

## Operational Doctrine – decisions and actions required

### Actions required

1. Members are asked to note the contents of the report

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## Operational Doctrine

### Background

1. On 6 May the minister announced his decision not to create a Centre of Excellence at the current time because the outcome of the consultation was inconclusive. The functions identified for early inclusion in a Centre of Excellence in the consultation document will, for the time being, remain being delivered by their current delivery bodies i.e. Communities and Local Government or the Fire Service College.
2. However, concerns were expressed by respondents to the consultation that a key priority is operational doctrine for the FRS given that work on developing and reviewing operational guidance has been limited in recent years. Responsibility for this function has been inherited by the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's Unit (CFRAU) from HM Fire Services Inspectorate. CFRAU are urgently developing procedures, in liaison with CFOA and other stakeholders, for the production of guidance and research is already underway to prioritise work.

### Operational doctrine – proposed programme of work

3. It is considered that the CFRAU is best placed to have oversight of the production of operational doctrine at the current time. The purpose of national guidance is to provide a consistency of approach, common operational practices and facilitate interoperability between fire and rescue services. A proposed programme of work was presented to the Practitioners' Forum in April by CFRAU and received support in principle.
4. The work programme includes a research contract that has been let by CLG to identify existing guidance and to consider key areas in more detail. This research will provide an assessment of gaps and areas requiring further development.
5. A risk prioritisation exercise of the existing and outstanding operational doctrine has been undertaken resulting in a provisional list of 19 priorities. Following discussions with key stakeholders this list has now been risk assessed and revised to provide a more refined and manageable programme of work for 2008/009 – this is attached at appendix A.
6. In addition to the proposed programme of priorities, work continues on updating 39 Generic Risk Assessments – attached at appendix B. The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and his representatives are in contact with stakeholders to understand the scale of work currently underway.
7. The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser will be responsible for the programme management arrangements that will include, commissioning, quality assurance and publication. The development of each piece of doctrine would be established as a project and may involve a combination of contributors dependent on the project scope. Where possible a light touch approach will be adopted when developing doctrine with an appropriate level of consultation throughout all phases of work. There may be several options for the commissioning of work and developing operational doctrine collaboratively with key stakeholders. The

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preferred approach would be to adopt the most appropriate option based on a number of issues such as specialist knowledge, capacity, cost etc.

8. The Practitioners' Forum unanimously supported the proposed programme. CFRAU will now work up an approach to commissioning the work and agreeing the authorising environment and will bring proposals back to the Practitioners' Forum on 24 July. Alongside this, the CFOA board will continue to work through the doctrine concept and model and explore with CFRAU the commissioning and authoring of guidance and where CFOA sits.

#### Outstanding issues

9. There is some confusion about the term doctrine vis-à-vis guidance. The definition and development of the terrain of operational doctrine is still being worked on by CFRAU.
10. Whilst it is recognised that there is a pressing need to develop guidance, there are wider issues around the concept of doctrine which include risk assessment as well as a coordinated approach to training and performance assessment and also equipment and facilities.
11. The Practitioners' Forum was keen to ensure that the wider issues are mapped out to encompass the following areas;
  - The definition and concept of doctrine
  - The authorising environment and governance of doctrine
  - The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders
  - The commissioning and authorship of guidance
  - The statutory framework – e.g. impact assessments, staff consultation.
  - The resource base to produce guidance.

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