

Requirements of the National Framework 2008/11 on Regional Management Boards

NB: Requirements of the National Framework are shown in *italics*.

Chapter 1: Prevention, protection and response

Response

Fire and Rescue Authorities should review the effectiveness of “cross-border” integration arrangements with neighbouring authorities and set these out appropriately in their IRMPs. Such reviews may best be carried out jointly and Regional Management Boards provide a potential forum for this to be taken forward.

In January 2009, the response and resilience vision was agreed by the Board which deals with cross-border and interoperability issues. It is from this document that the large regional procurements of common workwear, personal protective equipment, respiratory protective equipment, and appliances was derived.

We have also been working on developing common standard operating procedures, supported by risk assessments, incident task analysis and common training packages across the region which has the potential for very large efficiency savings.

Protection and response

There is no requirement to work together in either protection or prevention. However the south east has collaborated on training for technical fire safety officers, and has shared community safety campaign material, which has generated efficiency savings.

Chapter 2: Resilience

Resilience

At the regional level Fire and Rescue Authorities should work together to ensure effective Fire and Rescue Authority representation at Regional Resilience Forums.

This rather bland requirement is being discharged. Des Prichard is the region's representative on the regional resilience forum. No outcomes are stated to meet the requirements of the framework, but it is important to note that the regional resilience forum is a key mechanism through which the fire & rescue services' views on issues like the impact of the Olympics and the availability of Airwave network capability [an item discussed at the last meeting] are raised.

RCC

Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that the local authority controlled company in their region is established by the FRAs, working through their RMB, as soon as possible, and in good time to carry out formal requirements as a good employer and to take on the lease of the building as quickly after practical completion as possible.

The LACC has been set up, but has not taken on the lease at this time. The Human Resources group and the regional project team for the FiReControl programme are working well together to ensure that the transition to the RCC is as smooth as possible.

Chapter 3: Workforce

No areas for RMBs to explicitly work together on, but the commitment of the region to improving equality and diversity performance has helped FRAs to meet higher levels of the equality framework.

Chapter 4: Governance and Improvement

Regional Management Boards must have clear aims and objectives and where needed costed plans to deliver on their core business, which includes:

- *integrating common and specialist services*

We have been looking at approaches to fire investigation as a shared-service venture led by Hampshire, and have previously reviewed the appetite for shared services more generally. The business plan agreed in April 2010 commits us to looking at shared services again, but this time it is more likely to be based on fire-specific areas of service, and on a sub-regional basis. The different governance models make looking at back-office type functions more complicated, and less likely to deliver a high return on investment.

- *introducing regional personnel and human resource functions*

We have consciously not progressed this option, for the same reasons as above. However we have developed the policy database which holds all FRA policies which anyone needing to refresh policies locally can use, rather than starting afresh.

- *developing a regional approach to training*

We reviewed training in 2006, but have not moved to a more regional model, except in discrete areas like incident command, where one FRS acts as the lead authority for the region. It is important to note though that the work to develop common operating procedures will also deliver common training packages, which will deliver a common approach to training, but is unlikely in the early stages to reduce the number of training centres.

- *introducing regional procurement within the context of the National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service.*

This is an area we have successfully delivered in, driven by the regional procurement manager. There remains work to do, but the progress so far has been significant, as are the savings generated.

...Fire and Rescue Authorities working through Regional Management Boards must review the opportunities to deliver greater efficiencies through closer joint working or sharing of functions at regional or sub-regional level and take action to implement those efficiencies.

We have actively pursued closer joint working eg in procurement. We are also committed to looking at the sharing of functions as part of the shared services work in the new business plan.

Efficiency

Fire and Rescue Authorities should continue to report efficiencies on an individual authority basis; but Communities and Local Government will also provide a facility and guidance for authorities to report collectively on efficiency savings delivered through the Regional Management Board.

We have reported cashable efficiency savings to CLG for the last two years, and also reported all savings to the improvement & efficiency partnership.