries. Results of surveys and focus groups.

**Responsibility:** DCO Iain Bathgate  
Cllr Ms Bell

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Further develop the ICT network to support performance management and e-government	Jan 07		Ongoing	The Specification for new Fire Safety System is completed and tenders have now been returned. A preferred supplier has been identified and approval for this is currently being sought prior to order confirmation. Installation should now be complete during January 2007. This will enable us to ultimately achieve platinum level integration with national eFire Website. Initially silver level integration will be used.	

**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

CA		Implement VPN Access solution	Mar 2007	Ongoing	Access to the intranet (or any other TWFRS hosted system) will not be permitted from any location external to the TWFRS network until the VPN access solution is implemented in Q1/2007. Full secure access into the network will be permitted from service laptops only in conjunction with secure ID tokens. However, external access to e-mail is currently being piloted and tested from any external location.	
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**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

DoT		Further enhance Document Management	Jan 07 (phase 2)	Ongoing	<p>Phase 2 Document Management started Q3/2006 and includes internal scanning initially via two scan stations (ordered) and update of documents electronically direct from desktop PCs. Additional concurrent licences have also been ordered.</p> <p>Meeting took place in October with Canon to confirm TWFRS requirements.</p> <p>ICT currently investigating possibility of upgrading selected photocopiers with the e-copy facility. This would allow photocopiers to scan documents that can then be indexed into ADOS or e-mailed to the appropriate person.</p> <p>Training Programme currently in place.</p>	
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# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

**Improvement Outcome 6:**

All partnerships are relevant, attended by the appropriate person(s) and support the Authority's vision.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Measured by:**

Partnership procedure embedded, focus groups with partners, all existing partnerships support vision.

**Responsibility:** T/ACO Dave Simpson  
Cllr Gibson

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA Embed the Partnership policy and undertake a review to establish it's impact	Establish Local Area Agreements Project Team to formulate Authority partnership agenda	Jan 2007		Ongoing	November 06- The authority is firmly embedded into the Newcastle LAA with outcomes that relates directly to the Service; "increase domestic fire safety and reduce arson" which includes TWFRS targets for deliberate fires & injuries from accidental fires in dwelling. The LAA is now waiting final approval from GONE. The authority and GONE is still in negotiations with North Tyneside with a final presentation from senior management to the LAA board on the 20 <sup>th</sup> November. The authority has written to Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside local Authorities requesting involvement in the refresher stage of their LAA.	Draft Newcastle L.A.A. Written correspondence.

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Provide partners and community with newsletter communicating new initiatives that the Authority has introduced	Jan 06		Ongoing	Following a number of discussions and research it has been decided that the most effective way forward is by using local authority magazines	Local initiatives published in LA Magazines
CA	Undertake Survey of key partners to ensure two-way communications and to monitor the effectiveness of the communication strategy with partners.	Jan 2006		Ongoing	Draft survey produced. And issued to Partners	Survey itself. Results from survey
CA	Develop a robust tool for evaluation of Community Safety outcomes	Dec 2006		Ongoing	Policy now agreed. Policy launched November 2006 Evaluation training for relevant personnel arranged for November 2006	Evaluation of schools programme, Zone Rangers, Eco Rangers, RAP, wheelee bin initiative (Gateshead).
OA	Further develop information sharing processes to underpin decision making and action	April 2007		Ongoing	LFS inspections now collect comprehensive risk information which will be captured electronically with the new FS date system. The new system is due to be installed in April 2007. This information will then be available in electronic format to inform the FSEC model.	FSEC model populated with building risk data
OA	Benchmark against selected FRS and partners	Sept 2007			We intend to benchmark against other FRS in the region	Comparison of other FRS policies and procedures
OA	Implement revised procedures	Jan 2008			New policy will be written once comparison is complete and lessons have been learned from the risk information initiative	New policy
OA	Watch based training reviewed and revised	Mar 2008			Two members of personnel in HQ have been given this task	New Procedure

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**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

OA	Monitor and review	April 2008			A full review will be undertaken before April 2008	Results of the review
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# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### Improvement Outcome 7:

Projects and initiatives are prioritised and budgeted for. At all levels in the organisation Managers use accurate up to date information on performance of services to effectively manage and hence improve performance

### Measured by:

Result of surveys, linkage of strategic plan and budget, improvement in all performance areas.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Responsibility:** CFO Richard Bull  
Cllr Heron

	Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Further develop Planning, Performance Management and Risk Management Framework	Fully implement strategy for devolving budgets	April 08		Ongoing	Work for framework and cost centre budgeting in progress. Milestone March 07.	
CA		Deliver risk assessment training to managers.	October 06			Training delivered to senior managers re CRMG in June 06, middle managers still to be trained. Chairman has also received training and is member of CRMG.	
CA		Risk assess projects and initiatives to prioritise	Sept 06		In progress	80% Complete	

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**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**  
ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

**Improvement Outcome 8:**  
The Authority's services provide Value for Money.

**Measured by:**  
Result of Value for Money Audit.

**Report Number :** 13  
**Date:** October 2006

**Responsibility:**  
CFO Richard Bull  
Finance Officer  
Cllr Mrs Forbes

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve it	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA Demonstrate Value for Money	Carryout VFM conclusion	2005/06	None	Complete	Lead members briefed regularly. VFM Strategy to Authority 18 September 2006	Authority Minute 127 Authority Minute 33 (i-ii)
CA	Review process for obtaining external funding	Sept 06	None	Complete	Process for obtaining external funding reviewed and guidance published.	External funding guidance (Intranet)
DoT	Prepare documentary evidence to justify the high cost of the Authority	Sept 06	None	Complete	Benchmarking exercise commenced July 06. After Incident Survey results to be compared to other FRS to demonstrate. Results included in Value for Money Conclusion (Final Accounts) and Direction of Travel & Value for Money Statement (CPA)	
DoT	Develop systems to review and improve VFM.		None	Complete	Capital Strategy VFM Framework Medium Term Financial Strategy	Authority Minute 34 (i-ii) Authority Minute 33 (i-ii) Authority Minute 35 (i-ii)

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

## ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

### Improvement Outcome 9:

The workforce is fully developed so as to improve the level and application of skills, to achieve greater success for individuals and the organisation.

### Measured by:

Result of PDP process and development of organisational succession plan.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Responsibility:** ACO John Hindmarch  
Cllr Anglin

CA	Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost/ Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA	Progress IPDS and rank to role	Develop and pilot performance review process to monitor individual's performance	April 2007		Ongoing	IPDS working in partnership with Corporate Planning are piloting a scheme focussed on corporate staff and at Washington Community Fire Station focussed on operational staff.	
CA		Act upon findings of pilot	May 2007		Not started	Will commence one the results of the above pilot scheme are available	
CA	Ensure HR Strategy is implemented and fit for purpose	Update strategy regularly to reflect national and regional priorities.			Complete	Local HR strategy implemented in 2002 and updated on 3 subsequent occasions. Now approved by the Human Resources Committee of the Authority in September 2006.	HR Strategy Regional Diversity Strategy Workforce Development Strategy

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**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**  
**ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

**Improvement Outcome 10:**

Equality and diversity is promoted internally and externally to increase awareness throughout the Service and to create a workforce that reflects the community we serve.

**Report Number :** 13

**Date:** October 2006

**Measured by:**

Increase in number of female firefighters. Increase in BV11a and BV11b.

**Responsibility:**

ACO John Hindmarch  
 Cllr Cooney

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
Broaden the diversity of the workforce	Review of Diversity of the workforce	April 07		Ongoing	This is being achieved during the review of the establishment scheme, which includes a rationale for determining post position. The initial position was presented to the Authority in July 2006 with an Implementation Plan to be produced to align the process to budget setting. In addition, the Authority is developing a recruitment protocol to effectively target under-represented groups, provide relevant positive action initiatives and increase access to community facilities to the public of Tyne and Wear. This involves a detailed analysis of the 2005 recruitment and selection processes which were conducted using the National Firefighter Selection Tests.	SMT report July 2006  Fire Authority Paper & minutes of meetings
CA	Implement review findings	April 2007			To commence following approval of the re-structure by the Authority. Report to the December meeting of the Authority	

# PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

Actions We Will Take	How We Will Achieve It	Target Completion	Cost / Savings	Status	Comments / Milestones	Evidence
CA		Oct 06		Complete	RDM has produced a risk-based strategy for improvement presented to SMT and was approved by the Human Resources Committee in September 2006.	Regional Diversity Strategy and Action Plan and Committee report
CA	Raise the profile of diversity and equality	Sept 06		Ongoing	<p>The Regional Diversity Manager is actively working towards increasing awareness of equality and diversity, providing a focal point in this Authority in addition to the Equality and Diversity Officer. Regional diversity committee is chaired by the Chairman of the Authority.</p> <p>The Fairness at Work Committee has been further enhanced by additional corporate staff to engender equality and diversity into all aspects of the workplace. The Committee is actively supported by all representative bodies recognised by the Authority.</p> <p>Assessed during ADC process and incorporated into development plans as appropriate.</p>	<p>Local diversity strategy</p> <p>Fairness at Work Committee minutes and papers</p>
CA	Increase awareness at station/department level	April 2007		Not yet commenced	<p>Undertake audit to determine any issues re culture, management and job satisfaction</p> <p>The national cultural Audit is currently scheduled for Authority-wide publication in April 2007. It is envisaged that this approach will secure a greater return rate than would have been the case due to the number of other surveys currently 'live' being actioned by the Officers</p>	Cultural Audit

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**PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

CA	Develop and address Action Plan from results of Cultural Audit	June 2007	Not yet commenced	High impact core values are being embedded within the Service and are visually apparent in all premises An action plan will be formulated on completion of the Audit	Core Values and Strategic Plan
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**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
18th DECEMBER 2006**

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**SUBJECT: PROVISIONAL REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT SETTLEMENT  
FOR 2007/2008**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE FINANCE  
OFFICER**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To report the outcome of the 2007/2008 provisional local government finance settlement for this Authority;

**2. Description of Decision**

- 2.1 The Authority is requested to note the report and approve Paragraph 7 as the basis of a response to the Secretary of State.

**3. Introduction**

- 3.1 The government released the indicative 2007/2008 settlement information as part of the previous year's (2006/2007) settlement in order to allow better planning of resources in the medium term as part of the government's three-year settlement proposals.
- 3.2 On 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a consultation paper setting out details of proposals for the Provisional 2007/2008 Local Authority Finance Settlement. The broad amounts distributed follow on from the Comprehensive Spending Review 2004 (SR2004) announced in July 2004, and the indicative settlement for 2007/2008 released last year as part of the 2006/2007 Finance Settlement finalised in January 2006.
- 3.3 Whilst the Settlement is provisional and may be subject to changes by the Secretary of State, as a result of the consultation process, major changes are not anticipated. Comments on the proposals are required to be forwarded to the Secretary of State by 5th January 2007.
- 3.4 The main proposals within the consultation paper are outlined below.

**4. National Settlement**

- 4.1 The Provisional 2007/2008 Settlement sees the continuation of the four block system for formula grant introduced last December. This means that Total Assumed Spending and Formula Spending Shares no longer exist and as a result it is no longer possible to make meaningful comparisons between service areas.

The emphasis of the system is purely to distribute grant and is not designed to compare spending with levels of formula grant according to the government.

4.2 The Four Block system consists of the following elements:

**a) Relative Needs Block**

This block is calculated using Relative Needs Formulae (RNF). The RNF's are the equivalent to the Formula Spending Shares used in the previous system. RNF's are also split into service blocks covering Children's Services, Adult Services, Police, Fire and Rescue, Highways, Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) and Capital Financing. The Formula for each service block is based on a per client amount with top-ups to reflect local circumstances, mainly deprivation and area cost adjustments.

**b) Relative Resource Amount**

This block takes into account the different capacity of local authorities to raise income from the Council Tax. This is a negative amount in the formula.

**c) Central Allocation**

This block is allocated on a per capita basis.

**d) Floor Damping Block**

This block ensures that all Authorities receive a minimum grant increase in line with the Government's proposals by type of Authority. Different increases have been announced in the settlement.

The national allocations for the new Four Block Grant system are set out below:

	<b>2006/07 Actual £m</b>	<b>2007/08 Indicative £m</b>	<b>2007/08 Provisional £m</b>
Relative Needs Block	14,821.4	15,337.2	15,337.2
Relative Resource Amount	(5,129.8)	(5,308.3)	(5,308.3)
Central Allocation	11,186.5	11,575.8	11,575.8
Floor Damping Block	3,935.8	4,028.3	4,028.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,813.9</b>	<b>25,633.0</b>	<b>25,633.0</b>

From the above table it is possible to compare RNF blocks to each other over time, however it is no longer possible to assess Total Assumed Spending levels for particular services. There have been no changes to the indicative settlement information released last year and most Authorities' grant allocations have as a result remained unchanged.

The table below provides an analysis of central government funding for revenue expenditure, (more commonly known as Aggregate External Finance), in cash terms, for 2007/2008 compared with 2006/2007 adjusted for changes in responsibility and transfers of specific grant into and out of the formula grant system. The main changes in this respect relate to the fact some Social Services grants have either ended or been transferred to formula grant and include an element of the preserved rights grant and social care inspection.

The increase in AEF for 2007/2008 amounts to 4.9% compared to the previous year's increase for 2006/2007 of 4.5% and as this increase is above the rate of inflation is welcomed.

Prospects for future years local government grant settlements can be assumed to be much lower than compared to the increases set out in the last Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2004, as the Chancellor has confirmed in his recent pre budget statement that a tightening of the economy would impact on the amount of funding available to fund the public sector in the next CSR. CSR2007 will cover funding levels for the period 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 and will be announced in the summer/autumn of 2007. The government is also committed to releasing three year settlement information to local government to better aid longer term planning of resources and will see the usual provisional finance settlement for 2008/2009 in the autumn of 2007 along with indicative settlements for both 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

**Aggregate External Finance (AEF)**

	2006/07 £m	Adjusted 2006/07 £m	Change Adjusted %	Prov. 2007/08 £m	Change Adjusted %
Revenue Support Grant	3,443	3,335	(3.1)	3,163	(5.2)
Specific Grants	41,068	41,842	1.9	44,101	5.4
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>44,511</b>	<b>45,177</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>47,264</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Non-Domestic Rates	17,500	17,500	0.0	18,500	5.7
<b>Total AEF</b>	<b>62,011</b>	<b>62,677</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>65,764</b>	<b>4.9</b>

**4.3 Analysis of the National Settlement**

4.3.1 The new four block government grant system has been retained despite common consensus and feedback from local authorities and representative bodies that the proposed four block system is less transparent than the previous FSS system and harder to explain to key stakeholders.

4.3.2 The AEF table above shows that specific grants will continue to increase in 2007/2008. The increase is welcomed by local government, however, there are concerns that the high level of specific grants takes away the flexibility of Authorities' use of this funding and also directs spending on specific services by central government.

This year the proportion of funding the government proposes to meet through specific grants, after adjustments for transfers into and out of general grant, has increased in net terms by 5.4% for 2007/2008.

The specific grants total for 2006/2007 was amended last year to reflect the major change to separately fund Education where £24.049 billion of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was transferred into the new Dedicated Schools Grant which is now used to fund Schools. A separate announcement by the Department for Skills and Education now forms part of the Finance Settlement. In addition, most of the specific grant allocations for all other services are announced which is helpful to

Authorities when determining budgets for 2007/2008 and is this therefore welcomed.

4.3.3 Income from National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) is assumed to increase by 5.7%. The NNDR poundage will increase by 2.5% in line with the September 2006 Consumer Price Index. The proposed rate poundage for England for 2007/2008 is likely to be 44.4p compared to 43.3p in 2006/2007. The estimated increase in income from Business Rates of 5.7% therefore reflects that the number of businesses contributing is expected to increase in 2007/2008 as the economy grows.

The amount of NNDR is only one element of Central Government Formula Grant Support, however, and NNDR levels are taken into account by government when allocating Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to set the Formula Grant levels nationally. The government has clearly reduced the level of RSG support in the light of the predicted increase in the level of NNDR income for 2007/2008. RSG has fallen by 5.2% (on the adjusted base for 2006/2007), which reflects the recognition by the Government to reduce RSG and utilise an increase in NNDR income for 2007/2008.

4.3.4 The Government no longer provides Assumed National Council Tax (ANCT) figures. Instead the resources element block of the new formula grant assumes shares of council tax in calculating Authorities' share of the formula grant. The levels used in the settlement remain unchanged for 2007/2008.

Actual Council tax levels and precepts in 2007/2008 will depend upon the decisions of individual Authorities and their ability to balance budgetary pressures with increases in their Council Tax or precept levels for 2007/2008.

The government however used its capping powers for the third successive year in 2006/2007 and capped a small number of Authority budgets. The Minister has once again confirmed that the government expect to see average council tax increases for next year of less than 5%. The government has also set out draft Alternative Notional Amounts, which outline the proposed notional adjustments to local authorities' 2006/2007 budget requirements to help enable a like-for-like comparison with proposed 2007/2008 budget requirements for capping purposes.

4.3.5 Specific grant increases are detailed in the table below:

	<b>2006/07 £m</b>	<b>Adjusted 2006/07 £m</b>	<b>Change Adjusted %</b>	<b>Latest 2007/08 £m</b>	<b>Change Adjusted %</b>
Education	30,466.3	30,618.3	0.5	32,486.2	6.1
Social Services	2,901.6	2,914.1	0.4	3,027.4	3.9
Fire	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0
Police	4,408.0	4,475.4	0.2	4,656.1	4.0
EPCS	392.3	846.3	115.7	840.3	(0.7)
Capital	455.0	503.0	10.5	595.0	18.3
Unallocated	2,443.9	2,483.9	0.2	2,495.2	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,067.7</b>	<b>41,841.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>43,433.1</b>	<b>5.4</b>

As can be seen from the above table the main government priorities remain Education and Social Services.

## **4.4 Comments on the Settlement**

- 4.4.1 Phil Woolas, Minister for Local Government, said that "This is a good settlement for local government. With multi year settlements government is providing local authorities in England with stable and predictable funding. Councils should be able to better plan over the longer term, using the increased investment in local government funding to address local service priorities". Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart chair of the Local Government Association felt that "A two year deal is helpful but council tax payers cannot pay any more. With rising demand for services, such as care of the elderly, not covered by central government grant, councils face some hard choices".

## **5. Features of the National Settlement**

### **Three Year Settlements**

- 5.1 The government's intention is to move to three year settlements for local government in the next Spending Review 2007. The provisional settlement released on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2005 therefore covered the two remaining financial years (2006/2007 and 2007/2008) of the present Spending Review (2004). The provisional settlement for 2007/2008 has not changed from the indicative settlement issued last year.

### **Additional Funding and Relieving Spending Pressures**

- 5.2 The government announced extra formula grant in December 2005 for the two years, over and above previous plans shown in the Spending Review 2004, of £305m in 2006/2007 and £508m in 2007/2008. This has been confirmed in the 2007/2008 although the measures do not greatly affect the Fire Service.

### **General Grant Floor Damping**

- 5.3 The floor damping arrangements introduced as part of the new four block grant system in the 2006/2007 settlement, whereby each Authority will get a minimum increase in grant depending upon what type of Authority, is to continue in 2007/2008. This will be paid for by scaling back the grant increase above the floor for other Authorities in that class. The floor increases for 2007/2008 have been announced as:

- for Education and Social Services Authorities the floor is an increase of 2.7%;
- for District Councils the floor is an increase of 2.7%;
- for Fire Authorities the floor is an increase of 2.7%;
- for Police Authorities the floor is an increase of 3.7% in 2007/2008.

The 2006/2007 base used in assessing the floor has been adjusted so that the increases are on a like for like basis.

### **Capping Powers and Reserve Powers**

- 5.4 The government has retained capping and reserve capping powers. They expect to see average council tax and precept increases next year of less than 5% and have stated that "local government should be under no illusions; if there are excessive increases, we will take capping action as we have done over the last three years".

### **Amending Reports**

- 5.5 The government has confirmed that as use of projected population figures have been used in both the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 Finance Settlements it does not intend to correct any variances between projections and actuals once known. This effectively means that Amending Reports are unlikely to feature in future grant settlements.

## **6 Effects on the Authority**

- 6.1 In past settlements it has been possible to compare the changes in Formula Spending Shares and their impact on the level of funding received by the Authority between settlements and also the impact of changes due to formula reviews and data.

Under the revised system however, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons with the previous FSS grant distribution system and it is not possible to disaggregate the formula grant across services. The government has reaffirmed that the new system is to purely distribute grant and that this represents a change of emphasis from past grant regimes where links were made between grant and spending levels.

The government adopted most of the changes proposed in their Formula Grant Review consultation carried out in July 2005. The impact on the Authority of these changes saw a significant re-distribution of resources for fire authorities.

The main reasons for this are set out below :

- amendments to the RNF's (formerly FSS);
- removal of pensions from the formula which is now subject to separate funding arrangements;
- a new resources block incorporating full resource equalisation;
- the incorporation of the amending reports within the formula grant, and,
- changes to the formula and data used, (particularly the use of projected population figures for the first time);

It was however inevitable that floors would be retained in the new system to 'smooth in' the new regime and to ensure all authorities received a minimum increase in grant year on year.

The Fire Authority has benefited from the overall changes and in 2007/2008 will receive a grant increase of 3.0% compared to the floor increase of 2.7%.

If floors had not been in place in 2007/2008 the Authority's grant entitlement would have increased by a further £1.079 million which would have then equated to a total increase in grant of 6.4% compared to the 2006/2007 settlement.

6.2 The following table shows how the changes in the Formula Funding Grant allocation for Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service in 2007/2008 compares to the adjusted 2006/2007 Settlement and also compares this increase with other classes of Authorities.

	Adjusted Grant 2006/2007 £ million	Proposed Grant 2007/2008 £ million	% Change
Total for England	24,706.4	25,633.0	3.8
Total Shire Areas	11,962.3	12,443.9	4.0
Total Metropolitan Areas	7,019.1	7,267.6	3.5
Total London Authorities	5,723.4	5,919.7	3.4
Total North East Region	1,567.7	1,621.8	3.5
All Fire Authorities	967.0	1,003.5	3.8
Total Metropolitan Fire Authorities	307.9	316.6	2.8
Greater Manchester	70.1	72.0	2.8
Merseyside	44.2	45.4	2.7
South Yorkshire	33.2	34.3	3.4
West Yorkshire	52.1	53.5	2.7
West Midlands	75.3	77.4	2.8
Tyne and Wear	32.9	33.9	3.0

The impact of all of the changes included in this report culminates in the actual grant awarded by central government. It is the figures set out in the table above that play a significant part in determining the eventual spending level of the Authority and the resulting precept for 2007/2008.

The Central Government formula grant increase for the Authority of 3.0% for 2007/2008 is above the floor set for the fire service of 2.7% but this increase is lower than the national average increase for all authorities of 3.8% and is also lower than the average increase for all fire authorities of 3.8%.

**7. Comments on the Settlement**

7.1 The following comments can be considered as a basis for the Authority's response in addition to any comments members would wish to make.

**New Four Block System**

7.2 The Authority does not accept that the new system simplifies the grant settlement information and is opposed to its introduction. It is of concern that the government has introduced this system bearing in mind the number of local authorities who responded negatively to its proposed introduction for reasons of transparency and



that it would make the system more complex and open to more judgemental decisions by Ministers.

The fact the levels for each of the four blocks has to be determined by judgement means that the new system is more judgemental than the previous system. This, coupled with the fact that additional layers or blocks have been introduced, also means that the system for grant distribution is now predominantly population based with a reduced weighting for the needs based elements which this Authority, as a relatively highly deprived area, does not support.

## **Total Central Government Support**

- 7.3 Exchequer support to finance the 2007/2008 Settlement totals £66.764 billion, an increase of 4.9% on the previous year. This increase is above inflation and is welcomed.

## **Resource Equalisation**

- 7.4 The Resource Equalisation measure introduced by the government for the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 Settlements was welcomed but the Authority does not feel that it has greatly benefited from this measure as much as it should have done in the new grant system. This is an area for further work which will be carried out when contributing to the CSR2007 whereby the Authority would like to see more transparency within the new formula to be able to show and clarify the true impact this important measure.

The new grant regime means that disparities between funding of the regions of England will still exist and the richer areas with a buoyant property market will continue to be subsidised by poorer areas. Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority, with a relatively low tax base, requires additional funding to help bridge the gap between actual spending and formula grant. Deprived areas such as ours will still have higher council tax levels than some of the more affluent areas of the country and the new funding regime has not materially changed this situation. It was hoped that the introduction of the full resource equalisation element introduced within the new formula would help correct this position where council tax levels in deprived areas are higher than those in some of the more affluent areas of England.

## **Floors and Ceilings**

- 7.5 The Fire Authority is contributing £1.079m of its 2007/2008 grant allocation to help fund those Fire Authorities which need to be brought up to the floor increase of 2.7% over the adjusted 2006/2007 grant level. If this mechanism had not been in place the council tax precept for the Fire Authority would be lower by almost £3.33 based on the projected base for Tyne and Wear for 2007/2008. All fire authorities in receipt of an increase above the floor contribute grant to help fund the floor.

The Authority supports the use of the floor and on the grounds of fairness it is also difficult to argue against the continuation of this measure. It is the large and wide range of contributions that are difficult to explain in the new grant system.

## Area Cost Adjustment

- 7.6 The Council continues to oppose the amount allocated to the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) within the RNF calculations as unrealistic and not relative to the additional specific costs involved. The revised ACA in the new formula grant system still does not help explain the real cost differences that exist between Authorities and is another area we will request the government to reconsider in its CSR2007 review.

## Council Tax Revaluation

- 7.7 It appears inequitable to update earnings data (as in the Area Cost Adjustment) without updating house price data through a revaluation of council tax. Both earnings and house prices have risen more because of the strength of the south east economy. However, they would have opposite effects if both were updated. A revaluation of properties would reduce the RSG of the south-east as the RSG tax-base would rise, and channel resources to other areas including the North East, whilst higher earnings increases the RSG of the south-east which are reflected in the grant formula.

The government has announced its plan to delay the council tax revaluation until after the next parliament. The full resource equalisation option RE3 was adopted from the formula review consultation process and this was welcomed, however, as set out above the fact that this measure has in effect been diluted within the RNF block means the full benefit to those in greatest need has not been fully realised. It is suggested that this position be reviewed and in the longer term this Authority would like to see a full revaluation taking place every ten years as first proposed by the government with interim resource equalisation measures provided for in the absence of full revaluation each year.

## Formula Review

- 7.8 Concerns which were made last year are still relevant in connection with the Formula Grant Distribution Review which impacted on this Finance Settlement. These issues will continue to be highlighted to government in order to try and achieve a better settlement for the Authority.

## 8. Recommendation

- 8.1 Members are requested to note the report and specifically Paragraph 7, which will form the basis of a response to the Secretary of State together with any comments members may wish to make.

## Background Papers

Local Authority Finance (England) – Revenue Support Grant for 2007/2008 and related matters (DCLG)

LGA Revenue Support Grant Settlement 2007/2008 briefing

SIGOMA 2007/2008 briefing

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**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Sunderland  
City Council**

**MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

**Item No.18**

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**SUBJECT: RESPONDING TO THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT – AUDIT  
REPORT OCTOBER 2006**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER, THE CHIEF  
FIRE OFFICER, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

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## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 1.1 The Audit Commission recently reviewed the Authority's response to the Civil Contingencies Act (the Act) and its level of preparedness in meeting the Act. The review of the Authority's arrangements was part of a wider cross-cutting review of arrangements within Tyne and Wear. The review was considered to be particularly important given the importance of co-operation between authorities, the joint emergency planning arrangements in place for the Tyne and Wear metropolitan district councils, and the role of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which covers Northumberland as well as Tyne and Wear.
- 1.2 The following authorities participated in the review:
- Tyne & Wear Emergency Planning Unit;
  - Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service;
  - City of Sunderland Council;
  - Newcastle City Council;
  - Gateshead Council;
  - North Tyneside Council;
  - South Tyneside Council;
  - Gateshead Primary Care Trust; and
  - Northumbria Police.
- 1.3 The review was a joint piece of audit work between the Audit Commission and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), who are the appointed auditors for South Tyneside Council and North Tyneside Council.
- 1.4 The report, entitled "*Responding to the Civil Contingencies Act - Tyne and Wear Locality*", was agreed at a joint meeting of the above authorities held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006, which was chaired by Ged Fitzgerald, Clerk to the Authority. The final report was published in October 2006 and a copy is appended to this report.

## 2 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The aim of the review was to assess the response of individual Tyne and Wear Authorities to the Act and the level of preparedness in meeting the requirements of the Act.
- 2.2 The review was generally based upon Chapter 13 of *Emergency Preparedness*, the statutory guidance, which includes a self assessment diagnostic to assess the level of preparedness. In addition, the Audit Commission has prepared a more detailed diagnostic for use by local authorities. The Audit Commission suggested that the tool prepared by Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit, which brought together these two key diagnostics, may also be beneficial to the participating authorities. Key issues were then identified following structured interviews with key officers, together with an examination of key supporting documentation and plans.

## 3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 It is pleasing to note the report states that “considerable progress” has been made by the agencies involved in developing a Tyne and Wear response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- 3.2 The report also notes that the LRF is in place, a key statutory process which brings together representatives of all the key responding agencies. The Auditors comment that the LRF is supported by a clear sub working group framework: and members may wish to note that this framework was established and is subsequently performance managed by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer, acting as Chair of the LRF ‘General Working Group’. Roles, responsibilities and sub working group action plans are clearly defined and set out in the ‘*LRF Handbook*’, a publicly available document, again prepared on behalf of the LRF by Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit.
- 3.3 Nevertheless the report does acknowledge that the Act has wide ranging implications, and that much work still needs to be completed.

## 4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The report contains a total of twelve recommendations: of particular interest to this Authority are:
- i) Capacity* - The report recognises there is limited capacity in terms of dedicated resources and staffing available for civil contingencies preparation. Both the EPU and the constituent authorities have a small pool of specialist staff to draw upon. The joint arrangements to support the EPU should allow for local economies of scale in the

maintenance of specialist skills and knowledge, but it is considered essential that there is a clear understanding within authorities that the role of specialist staff is facilitative, and the success of both civil contingencies planning and action during and after an incident is dependent on the input of a far wider range of staff than those leading on civil contingencies.

**ii) Funding** - Local authority funding, identified by central government for civil contingencies, has been passed on, with an agreed split between the EPU and local authority based teams. However the report draws attention to the following:

- Longer-term sustainability of the EPU is hindered by its funding arrangements which are based on annual allocations. There is no medium to longer-term business and financial plan for the EPU, for example a three year horizon. While such plans could be developed, the funding being agreed annually is a limiting factor to plan further ahead.
- Uncertainty on funding has a knock on effect on recruitment and retention of EPU staff.

This situation has arisen due to the structure of funding arrangements, and the recent move from Civil Defence Grant funding to mainstream Revenue Support Grant. However the constituent local authorities operate medium-term financial planning arrangements; and the Audit Commission/PWC consider that a longer-term commitment to EPU funding would enhance the robustness of joint preparedness. The report recommends that the five local authorities which fund the Emergency Planning Unit should provide it with an indicative three year budget allocation.

**iii) Role of Members** – it is felt the role of members within the formal civil contingencies structure is limited. Members are involved at individual authority level and should receive feedback on the activities at LRF level. The report goes on to say that Members' roles as community representatives and in providing effective scrutiny and overview of this important and sensitive area could be further developed. This could include more regular briefings, awareness raising, and the delivery of appropriate training.

4.2 An Action Plan detailing all twelve recommendations and the proposed response to these is attached as **Appendix 2** to the Audit Report.

**5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The report highlights the fact that the Authority is making good progress in implementing the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act.
- 5.2 The significant role that this Authority has played in establishing a robust, clearly defined LRF framework on behalf of all local Category 1 and Category 2 Responders in the Northumbria area should be noted.
- 5.3 Further, the report underlines the important role of the EPU in enhancing the robustness of joint preparedness; and also recognises the important role of elected members in civil contingencies work.
- 5.4 Discussions are currently taking place regarding the development of work required to fulfil these recommendations, and members will be informed of progress in due course

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Authority is requested to:
    - a) Endorse this report
    - b) Receive further reports as appropriate
- 

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- 'Responding to the Civil Contingencies Act - Tyne and Wear Locality' – Joint report of the Audit Commission and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Performance Summary Report

October 2006



PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS 

# Responding to the Civil Contingencies Act

**Tyne & Wear locality**

**Audit 2005/2006**



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## Introduction

- 1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the Act) aims to deliver a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century. Although the Act was a direct response to the fuel crisis and severe flooding in 2000 and the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001, it has wider significance, particularly following the terrorist attacks on London in July 2005 and the current fears surrounding a potential pandemic flu outbreak.
- 2 Although national preparations are needed, the Act also places great emphasis on local preparedness, highlighting a range of category one responders (emergency services including police and fire, local authorities, health bodies and government agencies) and category two responders (including utilities and transport bodies). Part I of the Act relates to local arrangements for civil protection, and the subject of this audit review. Part II of the Act relates to the use of emergency powers by central government.
- 3 Part I of the Act is underpinned by regulations and statutory and non-statutory guidance. Integrated emergency management comprises anticipation, assessment, prevention, preparation, response and recovery. Emergency Preparedness is statutory guidance in respect of the first four activities, whereas Emergency Response and Recovery is non-statutory guidance covering the final two activities.
- 4 Most of the duties in Part I of the Act came into force from 14 November 2005. The duty on local authorities to provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations in respect of business continuity did not come fully into force until May 2006.

## Background

- 5 The main duties on category 1 responders (including this Authority), are set out in *Civil Contingencies Act 2004: A Short Guide (Revised October 2005)*:
  - co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency;
  - share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
  - assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
  - put in place emergency plans;
  - put in place business continuity management arrangements;
  - put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency; and
  - provide advice and assistance to business and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only).

- 6 A network of forums have been created to support local and regional resilience. The Local Resilience Forum covers both the Tyne and Wear locality and Northumberland, this work only focuses on the Tyne and Wear area (see Appendix 1). The Emergency Planning Unit (EPU), situated within Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority, is jointly funded by the local authorities and works closely with lead officers in each of the five principal authorities.

## Audit approach

- 7 The aim of this review is to assess the response of individual Tyne and Wear Authorities to the Act and the level of preparedness in meeting the requirements of the Act. This is a dynamic field of work, with many agencies continuing to develop their response individually and collectively.
- 8 The report is a cross cutting strategic, overview of arrangements within Tyne and Wear, with an initial focus on the preparedness of local authorities, police and fire. This is particularly important given the importance of co-operation between Authorities, the joint emergency planning arrangements in place for the Tyne and Wear metropolitan district councils, and the role of the Local Resilience Forum (the LRF) which covers Northumberland as well as Tyne and Wear.
- 9 The approach undertaken was based upon Chapter 13 of *Emergency Preparedness*, the statutory guidance, which includes a self assessment diagnostic to assess the level of preparedness. In addition, a more detailed diagnostic has been developed by the Audit Commission, for use by local authorities.
- 10 The starting point for this review was a series of self assessments from each of the principal authorities. These were used as a baseline, to identify key issues and was followed up by:
  - structured interviews with key officers; and
  - examination of key supporting documentation and plans.
- 11 The following authorities have participated in this review:
  - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority;
  - Northumbria Police;
  - City of Sunderland Council;
  - Newcastle City Council;
  - Gateshead Council;
  - Gateshead Primary Care Trust;
  - South Tyneside Council; and
  - North Tyneside Council.
- 12 This is a joint piece of audit work with the Audit Commission and PricewaterhouseCoopers, who are the appointed auditors for South Tyneside Council and North Tyneside Council.

## Main conclusions

- 13 Considerable progress has been made by the agencies involved in developing a Tyne and Wear response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The new structures for civil contingencies have built on long standing local emergency planning arrangements, experience and co-operation. This has enabled a relatively smooth transition to the new arrangements under the Act. However, there is no room for complacency, as the Act has wide ranging implications and much work still needs to be completed.

### Co-operation

- 14 The long established structures, pre-dating the Act, have underpinned good working relationships between all the key partners on a joint and bilateral basis. The LRF is in place, bringing together representatives of all the key agencies and is supported by a clear sub working group framework. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and set out in the LRF handbook.
- 15 There is limited capacity in terms of dedicated resources and staffing available for civil contingencies preparation. The local authority funding, identified by central government for civil contingencies, has been passed on, with an agreed split between the EPU and local authority based teams. Both the EPU and the constituent authorities have a small pool of specialist staff to draw upon. The joint arrangements to support the EPU should allow for local economies of scale in the maintenance of specialist skills and knowledge. However, it is essential that there is a clear understanding within authorities that the role of specialist staff is facilitative, and the success of both civil contingencies planning and action during and after an incident is dependent on the input of a far wider range of staff than those leading on civil contingencies.
- 16 The longer-term sustainability of the EPU is hindered by its funding arrangements which are based on annual allocations. There is no medium to longer-term business and financial plan for the EPU, for example a three year horizon. While such plans could be developed, the funding being agreed annually is a limiting factor to plan further ahead. Uncertainty on funding has a knock on effect on recruitment and retention of staff. We recognise that this situation has arisen due to the structure of funding arrangements, and the recent move from Civil Defence Grant funding to mainstream Revenue Support Grant. We also recognise the work done to ensure that an equitable split was achieved between the EPU and local authorities, and that this was viewed as the start of discussions over medium term funding. The constituent local authorities operate medium-term financial planning. Longer-term commitment to EPU funding would enhance the robustness of joint preparedness, and now that the funding arrangements have been clarified there is a good opportunity to move to a similar time horizon for the EPU.

- 17 The financial arrangements and the service level agreement for the EPU with the local authorities, have not been fully integrated. A service level agreement defining the roles of the EPU and the local authorities has been prepared but does not clearly link these to the agreed division of the funding stream (60:40). The service level agreement for the EPU would be strengthened by the allocation of estimated costs and funding, to the agreed division of roles and responsibility set out in the service level agreement. This would make clearer the impact of any future changes in funding levels.
- 18 The role of Members within the formal civil contingencies structure is limited. The LRF and related groups are officer based, in line with national guidance. Members are involved at individual authority level and should receive feedback on the activities at LRF level. Members' roles as community representatives and in providing effective scrutiny and overview of this important and sensitive area could be further developed. This could include more regular briefings, awareness raising, and the delivery of appropriate training.
- 19 There is a lack of clear success criteria in terms of community resilience. The current monitoring of progress against the requirements in the Act is process and milestone based. In the longer-term, the development of more defined outcome based measures is required, to help assess the effectiveness of arrangements, for example, in relation to promoting business continuity planning and public awareness. Development of outcome measures in this area is a national as well as local challenge. There are agencies that have experience of similar objectives around influencing third parties, for example, for public health and community safety. Drawing upon this experience may help to shape clearer success criteria to facilitate improved performance management.

**Recommendations**

*R1 The five local authorities which fund the Emergency Planning Unit should provide it with an indicative three year budget allocation, so as to enable the development of a medium term service and financial plan for the EPU. This would put the joint arrangements on a more sustainable footing.*

*R2 The service level agreement for the EPU should contain an allocation of the estimated costs to the agreed division of responsibilities.*

*R3 The role of Members in relation to civil contingencies should be further developed through more regular briefings, awareness raising, and the delivery of appropriate training.*

*R4 Success criteria related to outcomes should be developed for civil contingencies, so as to enable more effective performance monitoring.*

### Information sharing

- 20 All partners report that information sharing is well established and there is a good record of sharing information and local liaison arrangements. There have been no formal requests for information which suggests the informal agreements are effective. The statutory guidance has been used to inform arrangements but there is no formal protocol to underpin this.
- 21 There remain some hindrances to information exchanges within individual authorities, for example on information on at risk groups and consistency of approach to fully resolve.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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<i>R5 A formal information sharing protocol should be adopted.</i>
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### Risk assessment

- 22 The LRF complied with the national deadlines for the publication of a community risk register in November 2005. The generic nature of the published community risk register reduces its potential impact on the general public and other stakeholders. Further work is ongoing, at LRF and local authority level, on customising the risk register. The community risk register has been used by the key partners within the LRF to inform their own and joint planning. To ensure it has a wider impact and community preparedness is therefore enhanced, further work on making it more accessible to local communities is required.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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<i>R6 The Community Risk Register should be made more accessible to local businesses, communities and the general public, by linking the identified, published risks more clearly to local circumstances. Improved clarity on the issues facing the area will contribute to raising awareness on civil contingencies.</i>
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### Emergency Planning

- 23 An assessment of the validity and robustness of individual major incident plans is outside the scope of this overview. However, there are regular exercises, and associated training programmes and debriefs are in place to test and refine these plans. The EPU has helped coordinate the approach to emergency planning, which has facilitated a consistent approach across the locality.

- 24 Post incident or recovery arrangements are in place but less well developed. Major incidents elsewhere in the country, for example, the Carlisle flooding, have shown the potential for long-term impact on local communities. Greater emphasis on the recovery phase of incident management in future planning and training would help raise awareness, in particular for the local authorities, housing and voluntary sector, that are most likely to be involved.

**Recommendation**

*R7 The recovery or post incident phase should be given greater emphasis in major incident plans.*

**Internal Business Continuity Management**

- 25 The development of effective internal business continuity management plans is the responsibility of each individual authority. The effectiveness of the individual authorities' arrangements for business continuity, has not been assessed in detail in this overview. It is clear that some authorities business continuity arrangements are at a more advanced stage of development than others, and a number of authorities have identified the need for more formal arrangements to be put in place. The self assessment checklists provided should assist the agencies in ensuring they have robust arrangements in place.

**Recommendation**

*R8 Each individual authority should see through its plans to develop business continuity arrangements, and in particular, test the arrangements to ensure that they will be sufficiently robust if called upon in practice.*

**Communicating with the public**

- 26 The approach to public communication is mainly internet based which reduces impact, as many communities have limited access. At individual authority levels, there are a range of communication tools, forums and links to the various communities, which are being utilised. The need to build up public communication has been recognised, and a new LRF sub group on communications with the public, drawing in public relations professionals, was recently created.
- 27 Engagement with key groups could be strengthened; this should include vulnerable individuals, ethnic minorities and large student populations within Tyne and Wear. These represent an important 'at risk group' which can be isolated from traditional local authority communications.



<b>Recommendations</b>	
R9	<i>Civil contingency communication with all the communities in Tyne and Wear, should move beyond predominately web based media, taking into account the limited access many groups still have to the internet. The new LRF sub-group on communicating with the public should be well placed to further develop a common approach.</i>
R10	<i>Strategies should be developed to engage key groups in the community to ensure that they are effectively covered for civil contingencies.</i>

**Promotion of business continuity management planning in the private and voluntary sectors**

- 28 This is a new duty under the Act and a joint strategy has been put into place, for delivery through existing providers and support mechanisms for businesses and voluntary groups. This is expected to be a long term educational process, as local research has indicated generally low awareness in the business sector.
- 29 There is currently limited formal involvement by business sector representatives. There have been a number of well attended seminars and events, for example the BCM conference at the SAGE in 2005 at which there has been consultation and advice provided. However, there has been limited direct input or representation by the business sector in the various planning groups. Greater business involvement is more likely to encourage ownership of the business continuity management agenda.
- 30 There is potential to make greater use of the supplier chains within individual authorities. These conduct a significant level of procurement, as part of their own service provision. The inclusion of business continuity management requirements within contracts would directly promote BCM, as well as providing greater internal resilience for those organisations.

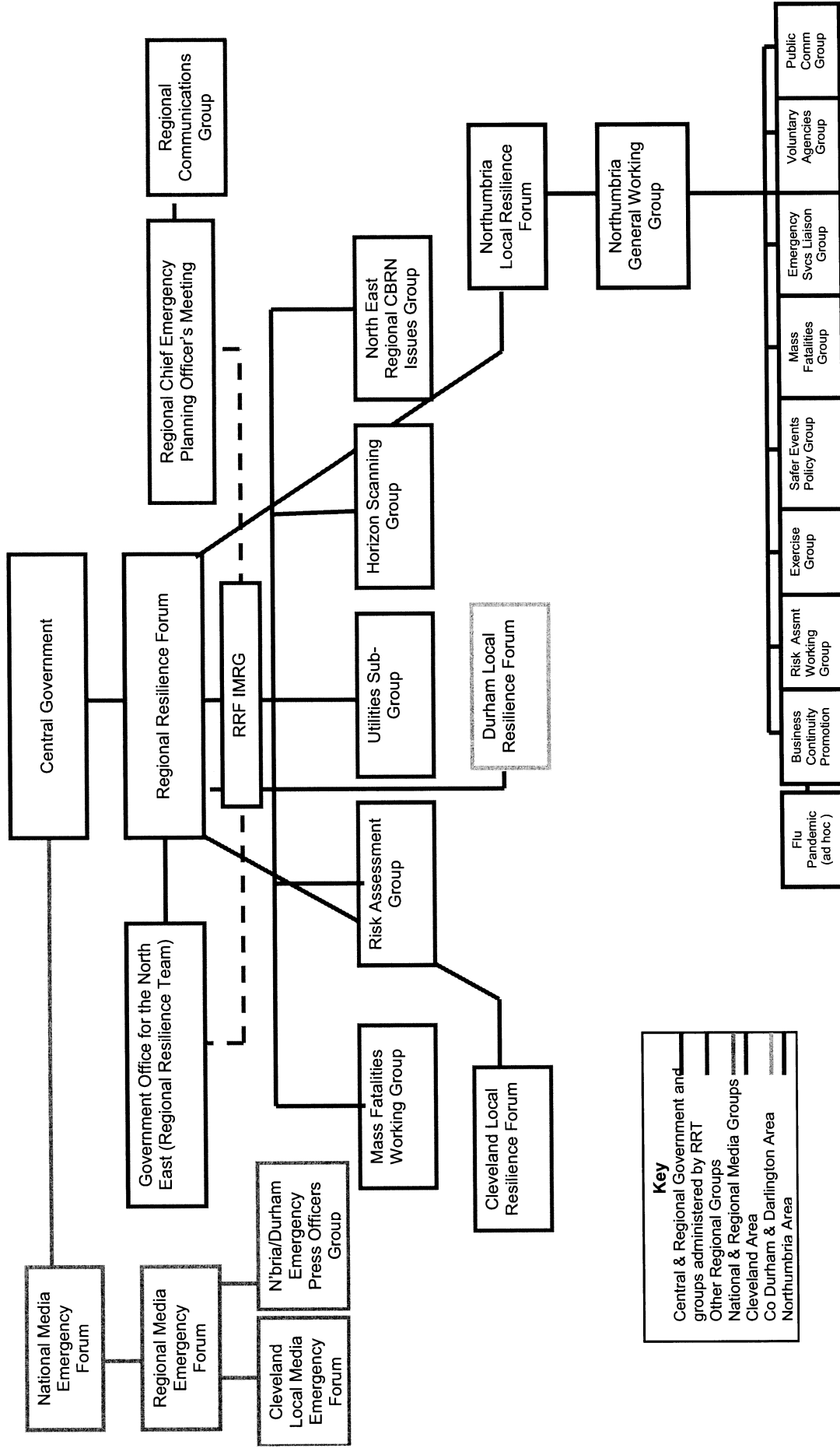
<b>Recommendations</b>	
R11	<i>The business sector should be more directly engaged in the groups tasked with coordinating the promotion of business continuity planning in the business and voluntary sector, for example formal representation on the relevant groups.</i>
R12	<i>The authorities should ensure their procurement strategies include the promotion of business continuity planning in their supplier chains.</i>

## The way forward

- 31 The authorities covered in this review are working actively to further the civil contingencies agenda, and work is already underway in a number of the areas highlighted in this report.
- 32 The achievements made so far in preparedness for civil contingencies would be further enhanced by the following key actions.
  - The five local authorities which fund the Emergency Planning Unit should provide it with an indicative three year budget allocation, so as to enable the development of a medium-term service and financial plan. This would put the joint arrangements on a more sustainable footing.
  - Members should have a greater role, at a Tyne and Wear level, in the planning for civil contingencies. This could include more regular briefings, awareness raising, and the delivery of appropriate training.
  - The Community Risk Register should be made more accessible to local businesses, communities and the general public, by linking the identified, published risks more clearly to local circumstances. Improved clarity on the issues facing the area will contribute to raising awareness on civil contingencies.
  - Civil contingency communication with all the communities in Tyne and Wear, should move beyond predominately web based media, taking into account the limited access many groups still have to the internet. The new LRF sub-group on communicating with the public should be well placed to further develop a common approach.
  - The business sector should be more directly engaged in the groups tasked with coordinating the promotion of business continuity planning in the business and voluntary sector, for example, formal representation on the relevant groups.
- 33 A meeting of all of the participating authorities in this review was held on 5 September 2006, where the report was presented and a draft action plan was discussed. Following further consultation co-ordinated by the EPU, a completed action plan has been agreed by all parties (see Appendix 2). Each participating authority will need to ensure that it addresses the elements of the action plan that are relevant to it. The action plan provides a basis for participating authorities to monitor progress, and it will also be used to follow up progress in future audit work.

## Appendix 1 – The resilience framework

- 1 The attached 'resilience framework' diagram has been reproduced with the kind permission of the Tyne & Wear Joint Emergency Planning Unit and the Government Office for the North East.
- 2 The diagram outlines the arrangements in place for resilience at various levels, central government, regional arrangements and local arrangements. In the North East there are also more detailed arrangements for the Durham LRF and Cleveland LRF. However, only the detailed arrangements for the Northumbria LRF have been included in this version of the diagram.



**Key**

- Central & Regional Government and groups administered by RRT
- Other Regional Groups
- National & Regional Media Groups
- Cleveland Area
- Co Durham & Darlington Area
- Northumbria Area

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## Appendix 2 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
	<b>Responding to the Civil Contingencies Act</b>					
7	R1 The five local authorities which fund the Emergency Planning Unit should provide it with an indicative three year budget allocation, so as to enable the development of a medium-term service and financial plan for the EPU. This would put the joint arrangements on a more sustainable footing.	3	Chief Emergency Planning Officer (CEPO)/Tyne & Wear Councils.	Yes	Incorporate into Tyne & Wear Agency Agreement.	April 2007
7	R2 The service level agreement for the EPU should contain an allocation of the estimated costs to the agreed division of responsibilities.	3	CEPO/Tyne & Wear Councils.	Yes		September 2006

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
7	R3 The role of Members in relation to civil contingencies should be further developed through more regular briefings, awareness raising, and the delivery of appropriate training.	2	All relevant authorities.	Yes	Action plans, setting out timescales, should be put in place to address Members involvement.	During 2007/08
7	R4 Success criteria related to outcomes should be developed for civil contingencies, so as to enable more effective performance monitoring.	1	CEPO has referred issue to LRF and raised nationally.	Yes	Local solution to be progressed via ad-hoc LRF sub group. National solution to be pursued. CEPO has raised the issue at the LGA Advisers Meeting and has also raised the issue with the Cabinet Office (Civil Contingencies Secretariat - CCS).	During 2007/08
8	R5 A formal information sharing protocol should be adopted.	1	CEPO has referred issue to LRF.	Yes	Via LRF General Working Group.	During 2007/08
8	R6 The Community Risk Register should be made more accessible to local businesses, communities and the general public, by linking the identified, published risks more clearly to local circumstances. Improved clarity on the issues facing the area will contribute to raising awareness on civil contingencies.	2	a) LRF RAWG for generic CRR. b) Category 1 Responders will need to address for their organisation's own individual CRR.	Yes	CEPO (as LRF General Working Group (GWG) Chair) has referred this issue to the LRF Risk Assessment Working Group (RAWG). This item has now been included into the RAWG Action Plan and will be addressed during 2007/08. Issue may also need to link to work of LRF Public Communication group. The GWG monitors progress of all LRF sub group Action Plans and will track progress.	During 2007/08

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16 Responding to the Civil Contingencies Act | Appendix 2 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
8	R7 The recovery or post incident phase should be given greater emphasis in major incident plans.	2	Relevant Category 1 Responders.	Yes	TWEPU/Councils are already addressing this; an initial workshop has been held and a draft Action Plan developed.	2007/08
9	R8 Each individual authority should see through its plans to develop business continuity arrangements, and in particular, test the arrangements to ensure that they will be sufficiently robust if called upon in practice.	3	All Category 1 Responders.	Yes	There is limited capacity in each organisation in terms of dedicated specialist staff. Their role should thus be seen as facilitative, and organisations should ensure the input of a far wider range of staff to ensure requirements are met in respect of civil contingencies preparation.	2007/08
9	R9 Civil contingency communication with all the communities in Tyne and Wear, should move beyond predominately web based media, taking into account the limited access many groups still have to the internet. The new LRF sub-group on communicating with the public should be well placed to further develop a common approach.	2	1) CEPO has referred this issue to the LRF Public Communication Group (PCG) 2) EPU/Councils	Yes	LRF PCG - item raised at the inaugural meeting of this group. Draft TWEPU report has also been issued to councils regarding local authority leaflet production. There are concerns relating to the budget availability to fulfil this recommendation.	Ongoing

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Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
9	R10 Strategies should be developed to engage key groups in the community to ensure that they are effectively covered for civil contingencies.	2	Councils/Category 1 Responders.	Yes	Harness and execute via existing council groups where possible.	2007/08
10	R11 The business sector should be more directly engaged in the groups tasked with co-ordinating the promotion of business continuity planning in the business and voluntary sector, for example formal representation on the relevant groups.	2	CEPO has referred this issue to the LRF BCMP (Business Continuity Mgt Promotion) Group.	Yes	Significant consultation already undertaken by TWEPU with the business sector during development of the LRF BCMP Strategy and awareness raising activity undertaken, for example, additional Cabinet Office funding secured by TWEPU to run two day SAGE Centre BCM Conference 2005; BCM Survey of NE Councils and Business; seminars and meetings etc. Business Link & Chamber of Commerce are now formally represented on the LRF BCMP group (chaired by TWEPU); and further representation is to be considered. Outcome of Beacon Scheme to be reviewed by BCMP Group to identify if any further best practice can be adopted. CEPO is representing LGA on new CCS-led national BCMP Practitioners group. Consultation with voluntary sector has been actively progressed via the LRF Voluntary Agencies Group, chaired by TWEPU.	2007/08

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18 Responding to the Civil Contingencies Act | Appendix 2 – Action Plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
10	R12 The authorities should ensure their procurement strategies include the promotion of business continuity planning in their supplier chains.	2	Category 1 responders.	Yes		2007/08

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No.19**

**MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

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**SUBJECT: DISPOSAL OF LAND AT HOLLIN HILL ROAD, CONCORD,  
WASHINGTON**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 To obtain approval for the disposal of the Authority's freehold interest in 0.06 hectares, or thereabouts, of land at Hollin Hill Road, Washington.

**2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 At its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2003 the Authority agreed to dispose of the freehold interest in the Fire Station at Hollin Hill Road, Concord, Washington as part of the Private Finance Initiative (P.F.I.) contract on completion of a replacement fire station.

2.2 The replacement Fire Station at Glover is now operational and the disposal of the Hollin Hill Road property is now proceeding.

2.3 The P.F.I. contract did not, however, include an area of land outside of the Fire Station boundary which is also in the Authority's ownership.

2.4 The land is of no operational benefit to the Authority, being a grassed area of land used for amenity open space purposes, and will become a long term maintenance liability.

**3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Authority is requested to:

- a) Approve the disposal of the freehold interest in 0.06 hectares, or thereabouts, of land at Hollin Hill Road, Washington, at the best consideration that can be achieved

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Report and minutes of the Authority's meeting on 10 March 2003.

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**SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE LIST FOR INFORMATION**

The following items of correspondence have been received since the last meeting of the Authority, and are not subject to a separate report. Copies are available from the Chief Fire Officer on request:

- i) FSC 65/2006 – Consultation on Future Funding of Firebuy Limited
- ii) FSC 66/2006 – Prevention Programme and the Fire and Rescue Service
- iii) FSC 67/2006 – Retained Duty System (1) Report of the September 2006 workshop and (2) Study of Local Employers
- iv) FSC 68/2006 – Notable Practice Guidance Case Studies (Batch 4)
- v) FSC 69/2006 – New Dimension Regional Team Structure 2006/07
- vi) FSC 70/2006 – Operational Assessment of Service Delivery – Next Steps
- vii) NJC 8/06 – Resolution Advisory (North Yorkshire – September and October 2006)
- viii) FSC 71/2006 – Supplementary advice on fighting fires in High Rise Buildings
- ix) FSC 72/2006 – Fire and Rescue Service National Framework – Online discussion forum
- x) FRSC 73/2006 – Disability Equality Duty

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**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MEETING: 18 DECEMBER 2006**

**SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF DRIVER TRAINING VEHICLE**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND FINANCE OFFICER**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report sets out for consideration and approval by members, a proposal to procure a driver training vehicle during 2007/2008.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The procurement of a vehicle has previously been included in the vehicle replacement programme and capital programme. However this procurement exercise was deferred pending clarification on proposed legislative changes to the specification of vehicles that can be used for carrying out driving tests for fire service drivers.
- 2.2 This legislative clarification has now been forthcoming and it is now evident that traditional fire appliances, which are currently used for fire appliance driver training, may only be used until July 2007, after which vehicles complying with the new standards must be used.
- 2.3 There are currently no vehicles within the fleet which meet the new standards, hence the requirement to purchase a new vehicle.

**3 NEW VEHICLE STANDARDS**

3.1 The new standards prescribe the following minimum criteria:

Maximum authorised mass (potential weight)	12 tonnes
Length	At least 8 metres
Width	At least 2.4 metres
Speed	Capable of at least 80 km/h
Brakes	Must have ABS
Gears	Must have gearbox with at least 8 forward ratios
Recording Equipment	Must have a Tachograph
Cargo Compartment	Must be a closed box body at least as wide and high as the cab

**4 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 It is proposed to purchase this vehicle from the 2007/2008 capital programme, however due to the build time of this vehicle, it is recommended that the tendering procedure commences immediately to ensure delivery of the vehicle by July 2007.
- 4.2 The cost of the vehicle is estimated to be between £60,000 and £65,000.
- 4.3 As a consequence of this purchase, the vehicle fleet can be reduced by one Water Tender which is currently used for driver training. This will be reflected in the revised vehicle replacement programme.

**5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Under the Prudential Code, where leasing finance is available, the Authority is obliged to undertake option appraisal to establish the method representing best value for money.
- 5.2 The additional financing costs associated with the acquisition of this vehicle will be included in the 2007/08 revenue estimates.
- 5.3 Changes to the Vehicle Replacement Programme, as detailed at paragraph 3, will be presented to the Authority as part of the Third Capital Programme Review in January 2007.

**6 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Failure to procure such a vehicle will result in the Service being unable to train and test LGV drivers from August 2007.

**7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The purchase of this driver training vehicle will ensure compliance with the requirements of the Driver Standards Agency for LGV testing.

**8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

**9 RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Authority is requested to approve:-

- a) The purchase of a driver training vehicle as outlined above
- b) The inclusion of a driver training vehicle in the vehicle replacement programme and capital programme for 2007/2008.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Driver Standards Agency – New standards for Category C vehicles
- Vehicle Replacement Programme