

12 March 2018

## **Appendix A**

### **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**

#### **LGA consultation response**

Date: 14 February 2018

#### **1. About the Local Government Association (LGA)**

- 1.1. The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government. We work with councils and fire and rescue authorities to support, promote and improve local government.
- 1.2. We are a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government. We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to local authorities so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems.
- 1.3. This paper contains the response of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee.

#### **2. The Framework**

- 2.1. We welcome assurances we have received that the IRMP remains the basis for all fire and rescue service activity and the National Framework continues to require all FRAs - regardless of governance model – to produce an IRMP setting out how each FRA will deliver its core functions.
- 2.2. We remain concerned that the apparent disparity between the expectations of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) style FRAs and other FRAs in relation to the production of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) and Fire and Rescue Plans could cause confusion. In particular the suggestion in paragraph 4.10 that the IRMP 'may also include details of how the fire and rescue service intends to meet the strategic vision set out by the fire and rescue plan' risks conflating political objectives and risk-based analysis.
- 2.3. We have concerns about both the resources and powers available to Police and Crime Panels in fulfilling their scrutiny functions in relation to an expanded remit to include fire. Any shortcomings in this respect could impact upon the preparation of the IRMP.
- 2.4. References to the Regulatory Fire Safety Order 2005 may need updating in the light of any recommendations that emerge from Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.

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We are pleased to note the Home Office's assurance that it will consider on an ongoing basis the outputs from the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety and make further changes to the Framework as required. Any Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry or Building Regulations Review related changes would be subject to further consultation.

- 2.5. The reserves strategy (paragraphs 5.5 -5.9) is a new requirement. Although the Home Office view is that FRAs which have effective arrangements in place to produce their medium-term financial plans will not find the inclusion of a reserves strategy an additional burden, as the information required for the reserves strategy is already produced by the FRA, the requirement to produce a reserves strategy is a new requirement and even if the information exists, information is not a strategy and the production of one is a new burden. This requirement therefore needs to be assessed under the new burdens protocol.
- 2.6. We note that the Home Office has undertaken to consider the section on Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) and resilience needs in the context of ongoing discussions at NJC between now and publication of the Framework and make any amendments as considered necessary. We expect to be consulted on any changes.
- 2.7. Paragraph 7.14 states that:
  - 2.7.1. Fire and rescue authorities are responsible for maintaining the robustness of the capability and, where they have an MTFA capability, must put in place arrangements to ensure their teams are fully available at all times, including periods when business continuity arrangements are in place.
- 2.8. We think this imposes an impossible burden on FRAs. In the event of industrial action MTFA capability cannot be hired in.
- 2.9. It is not clear to us what the difference is between PFCC (referred to in para 4.9 for example) and PCC FRA (paragraph 4.10). Are these not the same entity? If so it would be useful to refer to them by a single term. If not, the difference needs to be explained.
- 2.10. The requirement that 'all fire and rescue authorities must implement the standards approved through [the professional standards body]' (paragraph 6.4) is at odds with the Home office's view, stated to us previously that the PSB is something the sector has decided to do and constitutes a new burden.

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- 2.11. While we support the section on the re-engagement of senior officers (6.6 – 6.10) in principle, we are concerned about how it could interact with other requirements. Specifically, consideration needs to be given to how this approach relates to government proposals on the reform of exit payments and the ‘appointment on merit’ principles in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which would affect county services.