



# *A Centre of Excellence for the Fire and Rescue Service*

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Consultation





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Consultation

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# 1 Purpose of the consultation

- 1.1 This consultation seeks views on whether Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and other stakeholders want a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in England. It sets out options for the role, functions, status and governance of a CoE and associated costs and possible funding arrangements. This is a decision on which it is important that the FRS achieves consensus. A CoE will only be established if it has the support, including financial support, of the FRS and other key stakeholders. The outcome of the consultation will help to determine the level of that support and how these proposals are taken forward.

## How to respond to the consultation

- 1.2 You are invited to submit any comments or suggestions you have on these proposals by **31 January 2008**. Please e-mail them to:

christina.machado@communities.gsi.gov.uk or send them by post to:  
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Fire & Rescue Service Development Division  
Room 5B  
Allington Towers  
19 Allington Street  
London  
SW1E 5EB

A summary of responses to this consultation will be published by 30 April 2008.

## Freedom of information

- 1.3 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).
- 1.4 If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on Communities and Local Government.
- 1.5 Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.
- 1.6 This consultation confirms to the criteria set out in the Code of Practice on Written Consultations. A summary of the Code is at Annex K.

## 2 Why do we need a Centre of Excellence?

- 2.1 Across the fire and rescue service the pace and scope of change brought about by the modernisation agenda has been considerable. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are already implementing and delivering much of the improvement agenda. Significant progress has been made but it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain this level of improvement given the continuing competition for resources and the challenges which the Service faces in the future.
- 2.2 Those challenges are great. The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) will continue to operate against a background of external considerations – demographic and socio-economic change, the political landscape, technology, energy, transport, environmental and ecological changes and security threats.
- 2.3 Climate change, for example, is likely to lead to potentially more volatile and unpredictable weather patterns which will undoubtedly see the civil emergency role of the FRS evolve and enlarge in the 21st century. At the same time, the FRS is being required to work much more closely with individuals and communities to help deliver the Government's objectives for the wider well-being agenda. Its wider community safety work is expanding and increasingly it is contributing through multi-agency partnerships.
- 2.4 The Service has needed to take on a much wider Civil Emergency and Community Protection role, to meet the unpredictability in environmental, social and demographic trends. Increasing expectations of central government in terms of civil resilience and sustainability of the critical national infrastructure have also required the FRS to embrace a wider Civil Emergency role.
- 2.5 The demands now being made of the Service mean that some functions would benefit from being delivered nationally to facilitate greater consistency across the FRS, help drive up standards through the sharing of best practice, deliver economies of scale and reduce duplication of effort and expenditure. This has been achieved to a certain extent by the FRS but in the absence of a recognised legitimate and authoritative group, this has frequently been on an ad hoc basis with understandable but consequential difficulties in respect of governance, management and timely delivery.
- 2.6 Where there has been central co-ordination through a single group, there have been notable successes, for example, the Maritime Incident Response Group where there is now a more professional response to firefighting at sea. But these ad hoc arrangements have required time and effort to establish. The Service now operates in an increasingly volatile and complex environment and needs to respond with greater speed and focus making full use of its collective expertise. The creation of a central body providing a more focused, strategic co-ordinating role and enabling the Service to continue to operate effectively both now and in the future would seem to have significant merit. It could also help to streamline and reduce the cumulative burdens on FRAs.

- 2.7 Existing institutions such as the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and Regional Management Boards do not have the remit or capacity to help FRAs in the delivery of functions on a national basis. On operational doctrine, standards and codes of practice this gap potentially puts cross-border co-operation at risk and exposes the Service to legal challenge. It also limits strategic co-ordination on health and safety, diversity, leadership and development and the need for resilience.
- 2.8 In response to this the Local Government Association (LGA) and CFOA have been working with Communities and Local Government to examine whether the fire and rescue service would benefit from having access to a central resource, referred to in this document as a Centre of Excellence. A CoE could support the work of the FRS in driving forward an agenda of improvement, innovation and service delivery by providing operational and technical advice, guidance and shared practice across a range of issues in an authoritative, consistent and timely fashion.
- 2.9 A CoE would enable, facilitate, commission and deliver benefits to the FRS at local, regional and national level enabling partnership working which should lead to real improvements in service delivery, skills development within the workforce and improved value for local taxpayers.
- 2.10 It would help the FRS respond to the new approach to service delivery in the Local Government White Paper and in the LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government document *fire and rescue: a shared vision towards 2017* as well as supporting a consistent approach to implementation of the National Framework at regional and local level, through strategy development and quality assurance and support improvement and effective implementation in accordance with the National Improvement Strategy for local authorities to be published in 2008.
- 2.11 The view of the LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government is that a CoE could provide the following key benefits:
- allow the FRS to take much greater responsibility and ownership for managing the present service and to take a central role in influencing the future direction of the service as a whole
  - enable the FRS to respond to new challenges quickly and to the highest standards
  - help streamline multiple impacts of the modernisation programme on FRAs
  - help build capacity and strengthen leadership at all levels.
  - promote cost effectiveness and efficiency in delivery, and achieving economies of scale, by bringing together some activities currently undertaken in individual FRAs
  - facilitate collaborative working, dissemination of good practices and interoperability across the FRS.

and support for a CoE is also evident from the Service itself and from the wider fire industry:

"The Centre of Excellence will provide a focal point for the sharing of best practice and innovation, and a foundation for full stakeholder involvement. FPA believes this will be a vital and key component in enhancing and improving the effectiveness of our fire and rescue services."

*Jonathan O'Neill, Managing Director, Fire Protection Association*

"The Centre of Excellence will provide the expertise to coordinate the relationship between learning and leading. This will ensure our development is cost effective and consistent, providing leadership that is both innovative and inspiring."

*Darran Gunter, Chief Fire Officer, Dorset Fire & Rescue Service*

"The Centre of Excellence will provide an opportunity to consolidate and co-ordinate many national issues. The co-ordination of UK wide Health and Safety is a case in point, the Centre offers the means to enhance this very important area of FRS activity."

*Mark Smitherman, Chief Fire Officer, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service*

2.12 In order to further develop the business case on which to base decisions following consultation additional evidence is required to support the assertion that a CoE is required and the benefits which it might deliver. It would be helpful if respondees to this consultation could provide examples of areas where a CoE is needed together with both quantified and non-quantified benefits. For example what are the current arrangements, why are they not working and how would the various options for a CoE address this.

Further details supporting the case for a CoE can be found in Annex A.

## Name

2.13 Centre of Excellence is a working title. We would welcome your views on this or other possible names for a new body.

## Location

2.14 A principal physical location is desirable in order to develop a synergy and a critical mass. Accommodation is available at the FSC site in Moreton-in-Marsh and could be refurbished at modest cost. Further details can be found at Annex E.

**Q1 Do you agree that a Centre of Excellence should be established for the Fire and Rescue Service in England?**

**Q2 What evidence can you provide which would support the case for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence?**

**Q3 What would be your preferred name for the new body?**

## 3 Functions

- 3.1 A CoE has the potential to support a wide range of functions and be a body which will enable innovation, improvement, efficiency and effectiveness in delivery, building capacity in the FRS and taking forward corporate development. As well as directly delivering some work, the CoE could also be a commissioning body looking to others to also deliver work, including the private sector.
- 3.2 The functions are discussed in greater detail in Annex B but they focus around the following drivers of FRS improvement:
- **Operational and corporate development**, including organisational development, operational doctrine, equality and diversity, health and safety, fire prevention co-ordination, and technology and research
  - **Training delivery**
  - **Procurement**
  - **Resilience** including operational assurance, national procurement and contract management
- 3.3 A body which brought all these together would have the critical mass of expertise to drive forward improvement, build capacity and lead innovation, and would be able to do so with the greatest possible efficiency, drawing on synergies between its functions, networks throughout the Service and experts throughout the fire community. It would help to create the FRS of the future ready to meet the challenges the Service faces today and those that will emerge in the medium and longer term.

### Initial responsibilities

- 3.4 The earliest date on which it would be practicable to establish a CoE is April 2009. At this time Firelink and FireControl will be well advanced but still far from completion. The New Dimension project will be complete but new arrangements for oversight of its maintenance (the Long Term Capability Management) will be only a year old. Similarly Firebuy's relationship with the FRS may not be fully mature.
- 3.5 The considered view is that the resilience functions and Firebuy, will not be ready to move into a CoE until the resilience projects have delivered operational regional control rooms and radio systems, and Firebuy is more mature. The risks of including them at the outset of a CoE, itself an unproven body, would be substantial.
- 3.6 We are proposing three options for the management of training delivery which are discussed in greater detail in Annex C:
- keeping training delivery in an Agency separate from a CoE
  - a partnership arrangement between an Agency and a CoE
  - integrating training delivery fully into a CoE.

3.7 Integrating training delivery in a CoE at the outset will be dependent on the outcome of a review which Communities and Local Government are currently undertaking with the Fire Service College, assisted by independent advisors, of its activities and funding requirements with the aim of establishing a sustainable financial model for the College. Communities and Local Government would wish to see this work completed before training delivery is included in a CoE. It will also be dependent on the resolution of issues to enable a CoE to be admitted to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme.

3.8 Therefore, leaving aside training, the main initial functions of a CoE could be:

- **Organisational Development**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Operational Doctrine**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Fire Prevention support**
- **Technology and Research**

3.9 The following table gives an indication of how a CoE could initially support the FRS and Communities and Local Government.

	<b>For Communities and Local Government</b>	<b>For the FRS</b>
Organisational Development	Collection and analysis of data to support validation of National Firefighter Selection	Providing advice and guidance on leadership development Providing guidance, support, maintenance and development of effective systems for recruitment, progression and development of staff Maintain and develop the Quality Assurance Framework and supporting toolkit.
Equality and Diversity	Supporting improved performance management to promote equality and setting of new local targets.	Provide support and challenge in delivering the new national Equality and Diversity Strategy Collect and disseminate good practice and develop existing networks
Operational Doctrine	Provide operational advice and guidance	Support and develop procedures in a consistent format which will promote interoperability and be recognised as notable practice

	For Communities and Local Government	For the FRS
Health and Safety	Provide advice and guidance	Provide capacity at national level to support the FRS to maintain high standards of health and safety
Fire Prevention Support		Provide guidance based on sound evidence and practice Facilitate an effective network for disseminating good practice and sharing experience and expertise
Technology and Research	Provide research to underpin implementation of policy and best practice evaluation	Commission, manage and quality assure research Co-ordinate FRA bids for participation in EU research projects Co-ordinate and disseminate FRA research

3.10 These functions are discussed further in Annex B including an indication of the staff and financial resources which might be required.

## Options for service delivery

3.11 There are three ways in which a CoE might deliver the functions:

### Direct delivery

3.12 Under this option a CoE would decide its own work programme in liaison with the FRS and Communities and Local Government. Its staff would produce all the outputs and undertake all the CoEs work, for example drafting guidance. To do this it would need to be staffed by experts from the FRS and elsewhere with appropriate support.

### Brokered delivery

3.13 Under this option a CoE would be a co-ordination body with little or no expertise of its own in operational fire matters. Other bodies such as Communities and Local Government and CFOA would specify its programme. It would commission delivery of work from FRAs and other appropriate bodies which it would then disseminate.

### Hybrid delivery

3.14 This would combine the best parts of direct delivery and brokered delivery. A CoE would have a core of staff made up of experts from the FRS and from Communities and Local Government. It would formulate its own work programme in liaison with other bodies including Communities and Local Government, FRAs and CFOA. Some work would be directly delivered by a CoE through in-house experts and some would be commissioned from FRAs or other sources.

3.15 These models are discussed in greater detail in Annex D. None of these options can apply to a joint committee governance arrangement, which could not employ staff and therefore deliver functions itself.

***Q4 Which of these functions would you like for a Centre of Excellence to deliver and are there any others which should be included?***

***Q5 What do you think will be the impact on equality, highlighting any risks and opportunities?***

***Q6 Which model for training delivery do you prefer?***

***Q7 Which service delivery model do you prefer?***

## 4 Governance arrangements

- 4.1 A CoE would be a new national delivery body which fills an intermediate role between the FRS and Communities and Local Government. With the exception of one with Agency status it would represent a significant de facto transfer of power and responsibility from central government to the FRS and a transfer of responsibility for some operational support functions from FRAs to a central body. In particular it would make the Service responsible in practical terms for considering what support services it requires at national level and for ensuring their delivery. To function effectively it will need support and close involvement from the FRS, which will also expect influence over the new body which is commensurate with its financial contributions.
- 4.2 The right governance of a CoE is, therefore, critical to the new organisation's success. It needs to ensure FRA and stakeholder ownership and involvement, and provide a large degree of operational and policy independence, within the National Framework for the FRS. It must also provide a robust framework for delivery. Ideally it would also have the flexibility and potential to take on the further functions which may move into a CoE in the future, both from the FRS and from Communities and Local Government. Any national body though would remain ultimately accountable to Ministers.
- 4.3 After discussion with stakeholders, a number of governance options are offered for consultation:

**Option 1 – The establishment of a new Executive Agency**

**Option 2 – The establishment of a new executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)**

**Option 3 – Enhancing an existing executive Agency – the Fire Service College**

**Option 4 – Enhancing the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)**

**Option 5 – Establishing a joint committee of stakeholders**

- 4.4 The following table gives an indication of some of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options:

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Establishment of a new Executive Agency	<p>Can be set up relatively quickly by administrative action without legislation</p> <p>Entity which can employ staff, own assets and deliver functions</p>	<p>Limited role of FRS in governance</p> <p>Little power or responsibility transferred to FRS</p> <p>Complex contractual arrangements with FRAs would be needed to ensure they have appropriate control</p> <p>Chief Executive responsible to Ministers not Board</p>

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Establishment of a new executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)	<p>Chief Executive answers to Board not Ministers on policy and operations</p> <p>FRS can be on Board</p> <p>Can employ own staff</p> <p>Can own assets</p> <p>Can be funded by subscriptions or charges</p>	<p>Costly to establish</p> <p>Once established difficult to terminate</p>
Enhancing an existing executive Agency – the Fire Service College	<p>Body already in existence</p> <p>Relatively simple to extend remit</p> <p>Entity which can employ staff, own assets and deliver functions</p>	<p>Limited role of FRS in governance</p> <p>Would need significant organisational restructuring</p> <p>Chief Executive responsible to Ministers not Board</p>
Enhancing the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)	<p>Organisation already exists and could deliver functions</p>	<p>In current form does not have the capacity to deliver what is required of a CoE</p> <p>Significant change needed to structure, constitution and funding</p>
Establishing a joint committee of stakeholders	<p>Quick and easy to set up</p> <p>Involves stakeholders in a simple and transparent way</p> <p>Possible to establish a more formal Joint Committee</p>	<p>No formal organisational structure – no staff or assets – difficult to be seen as a CoE</p> <p>Can only deliver indirectly through partner organisations</p> <p>Reliant on capability and capacity of partner organisations to deliver</p>

4.5 These options are discussed in further detail in Annex E of this paper.

4.6 We would expect a CoE to involve practitioners closely in each area of its work. The intention is that it would work closely with a range of existing bodies, including Firebuy, Communities and Local Government, LGA, CFOA, FPA and the Fire Research Academy once it is established.

4.7 A CoE would need to continue to work closely with stakeholders but it is likely the way existing forums operate would need to be reviewed should a CoE be established to ensure the new arrangements operate effectively, including:

- LGA Fire Services Management Committee, Fire Forum and RMB Chairs' Group
- Ministerial Sounding Board
- Fire and Rescue Service Practitioners' Forum

- Business & Community Safety Forum
- CFOA

4.8 The CoE's primary focus will be the FRS in England. However, it will also have a strong relationship with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, supporting improvement where the devolved administrations wish to participate, such as the IPDS system. The CoE will also ensure that it draws on the best international practice and research and will foster international co-operation on fire and rescue issues.

***Q8 Which governance option do you support?***

***Q9 Are there any other options which you wish to propose?***

***Q10 Do you agree that the existing forums need to be reviewed? If so, how should they be restructured and interact with a Centre of Excellence?***

## 5 Funding

- 5.1 Whichever governance option emerges from this consultation as the preferred way forward, the success of a CoE will be very much dependent on both the commitment of the FRS to the concept and aims and crucially, for all governance options with the exception of the joint committee, on the financial contribution which they are willing to make. If appropriate in respect of the preferred governance option, Communities and Local Government are willing to fund the initial set up costs for a CoE and those aspects of its work which it considers would otherwise be the responsibility of central government to provide.
- 5.2 It will be for FRAs to decide whether they are willing to fund those functions which they wish a CoE to undertake for work falling outside of central government's contribution (see section 6). This is a decision on which it is important that the FRS achieves consensus. It may not be desirable or practical to set up a body which does not have the full support and commitment of all FRAs and FRSSs.
- 5.3 The following table provides an indication of the costs and contributions for a body delivering the full range of functions set out in Annex B.

	Communities and Local Government costs £m			FRS costs £m		
	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11
<b>Total contribution</b>	<b>1.3*</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>

\*set up costs

### Basis for allocation of costs

- 5.4 Two bases for apportioning FRS costs between FRAs have been identified and exemplified:
- equal shares for all FRAs
  - by population.
- 5.5 Equal shares would be simple, but would not make any allowance for the different amount of use made by individual FRAs or the benefits they might secure. Population is used as a simple indicator of likely levels of use and benefits. Whilst it would be possible to devise other possibly more complex options it is worth considering whether this is necessary in view of the likely relatively small level of contribution required to fund the CoE.
- 5.6 If FRAs wish the full range of functions to be carried out as described in Annex B, a financial contribution of some £50,000 per annum would be required from each FRA if costs are shared equally across all 46 FRAs (including the Isles of Scilly).
- 5.7 Funding is discussed in greater detail in Annex F.

***Q11 Would your authority be willing to contribute to funding a CoE?***

***Q12 Which of the options for allocating costs do you prefer? Is there another means of allocation which would be preferable?***

## 6 Next steps

- 6.1 If FRAs indicate in responding to this consultation that they would like a CoE to undertake work for them which they will fund, and the Government concludes that a CoE should be established for the FRS, we will write to FRAs to obtain their formal commitment before setting up the CoE. We will be seeking funding for the financial year 2009-10 with a view to establishing the CoE in 2009.
- 6.2 We will set out costed proposals for functions to be undertaken by the CoE and the contribution required from FRAs, based on responses to the consultation, including on functions and funding models. We will ask FRAs to make a three year commitment to funding those functions.

## Annex A – Why do we need a Centre of Excellence?

- A1. Across the fire and rescue service the pace and scope of change brought about by the modernisation agenda has been considerable. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are already implementing and delivering much of the improvement agenda. Significant progress has been made but it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain this level of improvement given the continuing competition for resources and the challenges which the Service faces in the future.
- A2. Those challenges are great. The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) will be operating against a background of external considerations many of which are outside of its control – demographic and socio-economic change, the political landscape, technology, energy, transport, environmental and ecological changes and terrorist threats.
- A3. Climate change, for example, is likely to lead to potentially more volatile and unpredictable weather patterns which will undoubtedly see the civil emergency role of the FRS evolve and enlarge in the 21st century. At the same time, the FRS is being required to work much more closely with communities to help deliver the Government's objectives for the wider well-being agenda. Its wider community safety work is expanding and increasingly it is contributing through multi-agency partnerships.
- A4. The Service has needed to take on a much wider Civil Emergency and Community Protection role, to meet the unpredictability in environmental, social and demographic trends. Increasing expectations of central government in terms of civil resilience and sustainability of the critical national infrastructure have also required the FRS to embrace a wider Civil Emergency role.
- A5. The demands now being made of the Service mean that some functions would benefit from being delivered nationally to facilitate greater consistency across the FRS, help drive up standards through the sharing of best practice, deliver economies of scale and reduce duplication of effort and expenditure. This has been achieved to a certain extent by the FRS but in the absence of a recognised legitimate and authoritative group, this has frequently been on an ad hoc basis with understandable but consequential difficulties in respect of governance, management and timely delivery.
- A6. Where there has been central co-ordination through a single group, there have been notable successes, for example, the Maritime Incident Response Group where there is now a more professional response to firefighting at sea. But these ad hoc arrangements have required time and effort to establish. The Service now operates in an increasingly volatile and complex environment and needs to respond with greater speed and focus making full use of its collective expertise. The creation of a central body providing a more focused, strategic co-ordinating role and enabling the Service to continue to operate effectively both now and in the future would seem to have significant merit. It could also help to streamline and reduce the cumulative burdens on FRAs.

- A7. Existing institutions such as the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and Regional Management Boards (RMBs) do not have the remit or capacity to help FRAs in the delivery of functions on a national basis. On operational doctrine, standards and codes of practice this gap potentially puts cross-border co-operation at risk and exposes the Service to legal challenge. It also limits strategic co-ordination on health and safety, diversity, leadership and development and the need for resilience.
- A8. In response to this the Local Government Association (LGA) and CFOA have been working with Communities and Local Government (including the Fire Service College) to consider alternative options for delivery of these operational functions. The work has been overseen by a Steering Group and a Project Board comprising CFOA, LGA, Communities and Local Government and Fire Service College (FSC) representatives. The options which have been considered are set out below.

## **Increased central government role**

- A9. This would build upon the current arrangements with an enhanced central government role. National control provided by a government department would have the following key advantages:
- the Government would be completely in control of the system, setting both strategic policy direction and providing advice, guidance and support as necessary to ensure consistency
  - ministers would maintain day to day contact with the FRS and, in particular, would be able to contribute effectively to the direction of travel for fire and resilience issues
  - it would in principle increase central government's levers to ensure capacity and cross departmental co-ordination, so strengthening resilience capability and interoperability between services.
- A10. But there would be a number of key disadvantages:
- most importantly, a centrally delivered system would not meet local needs. National standards of fire cover were abolished in 2003 precisely because they were inflexible and inefficient
  - central government would need to retain a larger body of staff to provide strategic direction, policy and operational guidance. This runs counter to the recommendations of the Gershon Efficiency Review which examined how the public sector could exploit opportunities for efficiency savings so that resources could be released for front-line public service delivery, and the direction of travel towards more strategic government departments, supported by delivery chains.

## Establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE)

- A11. This would see the creation of a body to sit between central government and the FRAs providing the FRS with access to a central resource which could support the work of the FRS in driving forward an agenda of improvement, innovation and service delivery by providing operational and technical advice, guidance and shared practice across a range of issues in an authoritative, consistent and timely fashion. A CoE would enable, facilitate, commission and deliver benefits to the FRS at local, regional and national level enabling partnership working which should lead to real improvements in service delivery, skills development within the workforce and improved value for local taxpayers.
- A12. A CoE could assume responsibility for a wide range of functions – supporting operational and workforce development including equality and diversity; operational and technical guidance; training and development; procurement and the maintenance and development of national resilience programmes. The body would also have a key contribution to make to national policy development and could, in time, take on responsibility for some policy areas. It would help the FRS respond to the new approach to service delivery in the Local Government White Paper and in the LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government document *fire and rescue: a shared vision towards 2017* as well as supporting a consistent approach to implementation of the National Framework at regional and local level, through strategy development and quality assurance and support improvement and effective implementation in accordance with the National Improvement Strategy for local authorities to be published in 2008.
- A13. The key advantages of a CoE are that it would:
- allow the FRS to take much greater responsibility and ownership for managing the present and to take a central role in influencing the future direction of the service as a whole
  - enable the FRS to respond to new challenges quickly and to the highest standards
  - help streamline multiple impacts of the modernisation programme on FRAs
  - help build capacity and strengthen leadership at all levels.
  - promote cost effectiveness and efficiency in delivery, and achieving economies of scale, by bringing together some activities currently undertaken in individual FRAs
  - facilitate collaborative working, dissemination of good practices and interoperability across the FRS.
- A14. The key disadvantages would be:
- perceived weakening of Ministerial control particularly on resilience
  - unless constituted with a wide remit, such a body may perpetuate a narrow fire-specific focus for its work and not develop wider collaboration across other emergency services, with local authorities and other agencies

- possibly lessening the individual capacity of FRAs by reducing their role in planning and management.

A15. Taking all of the above into account stakeholders considered that it would not be appropriate to increase central government's role and that a CoE is the way forward. A CoE would be a powerful outward facing body committed to working in partnership with others and generating a strong culture of professionalism, diversity and continuous improvement. As well as directly delivering some work, a CoE could be a commissioning body looking to others to also deliver work including FRAs, CFOA and the private sector. We believe that the earliest time at which such a body could be in place would be April 2009.

A16. The success of such a body, however, will be very much dependent on both the commitment of the FRS to the concept and aims, and crucially on the financial contribution which they are willing to make to the new body. If appropriate in respect of the preferred governance option, Communities and Local Government will fund the initial set up costs for a CoE and those aspects of its work which it considers are the responsibility of central government to provide. But it would be for FRAs to decide what functions they wish a CoE to undertake for work falling outside of central government's contribution. It would be for the FRS to fund this work.

A17. This is a decision on which it is important that consensus is achieved. It may not be desirable or practical to set up a body which does not have the full support and commitment of all FRAs.

## **What could the benefits and savings be for FRAs?**

A18. A CoE has the potential to facilitate a wide range of benefits for FRSs. Some of these benefits should be measurable in terms of savings, achieved for example by reducing duplication across authorities. The majority of the benefits though are likely to be less easily measured such as those associated with the sharing of good practice which might result in more effective practices.

A19. Savings are defined as:

- Cashable efficiencies release cash whilst maintaining outputs and allow the resources that are released to be diverted to other services or to hold down council tax increases. There is a direct financial saving or benefit with money released that can be spent elsewhere or recycled within a FRA to deliver better results.
- Non-cashable efficiency gains occur when productivity increases, either for the same resource inputs or a proportionately smaller increase in resource inputs.

A20. Initial work with a representative sample of FRAs has suggested that it will be difficult to quantify cost reductions or efficiencies in advance of the start of service delivery by a CoE, but that some savings could be expected particularly in the areas of health and safety and operational guidance.

- A21. For instance, a CoE might be able to liaise with the HSE on behalf of the service to identify emerging trends, issue health and safety guidance and share good practice, all of which is specific to the fire and rescue industry. This should reduce the need for local H&S advisors. A CoE could also influence the development of H&S legislation and Codes of practice, to ensure they take account of specific FRS issues.
- A22. A CoE could also help to reduce local and regional inconsistencies to ensure continuity across the country. For instance, national guidance produced by Communities and Local Government is routinely adapted by each FRA leading to potential inconsistencies in procedural approach between FRSs. Each FRA employs staff to carry out these adjustments. There should be scope for them to commission this work from a CoE leading to both cost savings and consistent guidance and procedures.
- A23. There might also be benefit from a CoE collating and analysing data to help identify good practice across a wide range of work. Whilst such analysis is increasingly being undertaken on a regional basis, a national approach is a logical extension and may bring added benefit both in terms of reducing duplication in carrying out the work but also in identifying regional variations.
- A24. A CoE might be able to increase the overall impetus to improve safety performance in the service nationally through better data collection and sharing, improved analysis of the data and a more structured approach to sharing safety event information in a timely fashion.
- A25. If a CoE has responsibility for the development of operational doctrine, there is a compelling case to link the development of this doctrine to a national overview of operational safety. Operational procedures play an integral part in the “Safe Person” concept, together with provision of appropriate PPE (a Firebuy issue), proper supervision (Incident Command doctrine) and appropriate training. A CoE might have a role in drawing all of this together at a national level to improve effective service delivery and firefighter safety.
- A26. Smaller FRAs may benefit from work they do not have the capacity to carry out at present, but which is routinely undertaken in larger authorities.
- A27. There is scope for a CoE to assume responsibility for certain functions currently carried out in technical services departments and HR departments across all 46 FRAs leading to potential savings within those areas.
- A28. There are also issues of a national scale which go beyond the narrow confines of the FRS and which would benefit from being co-ordinated centrally on behalf of the FRS and other stakeholders. An example of this is the current work being done on acetylene cylinders where responsibility does not sit with any one body.

## Annex B – Functions

- B1. The project established a working group to identify the functions which might go into a CoE. The working group had representatives from the LGA, CFOA, FSC and Communities and Local Government. It identified possible functions for inclusion in a CoE and evaluated these against criteria including, whether the functions would be likely to be at a point of development to be included in a CoE within the planned timetable; the strategic fit and the suitability for adoption by a CoE.
- B2. The outcome of this work is the following list of functions which are put forward for possible inclusion in a CoE:
- **Operational and corporate development**, including organisational development, operational doctrine, equality and diversity, health and safety, fire prevention co-ordination, and technology and research
  - **Training delivery**
  - **Procurement**
  - **Resilience** including operational assurance, national procurement and contract management
- B3. A body which brought all these together would have the critical mass of expertise to drive forward improvement, build capacity and lead innovation, and would be able to do so with the greatest possible efficiency, drawing on synergies between its functions, networks throughout the Service and experts throughout the fire community. It would help to create the FRS of the future ready to meet the challenges known and as yet unknown which the Service faces in the medium and longer term.
- B4. This would represent a radical simplification of the landscape compared with the range of bodies and projects currently charged with aspects of FRS improvement and development:
- Firebuy (national procurement body for the FRS, established in 2006 as a company NDPB)
  - New Dimension (national project funded and managed by Communities and Local Government for the provision and maintenance of new equipment and associated equipment, due to complete in April 2008)
  - FireLink and FireControl (national projects funded and managed by Communities and Local Government for provision of a national network of regional control centres with radio communications to every fire appliance, due to complete in 2011/12)
  - Fire Service College (national training institution, currently delivering a wide range of training to the FRS, established as an Agency and Trading Fund, and part of Communities and Local Government, which also has responsibility for delivery of the FRS Learning and Development Strategy)

- Fire Gateway (web portal established in 2006 providing fire safety information, careers information and access to local FRA services, currently managed by the FSC for the FRS)
- operational research and guidance currently provided directly by Communities and Local Government/Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser's Unit (CFRAU).

B5. This is a disparate list with status, funding, governance, capacity and stage of progress differing fundamentally for each. The path from where we are now to an eventual goal sketched above would not be simple or short, and there are important choices and risks along the way.

## The resilience projects and Firebuy

- B6. The earliest date on which we believe it would be practicable to establish a CoE is April 2009. At this time Firelink and FireControl will be well advanced but still far from completion. The New Dimension project will be complete but new arrangements for the Long Term Capability Management Board will be only a year old. Similarly arrangements for the future funding of Firebuy (yet to be decided following consultation) will be only a year old.
- B7. The considered view is that the resilience functions and Firebuy, will not be ready to move into a CoE until the resilience projects have delivered operational regional control rooms and radio systems, and Firebuy is more mature. The risks of including them at the outset of a CoE, itself an unproven body, would be substantial.
- B8. If the resilience projects and Firebuy were brought into a CoE after its initial establishment it would also bring large numbers of staff and significant funding into the organisation, completely altering its balance. This would be likely to require different skills and experience both for senior management in a CoE and for the Board. Significant restructuring might be required.
- B9. For these reasons we believe that the resilience projects should come into a CoE only when a CoE has become established and demonstrated its capability.
- B10. The criteria for bringing the resilience functions within a CoE would include:
- New Dimension, Firelink and FiReControl achieving steady state operations
  - proven capacity of a CoE/FRS, including the skills and experience to manage national functions
  - a CoE operating successfully with appropriate buy in from the FRS
  - availability of programme funding where functions would move from being funded from Communities and Local Government's administration budget to programme
  - appropriate Communities and Local Government representation on the Board to safeguard government interests.

- B11. The scope of resilience functions for inclusion in a CoE would be for decision at the time, but could range from management and maintenance of the ND, Firelink and Firecontrol contracts, procurement of replacements and new resilience equipment to taking on operational policy development.
- B12. The proposal is to establish a CoE which would deliver immediate improvement support for the FRS and form a sound basis for future development. Given the opportunities for synergy and development of a critical mass, we would want to see a CoE eventually having responsibility for a wide range of functions which it will deliver directly or commission others to deliver on its behalf.
- B13. However, as indicated previously, we do not believe the time is right for the resilience projects or procurement (Firebuy) to be brought into a CoE at its inception. Therefore, the main initial functions of a CoE could be:
- **Organisational Development** which would capture the national strategy for learning and development – leadership, performance management of staff, recruitment and assessment
  - **Equality and Diversity**
  - **Operational Doctrine** including good practice evaluation, operational manuals and technical guidance
  - **Health and Safety** including HSE liaison, risk critical information and guidance
  - **Fire Prevention support** including education programme/CFS toolbox and other guidance, good practice evaluation
  - **Technology and Research** including Fire Gateway, e-learning, the co-ordination of FRA research and good practice evaluation.
- B14. As discussed in Annex C, training delivery could also be a function of a CoE at the outset if a sustainable financial model for the FSC can be in place in time for the establishment of a CoE.

## Organisational development

- B15. The Learning and Development Strategy (LDS) has delivered processes and products that enable the FRS to carry out their employer role consistently and fairly and enable them to meet their obligations on interoperability/resilience and equality and diversity. These include Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), National Firefighter Selection (NFS), Assessment Development Centres (ADC), Quality Assurance (QA) and the Qualifications Framework (QF), and leadership development. In response to previous consultations the FRS supported the development of national processes for recruitment, progression, leadership and training and development. Communities and Local Government will have provided some £11m funding for the development of the processes by March 2008. By that date the Communities and Local Government projects that comprise the strategy will have been delivered and will be moving into business as usual.

- B16. Communities and Local Government considers that some continued funding may be required to support its own policy requirements. It is, therefore, proposing to provide funding of approximately £150,000 per year to a CoE to fund 1.5 staff at senior and middle management level for the collection and analysis of data to support the ongoing validation of the NFS and to oversee the successful implementation of the policy.
- B17. For all other areas which fall under the broad function heading of Organisational Development, including IPDS and leadership, Communities and Local Government will not be providing funding. Funding for 2008-09 is being taken forward separately
- B18. It will be for FRAs to decide what organisational development work they wish a CoE to undertake which would benefit the service as a whole by being done by the national body. In order to provide a prudent and complete costing of a CoE including ongoing support on Organisational Development, we have assumed that the FRS chooses an option at the high end of the range of possibilities. In this option the FRS as a whole would contribute some £800,000 per year, to fund approximately 10 FTE staff, ranging across senior, middle and junior management levels, and associated costs.

## Leadership development

- B19. Effective leadership is a requirement for all modern organisations and has been recognised for some time by the FRS as a particularly important requirement, given the challenges it faces, including on equality and diversity.
- B20. A CoE, building upon the work of the Centre for Leadership (CfL), could support the development of present and future leaders of the FRS, both officers and elected members, by providing FRAs and FRSs with:
- access to up to date advice and information on the best and most cost effective development in leadership available
  - guidance on what would meet their needs best
  - advice and guidance on the special requirements for leadership and leadership development in the FRS.

## Staff recruitment, progression and development

- B21. Fair and effective systems for recruitment, progression and development are vital to the development of a modern FRS, which brings together and develops the best talent within a diverse and inclusive workforce. National systems ensure high and consistent standards across the Service, effective cross border working and allow for economies of scale. As noted above Communities and Local Government will fund the completion and validation of the NFS.

B22. A CoE would be able to support the FRSs by providing future maintenance and development of the IPDS, NFS and ADC, including quality assurance and co-ordination of tests and ADCs. Similarly, with FRS commitment and funding, a CoE would be able to provide guidance and support on IPDS, ADC and NFS and continue to ensure that recruitment, progression and development frameworks are up to date with wider changes in learning and development.

## Learning and development frameworks

B23. National training, quality assurance and qualifications frameworks are essential to ensure value for money from high quality and up to date training provision, to allow cross border working and transfer between FRAs, and to promote access to nationally recognised and appropriate qualifications. Training and qualifications must also be in accordance with the IPDS framework and promote equality and diversity.

B24. A CoE would, with FRS commitment and funding, be able to maintain and develop the Quality Assurance Framework and supporting toolkit and monitor its use and application. It would also be able to provide technical support to the Vocational Standards Group to maintain the National Occupational Standards.

## Equality and diversity

B25. The FRS is committed to better reflect and engage the diverse communities it serves, and to promote equality, fairness and respect for all staff, in order to provide the highest standards of service to all. Outstanding work to promote equality and diversity across the Service and by representative bodies has recently been recognised by the Equality and Diversity Awards 2007.

B26. However progress to date, particularly on workforce diversity, has been unacceptably slow. Communities and Local Government, LGA and representative bodies are now working together to deliver a step change in FRS performance, and a national ten year Equality and Diversity Strategy for the FRS will come into effect in 2008. Given the high importance which Government places on progress in this area, Communities and Local Government is willing to provide funding of about £100,000 for two middle management posts and associated costs to support improved performance management to promote equality and setting of new local targets. A senior management post funded by the FRS would enable a CoE to undertake additional equality and diversity work for the service as a whole. We estimate this would require the FRS to collectively commit funding of around £100,000.

B27. A CoE, with FRS commitment and funding, would be able to provide support and challenge to the FRS in delivering the new national strategy. It would develop strong relationships with FRAs and RMBs, in particular providing advice and guidance on:

- equality proofing of plans, policies, procedures and practice, including IRMPs
- setting local targets and monitoring of performance
- equality and diversity in performance management of staff
- positive action to promote equality
- commissioning research to underpin future policy.

- B28. It would also collect and disseminate good practice from within the Service and elsewhere, and develop existing networks.
- B29. The team would work closely with the training delivery and IT function of a CoE, and with Communities and Local Government's equality and diversity policy team. The Communities and Local Government team would continue to work with colleagues across government to ensure the equality agenda takes account of FRS needs and to keep the FRS up to date with wider developments.

## Operational doctrine

- B30. The FRS must deliver an effective emergency response to fires and a wide range of other incidents, while protecting the health and safety of staff and minimising damage to property and the environment. Technical advice and operational manuals have in the past been provided principally by Her Majesty's Fire Services Inspectorate. CFOA has also had a role in many areas.
- B31. Public and firefighter safety requires an authoritative source of comprehensive and up to date advice and guidance. The increasing demands of cross-border working, interoperability with other emergency services and national and regional resilience make the need particularly urgent.
- B32. It is arguable whether the development of manuals and guidance is a function for central government or whether the FRS might well be expected to undertake this function for itself. However, Communities and Local Government recognise the importance of ensuring that manuals and national guidance are maintained and research is currently being undertaken in Communities and Local Government to identify the full range of extant guidance and scope the work required to bring it up to date. Subject to these findings, Communities and Local Government would provide funding of approximately £100,000 per year for the equivalent of 0.5 of an Area Manager and 1 Station Manager plus associated costs. This would enable a CoE to provide operational advice and guidance to the FRS to continuously improve its emergency response in all areas.
- B33. To meet this requirement, we expect a CoE to develop strong relationships with FRAs, RMBs and unions to enable it to:
- manage production of technical guidance and operational manuals by experts within the Service
  - validate and sign off guidance, with supporting good practice
  - collect and disseminate good practice, from within the Service and elsewhere
  - build on existing networks
  - provide guidance on health and safety
  - commission research to underpin future development.

- B34. For more locally tailored operational procedures (derived from national guidance), it will be for individual FRAs to decide what aspects they wish a CoE to undertake on their behalf. We estimate that the FRS as a whole would need to contribute in the region of £400,000 per year to fund the equivalent of 0.5 of an Area Manager, 4 Station Managers and a middle manager plus associated costs, so enabling a CoE to fully support and develop procedures in a consistent format which will promote interoperability and be recognised as notable practice.
- B35. The FRS will, of course, need confidence that the guidance produced for them by the CoE is fit for purpose. This may be through satisfying itself that the CoE has the appropriate quality control procedures in place. The Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser's Unit (CFRAU) could have a key part in providing this assurance through a quality assurance role for the guidance developed.

## Health and safety

- B36. Firefighter safety and the general health and safety of FRS staff are of paramount importance to Communities and Local Government. Historically, HMFSI undertook a role in taking an overview on operational health and safety matters in the FRS in England. CFRAU has now taken over the responsibility for much of this health and safety work.
- B37. Current arrangements provide limited capacity to move the agenda forward, and we consider that there is a need to provide coordination of FRS health and safety nationally. A CoE would be well placed to take an overview of safety events occurring around the country and analyse safety event data to identify trends. This work will feed into the development of operational doctrine and also be used to alert services to significant safety issues which might affect them.
- B38. Whilst this has been done to a degree by Communities and Local Government and predecessor departments, it is arguable that this is not a function for central government and one that the FRS might well be expected to undertake for itself. However, Communities and Local Government recognise the importance of maintaining a certain level of health & safety advice and guidance and are, therefore, proposing to provide funding of around £100,000 per year for a senior manager plus associated costs to a CoE for the provision of health & safety advice. It will be for FRAs collectively to decide whether they wish to also support a CoE to undertake health & safety work on their behalf. We estimate that the FRS as a whole would also need to contribute around £100,000 per year to fund the equivalent of a senior manager post plus associated costs so enabling a CoE to fully support this area of work.
- B39. With this support the CoE would be able to provide capacity at national level to support the Service to maintain high standards of health and safety. In particular it would:
- examine overall trends for accidents and other statistics
  - bring together relevant stakeholders to discuss collective action
  - be a central point for the dissemination of safety critical information (Significant Safety Events)

- development of health and safety documents such as incident/risk specific Generic Risk Assessments (GRAs)
- liaise with HSE at working level, including on potential enforcement action.

B40. CFRAU would continue to act as independent adviser to the HSE and Ministers on health and safety policy issues. Strategic direction would continue to be provided by the National Health and Safety Group. CFRAU would also maintain close links with a CoE on health and safety issues in general. Further details about the role of CFRAU can be found at Annex J.

## Fire Prevention Support

B41. Fire prevention, including community fire safety, non-domestic fire safety and arson control, the RRO, and wider community engagement is central to the work of the FRS. Guidance and advice to the FRS on fire prevention and community engagement has in the past been provided from a range of sources, including:

- the relevant policy teams and the National Community Fire Safety Centre (now closed) within Communities and Local Government.
- the Arson Control Forum and the BCSF
- the CFOA Fire Safety Committee.

B42. The Communities and Local Government fire prevention team is also currently responsible for national media campaigns (under the brand Fire Kills) and supporting work, including:

- targeted and tactical campaigns (deaf awareness week, child safety week, festivals such as Diwali and others)
- provision of leaflets and other supporting material for campaigns
- maintaining the Fire Kills website
- PR and sponsorship, especially the Partners in Fire Prevention programme.

B43. The Communities and Local Government team will continue to work with colleagues across government to promote the fire prevention agenda and to keep the FRS up to date with wider developments.

B44. The FRS has long felt need for a stronger central source of authoritative help and advice, including guidance based on sound evidence and practice, and an effective network for disseminating good practice and sharing experience and expertise, both from the UK FRS, internationally and other sectors. A CoE is ideally placed to provide such a role but it will be for individual FRAs to decide what aspects they wish a CoE to undertake on their behalf. We estimate that the FRS as a whole would need to contribute around £100,000 per year to fund the equivalent of a senior manager post plus associated costs. A CoE would need to develop strong relationships with FRAs and RMBs. In particular it would:

- manage production of further guidance
- validate guidance and good practice
- provide advice on the development of local initiatives
- collect and disseminate good practice, including on evaluation and targeting, from within the Service and elsewhere
- commission research to underpin future development
- build on existing networks.

## Technology and research

B45. Currently technology and research resources for the FRS are widely distributed, in FRAs, CFOA, Communities and Local Government, the fire industry and elsewhere.

## Fire Gateway and e-learning

B46. The Fire Gateway, launched in 2006, is a web portal for the public, business and care professionals providing fire safety information, careers information and access to local services, such as the ability to make online requests for Home Fire Risk Assessment. FSC took on responsibility for Fire Gateway from Greater Manchester FRS in April 2007. Maintenance and hosting of the portal is provided under contracts managed by the FSC under the supervision of a committee chaired by the LGA. Communities and Local Government funded the central support team until July 2007 and will fund the hosting until 2009/10. FRAs have paid a subscription of £5,000 pa to cover support costs from July 2007 to March 2008. Discussions are ongoing on the options for continuing support and funding by subscription for 2008-09. Running costs in subsequent years will depend on the approach taken to ongoing hosting and support of the system but are currently estimated in the region of £10,000 per FRA in England which includes funding for 2 staff.

B47. The Fire Gateway will be compatible with the Managed Learning System and has potential for much wider development. For example it could support external and FRS users by expanding its guidance for the public, providing new services such as online recruitment, and supporting collaboration at regional and national level through its secure support systems and providing a delivery mechanism for other proposed CoE functions such as operational doctrine and guidance. We are, therefore, proposing to incorporate the Fire Gateway and its funding within a CoE, with continuing stakeholder engagement through the governance of a CoE.

## Managed Learning System (e-Learning)

B48. The Managed Learning System (also known as e-learning) is currently under procurement by FSC under the Learning and Development Strategy. The new system will provide distance learning, individual and collective training needs analysis and supporting doctrine and guidance accessible from home or workplace. This is essential to meet the needs of a diverse workforce and in particular to support the learning of staff on the retained duty system.

B49. The Managed Learning System will support virtual elements of all CoE components, including research, leadership and maintenance of national role-maps, but will also be available for use by FRSs to meet their own learning management and delivery requirements. Project funding already provided by Communities and Local Government will fund the maintenance of the project for 2008-09 and 2009-10. We estimate the FRS as a whole would need to provide funding support of about £100,000 to cover ongoing costs.

## Research

B50. A very wide range of research is carried out within the wider fire community, including testing and development of equipment (technical services), systems and products, collection and validation of evidence on good practice, economic analysis, management research, statistical research and fire investigation research. FRAs, the fire industry, Communities and Local Government, the Forensic Science Service, universities and CFOA have all contributed but there is a need for a much stronger focus of effort in order to make the best use of scarce resources and to drive innovation and improvement.

B51. Some progress has already been made towards this aim. Firebuy is increasingly taking on the technical services role of testing of equipment and products, which was formerly undertaken by FRAs. The Fire Research Academy to be established shortly in interim format under the auspices of a host organisation located on the FSC site at Moreton will provide a focus for greater collaboration on fire and resilience related research across all sectors. FRAs, the fire industry, government, universities and CFOA all have their own research requirements, and the Academy will produce a national strategy for fire and resilience related research, which will provide a coherent focus for all sectors, encourage collaboration, identify gaps and make the best use of scarce resources at Moreton,

B52. Communities and Local Government are proposing to fund the transfer of five staff from the Communities and Local Government research team to a CoE at a cost of around £300,000. The intention is that the corresponding programme budget to fund research would be transferred to a CoE. This team of people would provide:

- research to underpin implementation,
- best practice evaluation; and
- provide research capacity to support other CoE work.

B53. Communities and Local Government would also maintain a headquarters research capability to provide evidence to underpin strategic policy making.

B54. The following table summarises the overall staffing levels which may be applicable for a CoE to be able to provide support to the FRS across the functions outlined above.

	<b>Number of staff funded by Communities and Local Government</b>	<b>Number of staff funded by the FRS</b>
Organisational Development	1.5	10.0
Equality and Diversity	2.0	1.0
Operational Doctrine	1.5	5.5
Health & Safety	1.0	1.0
Fire Prevention support		1.0
Technology and Research	5.0	2.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>20.5</b>

## Chief Executive and Board

B55. We are proposing that Communities and Local Government and the FRS should share the costs of the Chief Executive and the Board on a shared 50/50 basis as they will lead on both Communities and Local Government and FRS functions. We estimate that a funding contribution of around £100,000 each will be required from both the Communities and Local Government and the FRS.

## Annex C – Training Delivery

- C1. The principal business and statutory purpose of the Fire Service College is the delivery of education and training to the FRS in England.
- C2. The College also currently hosts and manages a number of projects to develop leadership and systems for recruiting and assessing staff, assuring the quality of training and establishing suitable qualifications under the Learning and Development Strategy on behalf of Communities and Local Government. It is proposed to incorporate these functions in a CoE. This annex, therefore, deals only with training delivery at the College and its future relationship to a CoE.
- C3. The FSC is a Trading Fund and Executive Agency of Communities and Local Government. It accounts separately for its assets including a 220 ha site, buildings, vehicles and other operational equipment. It is financed by charging FRAs and wider market customers for training and other products, together with loans and capital funding from Communities and Local Government, and charges to FRAs for training and other products. The value of its net assets stated in its 2006/7 accounts is £48m.
- C4. The current trading fund model has not been conducive to the achievement of the FSC's financial objectives. It is funded by a combination of selling places on its courses to FRSs and others for training, and capital funding and loans from CLG. It has an incident ground which is unique in size and scope, as well as some dated facilities, which are expensive to maintain.
- C5. Substantial capital investment by Communities and Local Government since 2003 has funded the development of new training facilities and student accommodation and significant improvements in efficiency and effectiveness have been made by College management in recent years. The College has adopted a more customer focused delivery model, resulting in an improving financial position. However, with its performance as a Trading Fund since 1992 leaving the College unable to improve and update the site, many of its facilities still fall short of the standard expected by users and required by its role. This has resulted in a backlog of capital development that the College is not able to fund from its training activities. There would be significant financial risk to a CoE if the College were incorporated under current arrangements.
- C6. Communities and Local Government are currently carrying out a review with the College, assisted by independent advisors, of its activities and funding requirements with the aim of establishing a sustainable financial model for the College. This work will include clarifying:
  - the facilities and training which Communities and Local Government would be prepared to fund on the basis that there is a national policy requirement which cannot be met in any other way
  - what further training it might make sense for FRAs to buy from the College because national provision could ensure economies of scale and consistency in content and quality
  - the scope to increase income and reduce costs to Communities and Local Government and FRAs by providing training and facilities to customers other than the FRS in England.

- C7. This work will form the basis of decisions on a new financial model which balances income, from all sources including central government, FRAs and other stakeholders and expenditure including on capital maintenance and refresh based on realistic forecasts.
- C8. Communities and Local Government would wish to see this work completed before training delivery is included in a CoE. It is hoped that it will be complete by spring 2008, with a view to making proposals on any necessary changes on future funding to FRAs in 2008 to start by spring 2009.
- C9. We are therefore proposing three options for the management of training delivery in the CoE:
  - A) keeping training delivery in an Agency separate from a CoE
  - B) a partnership arrangement between the Agency and a CoE
  - C) integrating training delivery into a CoE

### Option A

- C10. Under this option the delivery of training and related services to customers beyond the FRS in England would remain in the current FSC Trading Fund Agency. The Learning and Development Strategy projects would be transferred to a CoE. The location of training delivery could be reviewed if it is decided to set up a statutory NDPB. The principal benefit of this approach is that it will allow any new funding model to be proved before having it brought into a CoE, keeping financial risks separate to those of a CoE. The downside is that training development and delivery, with its clear links to operational development, operational doctrine etc will remain outside a CoE, with separate governance arrangements, and the synergies between both organisations may not be fully exploited.

### Option B

- C11. Under this option, as in option A, the delivery of training and related services to customers beyond the FRS in England would remain in the current FSC Trading Fund Agency. Organisational development would be transferred to a CoE. However, strong links would be established between the two organisations. They could either share the same Chief Executive or if each had separate Chief Executives they would each sit on the Boards of both bodies to allow close interaction. They would also share common support functions such as HR, Finance and Estates, with these functions residing in one body for management purposes and being bought in by the other.
- C12. This option would enable the financial risks to remain outside a CoE, whilst forming strong links between the bodies. However, the arrangements would fall short of establishing a single entity and training development and delivery would remain outside a CoE, and the synergies between both organisations may not be fully exploited.

## Option C

- C13. This option would involve winding up the current Trading Fund Agency and transferring all the work currently undertaken by the FSC into a CoE on its establishment. It would require a sustainable financial model to be in place in time to make arrangements to include the functions in a CoE when it is established. It will also be dependent on the resolution of issues to enable a CoE to be admitted to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme.
- C14. This option would mean that the major delivery support functions would be located and governed in a single body. But a CoE would face a financial risk from taking on an unproven financial model for training delivery. It would though potentially give the FRS, through a CoE Board, greater control of training delivery and the opportunity to steer this to complement training from other sources and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of overall training delivery to the FRS.
- C15. We believe that all three options are deliverable by spring 2009, the proposed start date for a CoE. If it proves impossible to develop and agree a sustainable financial model by then, it would be likely to be necessary to postpone inclusion of training delivery in a CoE.

## **Annex D – Service Delivery**

- D1. The concept of a CoE is that it will do things on a national basis which would otherwise be done by Communities and Local Government or by FRAs. The “doing” will have two elements. Firstly, it will involve identifying what is needed in terms of outputs – this is a thinking/analysis activity which will also be informed by input from various fire fora. The second element is the delivery of whatever outputs are required, for example, guidance.
- D2. One option examined is for a CoE to be a relatively small body with primarily a co-ordination function and little or no expertise in FRS service delivery as this would be provided by FRAs. The identification of required outputs would be made by existing fora and the outputs would be commissioned from FRAs or procured as appropriate. Another option is for a CoE to be staffed by FRS experts who would both specify and deliver outputs. Other options combining different elements of those above may be possible but difficulties may arise in planning and making sure resources in a CoE are used efficiently and effectively.

### **Identification of outputs**

- D3. To manage its operations a CoE would need to identify its business deliverables. This is likely to need to be informed by some analysis and research in order to prioritise work, including assessment of costs and benefits and to adequately specify outputs.
- D4. Three options are examined here.

### **Option 1 – FRS and other experts in CoE identify required outputs**

- D5. This would need to be undertaken by a group of people who collectively had a substantial expertise in the full range of FRS delivery and development requirements with analytical/research capability in support. These experts and analysts would form the core of a CoE. This would have the benefit of the business and the FRS improvement agenda being driven by a CoE rather than being reliant on others (FRAs/CFOA etc) to identify what a CoE should be doing. It is also likely to facilitate common standards and approach in analysing needs and prioritisation and would establish a core of expertise. It would though generate significant running costs and there could be issues about staff maintaining operational experience. This might be overcome by making relatively short term secondments from the FRS.

### **Option 2 – Outputs specified by FRAs/CFOA/Communities and Local Government**

- D6. FRAs/CFOA/Communities and Local Government would need to be responsible for identifying gaps in guidance, practices which may be worth dissemination and any other work to be undertaken by a CoE. The benefit of this is that it would reduce CoE running costs. However, work would be externally driven. This might on the one hand result in little work going to the COE to undertake or on the other work which has not been prioritised or which is insufficiently specified. This option could limit the drive for improvement to FRS delivery which would come from this work being undertaken centrally.

## Option 3 – New arrangements established for identifying required outputs

D7. This is a variation on Option 2 recognising that new arrangements, such as an extension of the responsibility of the practitioners forum, might need to be established with a specific responsibility for identifying work for a CoE and could improve the capacity for driving improvement. However, it would still leave a CoE business externally driven and not, therefore, entirely in control of its destiny.

### Delivery of Outputs

D8. Delivery of outputs will not only require expert knowledge of the subject area from an FRS perspective, but also wider knowledge such as legal and health and safety requirements. It is likely to require research and also drafting/presentation and communication skills, including IT based.

D9. Three options for delivery are explored below, direct delivery, delivery by a third party and a hybrid approach.

### Direct Delivery

D10. Under this model all work requiring FRS topic specific and other expertise will be contained in a CoE as far as possible, although some advice may need to be bought in where it would be uneconomic to provide internally. This would require less expertise than that for identifying work and hence would be carried out by different, less costly, staff. Additional staff would be employed with drafting/ presentation / communications skills etc to produce the outputs.

D11. The benefits would be that delivery would be in the control of a CoE providing greater certainty of achieving planned outputs. Consistency should also be improved eg in terms of style and quality. And outputs can be designed to meet the requirements of the whole FRS from the outset. It would provide greater certainty for resource and programme planning. It would provide a central source of expertise.

D12. It may though be difficult to attract the right expertise to a CoE, particularly if staff are required to serve away from their current location. This might be overcome by remote working, though this would have some disbenefits. It would also be comparatively costly in terms of CoE direct costs.

### Brokered Delivery

D13. Under this model as far as possible work would be commissioned from FRAs or other sources. The concept would be that where FRAs already have outputs of the type needed by a CoE that this would be purchased by a CoE and disseminated. Or where the outputs need tailoring for national use or new outputs are required that work would be commissioned by a CoE. In that way comparatively little capacity would be required in a CoE for producing the outputs. The risk is that outputs delivered by FRAs may not be consistent and may need considerable adaptation to ensure they meet national needs and to meet acceptable standards. Central resource would be needed for managing contracts for work and quality assuring outputs, for making the necessary changes and for production and communication. This could be comparatively inefficient.

- D14. There would be an issue about how to select the authorities to carry out the work for a CoE. It would be time consuming if bids were required for each output required and if work was spread thinly savings might not be achieved in FRAs. This may point to a small number of authorities being selected to carry out CoE delivery work. It is not clear at present whether any authorities would be willing to work on this basis or whether they would be able to deliver work for national application.
- D15. However, there are significant benefits. It would reduce the need for staff in the centre, bring current operational expertise to bear and ensure this is maintained. If all FRAs agreed which of them should do the work for a CoE it should also help ensure their buy in through either subscription or buying products. Instead of one centre of expertise developing the FRAs producing work for a CoE would become the recognised experts. It would also reduce the direct costs of a CoE, but the cost of the work undertaken by FRAs would still need to be recovered through charging/subscription. Additionally it would engage FRAs in a CoE, creating an inclusive organisation, firmly founded in the FRS.

## Hybrid Delivery

- D16. This would combine the direct delivery/brokering approach. Under this option it would be necessary to staff a CoE at a level which would assume a certain proportion of work would be delivered through brokered delivery. This would retain some expertise in a CoE, but there would be recognised centres outside a CoE. It would deliver the benefits of both the direct and brokered delivery approaches if effectively managed.

## **Annex E – Governance**

### **Criteria for governance**

- E1. A CoE would be a new national delivery body filling an intermediate role between the FRS and Communities and Local Government. With the exception of one with Agency status it will represent a significant de facto transfer of power and responsibility from central government to the FRS. In particular it will make the Service jointly responsible with Communities and Local Government in practical terms for considering what support services it requires at national level, for funding such support, and for ensuring its delivery. To function effectively it will need support and close involvement from the FRS, which will also expect influence over a new body which is commensurate with its financial contributions.
- E2. The right governance of a CoE is, therefore, critical to its success. It needs to ensure FRA and stakeholder ownership and involvement, and provide a large degree of operational and policy independence, within the National Framework for the FRS, while remaining ultimately accountable to Ministers. It must also provide a robust framework for delivery. Ideally it would also have the flexibility and potential to take on the further functions which may move into a CoE in the future, especially procurement and development of national infrastructure.

### **Options**

- E3. A number of options for governance are offered for consideration in the consultation: a joint committee, an executive Agency, an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and an enhanced CFOA. Their advantages and disadvantages are set out below.

#### **Joint committee**

- E4. An informal managing committee of stakeholders would be quick and easy to set up and involve stakeholders in a simple and transparent way. It would also be possible to establish a more formal Joint Committee of FRAs under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. But such bodies seem likely to be unsuitable vehicles for the delivery of timely and high quality support to the FRS which the CoE would aim to provide. They would be entirely dependent on the commitment, resources and capability which partner organisations could contribute, since they could deliver only indirectly through the partners. They would not have effective means to deal with failure to deliver.

#### **Executive Agency**

- E5. An Executive Agency can be set up by administrative action, without legislation. It would be an administrative arm of Communities and Local Government and its staff would be civil servants. Its Chief Executive would be responsible to Ministers, not to its Board although a non-Executive Chair could be appointed to lead and set the strategic direction for the Agency. Stakeholders may be members of an Agency Board, but the Board exists principally to advise the Chief Executive. It could be funded in part by charging FRAs for its products (as the FSC does at present) but stakeholders

would have very little formal influence on the running of an Executive Agency. Influence would be through the decision making process on whether to buy services and hence influence over the services to be provided. Such a body would transfer very little power or responsibility to the FRS.

## **Executive NDPB**

- E6. An executive NDPB could be established by Communities and Local Government but would operate at arms length from it. It would have a Chair, Board Members and Chief Executive, who are normally appointed by Ministers (but see further below on the appointments process and opportunity for stakeholder involvement). The Chief Executive would answer to the Board on its policy and operations. The NDPB would employ its own staff who would be public rather than civil servants and could own assets. It could be funded by subscriptions or charges and could also receive Grant in Aid from Government. Such a body could be established either under the Companies Act or via new primary legislation.
- E7. Ministerial appointments to the Boards of Public Bodies should be made in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice. Essentially this means that Board places must be made by open competition. Places must be advertised with person specifications, including the skills and qualities required. Applications must be made in person. Stakeholders can put forward names of persons they would like to receive information packs on the places being advertised. Stakeholders may also be represented on the panel which would be established to advise Ministers on appointments. We would propose to invite nominations for the panel from LGA, CFOA and the FPA and also to informally consult these organisations on the person specification for Board members. The Minister may also make ex-officio appointments to organisations, for example, the president of CFOA would be made an ex-officio board member.
- E8. If training delivery were not included in the initial CoE, it would be possible for a minority of non-executive Board member appointments to be made by stakeholders, rather than by the Secretary of State.

## **An enhanced Chief Fire Officers' Association**

- E9. This would require CFOA to be redefined from its current status as a professional association for principal fire officers. It would have the advantage that no new body would have to be created from scratch but clearly in its current form CFOA does not have the capacity to deliver what is required of a national improvement body. Therefore, significant change would be required not only to CFOA's structure and constitution but also to its funding.

## **Stakeholder involvement**

- E10. We would expect a CoE to involve practitioners closely in each area of its work. The intention is that it would work closely with a range of existing bodies, including Firebuy, Communities and Local Government, CFOA, LGA, FPA and the Fire Research Academy once it is established.

E11. A CoE would need to continue to work closely with stakeholders but it is likely that the way existing forums operate would need to be reviewed should a CoE be established to ensure the new arrangements operate effectively, including:

- LGA Fire Services Management Committee, Fire Forum and RMB Chairs' Group
- Ministerial Sounding Board
- Fire and Rescue Service Practitioners' Forum
- Business & Community Safety Forum
- CFOA

E12. The CoE's primary focus will be the FRS in England. However, it will also have a strong relationship with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, supporting improvement where the devolved administrations wish to participate, such as the IPDS system. The CoE will also ensure that it draws on the best international practice and research and will foster international cooperation on fire and rescue issues.

## Leadership

E13. The right Chief Executive would be central to success of a new body. He or she would need to be innovative and outward looking with the drive and credibility to secure the buy-in and support of stakeholders and to develop a CoE into a key player in the fire and rescue community. The right Chair and Board members will also be vital bringing together a range of expertise, experience and networks needed to achieve the aims of the organisation.

## Location

E14. Bringing together the functions currently located at FSC (organisational development and possibly training delivery) with staff and functions transferred from Communities and Local Government (operational doctrine, fire prevention, research, health and safety and equality and diversity) would offer opportunities for the development of synergy and a critical mass. A principal physical location is therefore desirable and is generally considered important for universities and other organisations with a goal of innovation and improvement. Accommodation is available at the FSC site in Moreton-in-Marsh and could be refurbished at modest cost.

E15. A principal initial location at Moreton also has considerable attractions for the CoE, as it would facilitate joint working with the Research Academy, the Fire Experimental Unit, the FPA and the IFE which are also located on the site. There would be some impact on staff time and running cost implications, given the distance from London. There may also be a need to consider more dispersed locations for some CoE staff in the future particularly if it were to take on a role in operational delivery, where dispersed locations are more appropriate.

## Annex F – Funding

- F1. Implementation of the proposed CoE depends both on FRA and stakeholder commitment to a CoE concept and aims, and on their financial contribution towards the running costs of the new body.
- F2. The work of a CoE will fall into two broad categories for funding: that which Communities and Local Government requires to meet central government responsibilities to develop and support national strategic policy; and work to support operations which FRAs choose a CoE to deliver on their behalf because it would benefit from being done centrally for reasons of efficiency or effectiveness.
- F3. The net additional costs of new policies, duties or expectations imposed on local authorities (including FRAs) by central government must be funded under the new burdens rules, in order to prevent pressure on council tax. Communities and Local Government will meet these requirements by funding the costs of the work it requires a CoE to carry out, including costs needed to support those functions. It will be for FRAs to decide the work they require a CoE to carry out on their behalf. Communities and Local Government will not require this work to be carried out in a CoE and it will therefore be for FRAs to decide if they wish to fund this work collectively through a CoE, including the cost of support functions.

### Communities and Local Government Funding

- F4. If appropriate in relation to the preferred governance option, Communities and Local Government are willing to meet the costs of establishing a CoE. For example, in respect of an NDPB the current cost estimates range from £480,000 to about £1.3m excluding staff costs, depending on whether the FSC, with its significant number of staff is included. Costs include:
- administrative support for setting up the new body, including any associated recruitment and sponsorship costs
  - legal advice for setting up a limited company, including drafting Memorandum and Articles of Association and addressing employment transfer issues
  - advertising for Chair, Board Members and Chief Executive including recruitment of new staff and any staff transfer or redundancy costs
  - staff accommodation requirements including refurbishment costs, furniture, IT and office equipment
- F5. Communities and Local Government will meet the running costs of the work it requires to support Organisational Development, Operational Doctrine, Health and Safety, equality and diversity and Research. Our assessment of the annual running costs of these functions is £1m in 2009–10 and 2010–11. Further details of this work and funding contribution are at Annex B.
- F6. Communities and Local Government will also contribute to the funding of the Chief Executive and their support staff and to the costs of the Board by meeting half their costs on the basis that they will lead the work required by both Communities and Local Government and FRAs.

## FRS funding

- F7. We have looked at the staffing levels and skills which might be required by a CoE to deliver functions on behalf of FRAs. Functions include Organisational Development, Operational Doctrine including notable practice, Equality and Diversity, Health & Safety, Fire Prevention Support and Technology and Research. Our assessment of the annual running costs of these functions including support costs such as HR, Finance and Accommodation and associated programme costs is £2.3m in 2009-10 and in 2010-11, if FRAs would like all those functions delivered by the CoE.
- F8. These costs might be offset to some extent by efficiency savings in FRAs. However, information from a small sample of FRAs indicates that savings might be modest and they may not be cashable. It will be for FRAs to determine what savings they might make from using a CoE.
- F9. As mentioned above Communities and Local Government are offering to fund half the cost of the Chief Executive and support staff and of the Board. The remaining half of the costs will be for FRAs to meet.
- F10. As mentioned previously, it may not be desirable or practical to set up a body which does not have the full support and commitment of all FRAs and FRSSs.

## Summary of costs

- F11. Table 1 below sets out the current estimate of funding contributions required to set up and run a CoE from Communities and Local Government and FRAs. Actual requirements will depend on decisions taken in light of the responses to consultation.

Table 1

	Communities and Local Government costs £m			FRS costs £m		
	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11
Setup & accommodation	1.3					
Chief Executive and Board		0.1	0.1		0.1	0.1
Organisational Development		0.2	0.2		0.8	0.8
Equality and Diversity		0.1	0.1		0.1	0.1
Operational Doctrine		0.1	0.1		0.4	0.4
Health and Safety		0.1	0.1		0.1	0.1
Fire Prevention co-ordination					0.1	0.1
Technology, Research and MLS		0.3	0.3		0.6	0.6
Programme costs		0.1	0.1		0.1	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>

F12. The above costs include those for Fire Gateway and Organisational Development for which a subscription will be sought from FRAs for 2008-09. The cost of a CoE's functions additional to those for Fire Gateway and Organisational Development would be about £1.1m or £24,000 per FRA on an equal subscription basis.

## Funding Options for FRS contribution

F13. We have identified two possible models for FRAs to make their contributions: subscription and a combination of subscription and charges. Both allow FRAs to decide individually whether they wish to buy into a CoE. An assessment of their advantages and disadvantages follows.

### Option 1: An organisation funded by an annual subscription from individual Fire and Rescue Authorities

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Maximises buy in from stakeholders and supports greater collaboration and hence helps achieve CoE objectives including sharing of best practice and common standards.</p> <p>Greater certainty for FRS and CoE business planning purposes – enables CoE to deliver services efficiently.</p>	<p>Authorities may choose not to contribute, reducing the benefits to them but also to other FRAs because of narrower area of activity of CoE eg reduced sharing of good practice. May increase cost burden on others.</p> <p>FRAs pay for full range of products irrespective of individual circumstances and demand.</p>

### Option 2: An organisation partially funded by FRA subscription but with some elements being offered for purchase on a product charging basis. Annex B gives some examples of services which might be funded on a charging basis

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Most flexible model from FRA perspective allowing 'opt outs' from particular functions in line with individual needs</p> <p>Discipline of market defines outputs and exercises maximum cost control.</p>	<p>Provides reduced degree of certainty for planning and governance purposes.</p> <p>Sub optimal delivery of some functions.</p> <p>Less consistency in national standards.</p> <p>Additional administration required to monitor and collect contributions.</p> <p>Reduced certainty for subscribers with possibility of additional retrospective levy if product sale budgets are not achieved to meet CoE cash flow/funding needs.</p>

## Other funding options considered

F14. With stakeholders, we have considered other potential funding models for a CoE, but these were ruled out as being either not desirable or deliverable at this time. These are set out below but are not offered for consultation.

## Top slicing

F15. An organisation funded by top slicing Local Authority allocations is not considered deliverable. It would remove flexibility by setting the budget for a CoE which might not align with its funding requirements. A top slice could also only be justified if offsetting efficiency savings could be identified. We do not have evidence of sufficient efficiency savings to justify the level of top slice that would be required to fund a CoE. In addition it is felt that the discipline of a subscription recovery service will act as an incentive to the efficient delivery of CoE operations.

## Other income sources

F16. A CoE will be able to pursue income from sources other than the FRS, for example from providing services to the private sector, devolved administrations and other countries and by seeking sponsorship. Such income will be used to offset its costs and will reduce the level of charges/subscription to the FRS. Such sources of income have yet to be confirmed and have not therefore been factored into forecasts.

## Basis for allocation of costs

F17. We have identified and exemplified two bases for apportioning FRS costs between FRAs, as follows:

- equal shares for all FRAs
- by population.

F18. Equal shares would be simple, but would not make any allowance for the different amount of use made by individual FRAs or the benefits they might secure. Population is used as a simple indicator of likely levels of use and benefits. Whilst it would be possible to devise other possibly more complex options it is worth considering whether this is necessary in view of the likely relatively small level of contribution required to fund a CoE.

F19. Assuming an equal share basis this would equate to a subscription requirement from 46 individual FRAs (including the Isles of Scilly) of around £50,000 for 2009-10. Allocation on the basis of population is set out at table 2.

F20. We looked at the possibility of a partial subscription model whereby a proportion of the annual running costs would not be funded by means of a single subscription but would instead be recovered by a charge for specific products offered for sale on a commercial basis. We have concluded that such a model would be impractical to operate at the outset, for example, due to the uncertainty which would exist about the level of service which would need to be delivered. However, the possibility of some services being provided on a charging basis is not ruled out for the future.

**Table 2: Fire and Rescue Authority Contributions: By Population**

<b>Fire and Rescue Service</b>	<b>Population<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Avon	1,041,914	£47,208
Bedfordshire	590,689	£26,763
Berkshire	815,880	£36,966
Buckinghamshire	712,135	£32,266
Cambridgeshire	752,870	£34,112
Cheshire	999,884	£45,303
Cleveland	558,206	£25,292
Cornwall	524,243	£23,753
Isles of Scilly	2,126	£96
Cumbria	496,151	£22,480
Derbyshire	990,385	£44,873
Devon	1,122,123	£50,842
Somerset	518,637	£23,499
Dorset	701,084	£31,765
Durham	600,055	£27,188
East Sussex	757,651	£34,328
Essex	1,669,945	£75,663
Greater London	7,512,372	£340,375
Gloucestershire	578,631	£26,217
Greater Manchester	2,553,837	£115,711
Hampshire	1,690,930	£76,614
Hereford and Worcester	730,759	£33,110
Hertfordshire	1,058,586	£47,963
Humberside	904,947	£41,002
Isle of Wight	138,531	£6,277
Kent	1,634,596	£74,061
Lancashire	1,449,686	£65,683
Leicestershire	963,067	£43,635
Lincolnshire	686,195	£31,091
Merseyside	1,353,596	£61,330
Norfolk	832,443	£37,717
North Yorkshire	783,337	£35,492
Northamptonshire	669,102	£30,316
Northumberland	309,866	£14,040

<b>Fire and Rescue Service</b>	<b>Population<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Nottinghamshire	1,055,465	£47,822
Oxfordshire	631,999	£28,635
Shropshire	451,178	£20,442
South Yorkshire	1,292,869	£58,578
Staffordshire	1,062,461	£48,139
Suffolk	702,037	£31,808
Surrey	1,085,249	£49,171
Tyne and Wear	1,087,581	£49,277
Warwickshire	522,232	£23,662
West Midlands	2,600,064	£117,805
West Sussex	770,784	£34,923
West Yorkshire	2,161,241	£97,923
Wiltshire	635,326	£28,786
<b>England Total</b>	<b>50,762,945</b>	<b>£2,300,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> midyear 2006 estimate

## **Annex G – Summary of Consultation Questions**

### **Section 2. Why do we need a Centre of Excellence?**

***Q1 – Do you agree that a Centre of Excellence should be established for the Fire and Rescue Service in England?***

***Q2 – What evidence can you provide which would support the case for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence?***

***Q3 – What is your preferred name for the new body?***

### **Section 3. Functions**

***Q4 – Which of these functions would you like for a Centre of Excellence to deliver and are there any others which should be included?***

***Q5 – What do you think will be the impact on equality, highlighting any risks and opportunities?***

***Q6 – Which model for training delivery do you prefer?***

***Q7 – Which service delivery model do you prefer?***

### **Section 4. Governance arrangements**

***Q8 – Which governance option do you support?***

***Q9 – Are there any other options which you wish to propose?***

***Q10 – Do you agree that the existing forums need to be reviewed? If so, how should they be restructured and interact with a Centre of Excellence?***

### **Section 5. Funding**

***Q11 – Would your authority be willing to contribute to funding a CoE?***

***Q12 – Which of the options for allocating costs do you prefer? Is there another means of allocation which would be preferable?***

## **Annex H – List of those Consulted**

Asian Fire Service Association  
Association of Principal Fire Officers (APFO)  
Audit Commission  
Business and Community Safety Forum (BCSF)  
Cabinet Office  
Chairs of the Fire & Rescue Authorities  
Chairs of the Regional Management Boards  
Chief Fire Officers  
Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA)  
Chief Executive, County Councils  
Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities  
Clerk of the Fire & Rescue Authority  
Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform  
Department for Children, Schools and Families  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Department of Health  
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills  
Department for Transport  
Emergency Planning College  
Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Fire Brigades Union (FBU)  
Firebuy  
Fire Industry Association (FIA)  
Fire Officers' Association (FOA)  
Fire Protection Association (FPA)  
Fire, Rescue and Safety Vocational Standards Group (FRSVSG)  
Fire Service College  
GMB  
Government Offices  
HM Treasury  
Health & Safety Executive  
Home Office  
Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)  
Institution of Fire Engineers

Local Government Employers (LGE)  
Learning and Skills Council  
Local Government Association (LGA)  
Ministry of Defence  
National Assembly for Wales  
National Disabled Fire Association  
National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades  
National Police Improvement Agency  
Networking Women in the Fire Service  
Northern Ireland Office  
Practitioners' Forum  
Prospect  
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority  
Retained Firefighters Union (RFU)  
Scottish Executive Justice Department  
Scottish Fire Service Inspectorate  
Scottish Fire Services College  
Unison

## **Annex J – Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser’s Unit**

- J1. If responsibility for the major resilience projects was transferred to the FRS the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (CFRA) could have a role in providing assurance on a number of issues, particularly in relation to the New Dimensions Project. With FRS ownership impending, one of the key concerns over the New Dimension programme is individual FRAs continued contribution to the overall picture of national resilience. The CFRA could have a role in ensuring that such resilience is maintained, and that individual FRAs are ensuring that staff providing these functions are properly equipped and trained.
- J2. With regard to other key projects such as Fire Control and Fire Link, the CFRA could have a role in terms of monitoring the overall operational effectiveness of such arrangements and keeping a view on onward development once FRS ownership was achieved.
- J3. The CFRA will be maintaining ownership of the Operational Assessment toolkit, developed for the 2006 Service Assessment. Assurance on Critical National Infrastructure issues could be achieved either by the CFRA organising the use of the toolkit for such purposes, or more probably by ensuring effective self assessment peer review process are in place.

### **Advisory function**

- J4. The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser also has a role in providing advice to Ministers in the event of a national emergency/large-scale incident. This will continue if a Centre of Excellence is established. As part of this the running of the Emergency Information Support Group (EISG) and coordination of the National Strategic Advisers (NSAT) forms part of the role of the CFRAU and this is likely to continue in the event of the establishment of a Centre of Excellence. The EISG/NSAT arrangements will administer national command and control arrangements, which might well be developed by the Centre of Excellence through its role in operational doctrine production.

### **Operational Doctrine and Health and Safety**

- J5. The premise on which CFRAU Transition Team have been working is that operational guidance development and health and safety coordination will become part of the role of the Centre of Excellence (CoE). As Communities and Local Government does now through CFRAU, the CoE may be tasked with developing and reviewing operational doctrine on behalf of the service and Communities and Local Government. This guidance has two distinct parts; firstly manuals and national guidance currently developed by Communities and Local Government, and secondly more locally tailored operational procedures (derived from national Guidance) developed by FRAs. Whilst all of the national guidance function can move to the CoE from CFRAU, and the resources currently used; the procedures developed in FRAs use resources that also undertake other functions and a residual function for local adjustment is also likely to be retained. The CFRAU are likely to play a key role in providing confidence in the quality of the centrally developed doctrine through its quality assurance role.

- J6. With regard to health and safety, the CoE might take an overview of safety events occurring around the country and analyse safety event data to identify trends. This work may feed into the development of operational doctrine and could also be used to alert services to significant safety issues which might affect them. Whilst this has been done to a degree by Communities and Local Government and predecessor departments, it is arguable that this is not a function for Government and one that the service might well be expected to undertake for itself, but is better done collectively hence the move to the CoE. The CFRAU would however continue to act as a point of contact for the HSE, who want an independent viewpoint on health and safety issues in services. CFRAU would naturally maintain close links with the CoE on health and safety matters in general.
- J7. The Toolkit used by the Service during the 2006 Operational Assessment of Service Delivery was developed jointly between Communities and Local Government and CFOA. The toolkit is currently under review but it is likely that it will be used in future for self assessment and peer review purposes. The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser is seen as having a quality assurance role in looking at how the toolkit is used, and will maintain ownership for the development of the toolkit itself. Sharing notable practice and innovation that is identified through the use of the toolkit is also a role for the CFRAU.

## **International work**

- J8. CFRAU has a role in liaising with international and European fire and rescue services, often as part of its role in the co-ordination of overseas deployment. The CFRA will be in a position to identify operational good practice from overseas and may wish to join up with the CoE regarding its collection and dissemination.

# Annex K – Consultation Code of Practice

## The consultation criteria

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation. Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

- 1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.**
- 2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.**
- 3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.**
- 4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.**
- 5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.**
- 6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out an Impact Assessment if appropriate.**

The full consultation code may be viewed at [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm)

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact:

Albert Joyce  
Consultation Co-ordinator  
Communities and Local Government  
Floor 6 Zone H10  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

E-mail: [albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

## Annex L – Impact Assessment

Summary: Intervention & Options		
<b>Department/Agency:</b> Communities and Local Government	<b>Title:</b> Impact Assessment of establishing a Centre of Excellence for the Fire and Rescue Service in England	
<b>Stage:</b> Consultation	<b>Version:</b> 1	<b>Date:</b> 4 October 2007
<b>Related Publications:</b> Consultation paper: A Centre of Excellence for the Fire and Rescue Service in England		

**Available to view or download at:**

<http://www>.

**Contact for enquiries:** Richard Davis/Brian Nash      **Telephone:** 0207 944 5307/5620

**What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?**

The demands now being made of the Service mean that some functions would benefit from being delivered nationally to facilitate greater consistency across the FRS and help drive up standards through the sharing of best practice, deliver economies of scale and reduce duplication of effort and expenditure. This has been achieved to a certain extent by the FRS but in the absence of a recognised legitimate and authoritative body, this has frequently been on an ad hoc basis with understandable but consequential difficulties in respect of governance, management and timely delivery.

**What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?**

To help the FRS establish arrangements which will assist them to continue to deliver the improvement agenda against a background of continuing competition for resources and the challenges which the Service faces in the future. Achieving this objective should deliver benefits to the FRS at local, regional and national level enabling partnership working which should lead to real improvements in service delivery, skills development within the workforce and improved value for local taxpayers.

**What policy options have been considered? Please justify any preferred option.**

a) To do nothing b) to increase central Government’s role c) to establish a Centre of Excellence. The preferred option, supported in principle by CFA & LGA is (c). The FRS would benefit from having access to a central resource which could support the work of the FRS in driving forward improvement, innovation and service delivery by providing operational and technical advice, guidance and shared practice across a range of issues in an authoritative, consistent and timely fashion. The consultation seeks views on whether the FRS want a CoE and options for its governance, funding and functions.

**When will the policy be reviewed to establish the actual costs and benefits and the achievement of the desired effects?**

Progress would be reviewed annually as part of the annual planning and reporting process for the chosen option. It will also be reviewed before decisions are taken to establish a statutory body.

**Ministerial Sign-off** For consultation stage Impact Assessments:

***I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.***

Signed by the responsible Minister:



Date: 8 October 2007

### Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: (C)

Description: Establish a Centre of Excellence for the FRS in England

COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of <b>key monetised costs</b> by 'main affected groups' *NDPB governance model where Communities will fund the initial set up costs. **FRAs to fund those functions they wish (therefore not a new burden) the CoE to undertake for work falling outside of central government's contribution (no additional cost implications for Communities – existing costs of £1m)
	<b>One-off (Transition)</b>	<b>Years</b>	
	£ up to 1.3m*	1	
	<b>Average Annual Cost</b> (excluding one-off)		
£2.3m**		<b>Total Cost (PV)</b>	£
Other <b>key non-monetised costs</b> by 'main affected groups'			

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of <b>key monetised benefits</b> by 'main affected groups' FRA/FRS: economies of scale by reducing duplication and bringing together activities currently undertaken in 46 individual authorities; savings expected particularly in the areas of H&S and operational guidance. Not possible to quantify cost reductions or efficiencies in advance of the start of service delivery by the CoE.
	<b>One-off</b>	<b>Years</b>	
	£		
	<b>Average Annual Benefit</b> (excluding one-off)		
£		<b>Total Benefit (PV)</b>	£
Other <b>key non-monetised benefits</b> by 'main affected groups' FRA/FRS: sharing of best practice resulting in more effective practices – leading to wider social benefits through reduced fire deaths, injuries and property losses from fire, road traffic accidents and other incidents requiring an emergency response from the FRS			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks Success will be very much dependent on both the commitment of the FRS to the concept and aims of a CoE, and crucially on the financial contribution which they are willing to make to the new body. Set up costs assume training delivery would be included in a CoE. Cost would be reduced if training delivery is not included.

Price Base Year	Time Period Years	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £N/A	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £N/A
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?		England		
On what date will the policy be implemented?		1 April 2009		
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?		No enforcement		
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?		£N/A		
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?		Yes/No		
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?		Yes/No		
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?		£N/A		
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?		£N/A		
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?		No		
Annual cost (£) £per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Are any of these organisations exempt?	Yes/No	Yes/No	N/A	N/A

<b>Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline</b> (2005 Prices)		(Increase – Decrease)		
Increase of	£N/A	Decrease of	£N/A	Net Impact
				£N/A

Key:	Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices	(Net) Present Value
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Summary: Analysis & Evidence	
<b>Policy Option: (B)</b>	<b>Description: Increase Central Government's role</b>

<b>COSTS</b>	<b>ANNUAL COSTS</b>		Description and scale of <b>key monetised costs</b> by 'main affected groups' Cost of those functions for which CLG could assume responsibility for delivery.
	<b>One-off</b> (Transition)	<b>Years</b>	
	£		
	<b>Average Annual Cost</b> (excluding one-off)		
	£2.3m		<b>Total Cost (PV)</b>
Other <b>key non-monetised costs</b> by 'main affected groups'			

<b>BENEFITS</b>	<b>ANNUAL BENEFITS</b>		Description and scale of <b>key monetised benefits</b> by 'main affected groups' FRA/FRS: economies of scale by reducing duplication and bringing together activities currently undertaken in 46 individual authorities; savings expected particularly in the areas of H&S and operational guidance. Not possible to quantify cost reductions or efficiencies.
	<b>One-off</b>	<b>Years</b>	
	£		
	<b>Average Annual Benefit</b> (excluding one-off)		
	£		<b>Total Benefit (PV)</b>
Other <b>key non-monetised benefits</b> by 'main affected groups' In principle would increase central Government's levers to ensure capacity and cross departmental co-ordination so strengthening resilience capability and interoperability between services.			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks An increased centrally delivered system would not meet local needs. Central Government would need to retain a larger corps of staff to provide strategic direction, policy and operational guidance – runs counter to Gershon and the direction of travel towards more strategic government departments supported by delivery chains

Price Base Year	Time Period Years	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £N/A	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £N/A
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	England			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	1 April 2009			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	No enforcement			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes/No			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	Yes/No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£N/A			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£N/A			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£per organisation (excluding one-off))	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Are any of these organisations exempt?	Yes/No	Yes/No	N/A	N/A

<b>Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline</b> (2005 Prices)		(Increase – Decrease)	
Increase of £N/A	Decrease of £N/A	Net Impact	£N/A

Key:	Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices	(Net) Present Value
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## Evidence Base (for summary sheets)

[Use this space (with a recommended maximum of 30 pages) to set out the evidence, analysis and detailed narrative from which you have generated your policy options or proposal. Ensure that the information is organised in such a way as to explain clearly the summary information on the preceding pages of this form.]

### Background/Context

1. Across the fire and rescue service the pace and scope of change brought about by the modernisation agenda has been considerable. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are already implementing and delivering much of the improvement agenda. Significant progress has been made but it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain this level of improvement given the continuing competition for resources and the challenges which the Service faces in the future.
2. Those challenges are great. The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) will continue to operate against a background of external considerations many of which are outside of its control – demographic and socio-economic change, the political landscape, technology, energy, transport, environmental and ecological changes and terrorist threats.
3. Climate change, for example, is likely to lead to potentially more volatile and unpredictable weather patterns which will undoubtedly see the civil emergency role of the FRS evolve and enlarge in the 21st century. At the same time, the FRS is being required to work much more closely with communities to help deliver the Government's objectives for the wider well-being agenda. Its wider community safety work is expanding and increasingly it is contributing through multi-agency partnerships.
4. The Service has needed to take on a much wider Civil Emergency and Community Protection role, to meet the unpredictability in environmental, social and demographic trends. Increasing expectations of central government in terms of civil resilience and sustainability of the critical national infrastructure have also required the FRS to embrace a wider Civil Emergency role.
5. The demands now being made of the Service mean that some functions would benefit from being delivered nationally to facilitate greater consistency across the FRS, help drive up standards through the sharing of best practice, deliver economies of scale and reduce duplication of effort and expenditure. This has been achieved to a certain extent by the FRS but in the absence of a recognised legitimate and authoritative group, this has frequently been on an ad hoc basis with understandable but consequential difficulties in respect of governance, management and timely delivery.

6. Where there has been central co-ordination through a single group, there have been notable successes, for example, the Maritime Incident Response Group where there is now a more professional response to firefighting at sea. But these ad hoc arrangements have required time and effort to establish. The Service now operates in an increasingly volatile and complex environment and needs to respond with greater speed and focus making full use of its collective expertise. The creation of a central body providing a more focused, strategic co-ordinating role and enabling the Service to continue to operate effectively both now and in the future would seem to have significant merit. It could also help to streamline and reduce the cumulative burdens on FRAs.
7. Existing institutions such as CFOA and Regional Management Boards do not have the remit or capacity to help FRAs in the delivery of functions on a national basis. On operational doctrine, standards and codes of practice this gap potentially puts cross-border co-operation at risk and exposes the Service to legal challenge. It also limits strategic co-ordination on health and safety, diversity, leadership and development and the need for resilience.

## **The policy objective**

8. To establish arrangements which will help the FRS to continue to deliver the improvement agenda against a background of continuing competition for resources and the challenges which the Service faces in the future. Achieving this objective should deliver benefits to the FRS locally, regionally and nationally enabling partnership working which should lead to real improvements in service delivery, skills development within the workforce and improved value for local taxpayers.

## **Policy Options**

9. Communities and Local Government has been working with the LGA and CFOA to consider alternative options for the national delivery of certain operational functions for the FRS. The work has been overseen by a Steering Group and a Project Board, and included CFOA, LGA, Communities and Local Government and Fire Service College representatives.
10. The do nothing position was clearly unacceptable given the concerns expressed with the current arrangements. Therefore, working collaboratively with the key stakeholders two alternative options were considered – an increased central government role and the establishment of national improvement body.
11. The following table analyses the key advantages and disadvantages for each option:

	<b>Key Advantages</b>	<b>Key Disadvantages</b>
Increased Central Government role	<p>Government would be completely in control of the system, setting both strategic policy direction and providing advice, guidance and support as necessary to ensure consistency</p> <p>Ministers would maintain day to day contact with the FRS and, in particular, would be able to contribute effectively to the direction of travel for fire and resilience issues</p> <p>It would in principle increase central Government's levers to ensure capacity and cross departmental co-ordination, so strengthening resilience capability and interoperability between services</p>	<p>a centrally delivered system would not meet local needs. National standards of fire cover were abolished in 2003 precisely because they were inflexible and inefficient</p> <p>central Government would need to retain a larger corps of staff to provide strategic direction, policy and operational guidance. This runs counter to Gershon and the direction of travel towards more strategic government departments, supported by delivery chains</p>
Centre of Excellence	<p>provide the opportunity for greater FRS ownership of the fire and rescue system</p> <p>support a consistent approach to implementation of the National Framework at regional and local level, through strategy development and quality assurance</p> <p>build capacity and strengthen leadership at all levels</p> <p>support improvement and effective implementation in accordance with the National Improvement Strategy</p> <p>promote cost effectiveness and efficiency in delivery, and achieving economies of scale, by bringing together some activities currently undertaken in individual FRAs</p> <p>facilitate collaborative working, dissemination of good practices and interoperability across the FRS</p> <p>provide the opportunity for the FRS to play a central role in influencing the future direction of the service as a whole, helping the FRS to respond to the new approach to service delivery in the Local Government White Paper and in the LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government document "fire and rescue: a shared vision towards 2017"</p>	<p>perceived weakening of Ministerial control particularly on resilience</p> <p>possibly lessening the individual capacity of FRAs by reducing their role in planning and management</p> <p>unless constituted with a wide remit, such a body may perpetuate a narrow fire-specific focus for its work and not develop wider collaboration across other emergency services, with local authorities and other agencies</p>

12. Taking all the above into account, including discussions with stakeholders on this subject, the establishment of a CoE was considered by LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government as the best option for providing the FRS with access to a central resource which could support the work of the FRS in driving forward an agenda of improvement, innovation and service delivery by providing operational and technical advice, guidance and shared practice across a range of issues in an authoritative, consistent and timely fashion.
13. A CoE would enable, facilitate, commission and deliver benefits to the FRS at local, regional and national level enabling partnership working which should lead to real improvements in service delivery, skills development within the workforce and improved value for local taxpayers.
14. It would help the FRS respond to the new approach to service delivery in the Local Government White Paper and in the LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government document *fire and rescue: a shared vision towards 2017* as well as supporting a consistent approach to implementation of the National Framework at regional and local level, through strategy development and quality assurance and support improvement and effective implementation in accordance with the National Improvement Strategy for local authorities to be published in 2008.
15. The view of the LGA, CFOA and Communities and Local Government is that a CoE could provide the following key benefits:
  - allow the FRS to take much greater responsibility and ownership for managing the present and to take a central role in influencing the future direction of the service as a whole
  - enable the FRS to respond to new challenges quickly and to the highest standards
  - help streamline multiple impacts of the modernisation programme on FRAs
  - help build capacity and strengthen leadership at all levels
  - promote cost effectiveness and efficiency in delivery, and achieving economies of scale, by bringing together some activities currently undertaken in individual FRAs
  - facilitate collaborative working, dissemination of good practices and interoperability across the FRS.

## Functions

16. The CoE would be responsible for the following drivers of Fire and Rescue Service improvement:
  - **Operational and corporate development**, including organisational development, operational doctrine, equality and diversity, health and safety, fire prevention support, and technology and research
  - **Training delivery**

- **Procurement** including Firebuy (a company NDPB established in 2006 to deliver national procurement projects and processes to the FRS)
  - **Resilience** including operational assurance, national procurement and contract management
17. A body which brought all these aspects together would have the authority and the critical mass of expertise to drive forward improvement, build capacity and lead innovation, and would be able to do so with the greatest possible efficiency, drawing on synergies between its functions, networks throughout the Service and experts throughout the fire community. It would help to create the FRS of the future ready to meet the challenges known and as yet unknown which the Service faces in the medium and longer term.
18. The earliest date on which we believe it would be practicable to establish the CoE is April 2009. At this time Firelink and FireControl will be well advanced but still far from completion. The New Dimension project will be complete but new arrangements for oversight of its maintenance (the Long Term Capability Management) will be only a year old. Similarly Firebuy's relationship with the FRS may not be fully mature.
19. The considered view is that the resilience functions and Firebuy will not be ready to move into a CoE until the resilience projects have delivered operational regional control rooms and radio systems, and Firebuy is more mature. The risks of including them at the outset of a CoE, itself an unproven body, would be substantial.
20. Training delivery may also be a function of CoE at the outset if a sustainable financial model for the Fire Service College (whose principal business and statutory function is the delivery of training to the FRS in England) can be in place in time for the establishment of the CoE. There would be significant financial risk to the CoE if the FSC were incorporated under its current financial arrangements.
21. Therefore, leaving aside training, the main initial functions of a CoE could be:
- **Organisational Development**
  - **Equality and Diversity**
  - **Operational Doctrine**
  - **Health and Safety**
  - **Fire Prevention support**
  - **Technology and Research**

## Governance

22. A CoE would be a new national delivery body which fills an intermediate role between the FRS and Communities and Local Government. With the exception of one with Agency status it would represent a significant de facto transfer of power and responsibility from central government to the FRS and a transfer of responsibility for some operational support functions from FRAs to a central body. In particular it would make the Service responsible in practical terms for considering what support services it requires at national level and for ensuring its delivery. To function effectively it will need support and close involvement from the FRS, which will also expect influence over the new body which is commensurate with its financial contributions.
23. The right governance of a CoE is, therefore, critical to the new organisation's success. It needs to ensure FRA and stakeholder involvement, and provide a large degree of operational and policy independence, within the National Framework for the FRS. It must also provide a robust framework for delivery. Ideally it would also have the flexibility and potential to take on the further functions which may move into a CoE in the future, both from the FRS and from Communities and Local Government. Any national body though would remain ultimately accountable to Ministers.
24. In discussion with stakeholders, a number of governance options are being offered for consultation:

**Option 1 – The establishment of a new Executive Agency**

**Option 2 – The establishment of a new executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)**

**Option 3 – Enhancing an existing executive Agency – the Fire Service College**

**Option 4 – Enhancing the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)**

**Option 5 – Establishing a joint committee of stakeholders**

25. The following table gives an indication of some of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these options:

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Establishment of a new Executive Agency	<p>Can be set up relatively quickly by administrative action without legislation</p> <p>Entity which can employ staff, own assets and deliver functions</p>	<p>Limited role of FRS in governance</p> <p>Little power or responsibility transferred to FRS</p> <p>Complex contractual arrangements with FRAs would be needed to ensure they have appropriate control</p> <p>Chief Executive responsible to Ministers not Board</p>
Establishment of a new executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)	<p>Chief Executive answers to Board not Ministers on policy and operations</p> <p>Can employ own staff</p> <p>Can own assets</p> <p>Can be funded by subscriptions or charges</p>	<p>Costly to establish</p> <p>Once established difficult to terminate</p>
Enhancing an existing executive Agency – the Fire Service College	<p>Body already in existence</p> <p>Relatively simple to extend remit</p> <p>Entity which can employ staff, own assets and deliver functions</p>	<p>Limited role of FRS in governance</p> <p>Would need significant organisational restructuring</p> <p>Chief Executive responsible to Ministers not Board</p>
Enhancing the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)	<p>Organisation already exists and could deliver functions</p>	<p>In current form does not have the capacity to deliver what is required of a CoE</p> <p>Significant change needed to structure, constitution and funding</p>
Establishing a joint committee of stakeholders	<p>Quick and easy to set up</p> <p>Involves stakeholders in a simple and transparent way</p> <p>Possible to establish a more formal Joint Committee</p>	<p>No formal organisational structure – difficult to be seen as a CoE</p> <p>Can only deliver indirectly through partner organisations</p> <p>Reliant on capability and capacity of partner organisations to deliver</p>

## Costs and Benefits

26. A CoE has the potential to facilitate a wide range of benefits for FRSs. Some of these benefits should be measurable in terms of savings, achieved for example by reducing duplication across authorities. The majority of the benefits though are likely to be less easily measured such as those associated with the sharing of best practice which might result in more effective practices.
27. Initial work with a representative sample of FRSs has suggested that it will be difficult to quantify cost reductions or efficiencies in advance of the start of service delivery by a CoE, but that some savings could be expected particularly in the areas of health and safety and operational guidance.
28. For instance, a CoE might be able to liaise with the HSE on behalf of the service to identify emerging trends, issue health and safety guidance and share good practice, all of which is specific to the fire and rescue industry. This should reduce the need for local H&S advisors. The CoE could also influence the development of H&S legislation and Codes of practice, to ensure they take account of specific FRS issues. An example of where FRS input was helpful was the introduction of the Working from Height Regulations to emergency response situations.
29. A CoE could also help to reduce local and regional inconsistencies to ensure continuity across the country. For instance, national guidance produced by Communities and Local Government is routinely adapted by each FRS leading to potential inconsistencies in procedural approach between FRSs. Each FRA employs staff to carry out these adjustments. There should be scope for them to commission this work from the CoE leading to both cost savings and consistent guidance and procedures.
30. There might also be benefit from the CoE collating and analysing data to help identify good practice across a wide range of work. Whilst such analysis is increasingly being undertaken on a regional basis, a national approach is a logical extension and may bring added benefit both in terms of reducing duplication in carrying out the work but also in identifying regional variations.
31. A CoE might be able to increase the overall impetus to improve safety performance in the service nationally through better data collection and sharing, improved analysis of the data and a more structured approach to sharing safety event information in a timely fashion.
32. If the CoE has responsibility for the development of operational doctrine, there is a compelling case to link the development of this doctrine to a national overview of operational safety. Operational procedures play an integral part in the “Safe Person” concept, together with provision of appropriate PPE (a Firebuy issue), proper supervision (Incident Command doctrine) and appropriate training. The CoE might have a role in drawing all of this together at a national level to improve effective service delivery and firefighter safety.
33. Smaller FRAs may benefit from work they do not have the capacity to carry out at present, but which is routinely undertaken in larger authorities.

- 34. There is scope for a CoE to assume responsibility for certain functions currently carried out in technical services departments and HR departments across all 46 FRAs leading to potential savings within those areas.
- 35. There are also issues of a national scale which go beyond the narrow confines of the FRS and which would benefit from being co-ordinated centrally on behalf of the FRS and other stakeholders. An example of this is the current work being done on acetylene cylinders where responsibility does not sit with any one body.

## Funding

- 36. Whichever governance option emerges from this consultation as the preferred way forward, the success of a CoE will be very much dependent on both the commitment of the FRS to the concept and aims and crucially, for all options with the exception of the joint committee, on the financial contribution which they are willing to make. If appropriate for the preferred governance option, Communities and Local Government are willing to fund the initial set up costs for a CoE and those aspects of its work which it considers are the responsibility of central government to provide.
- 37. It will be for FRAs to decide whether they are willing to fund those functions which they wish a CoE to undertake for work falling outside of central government’s contribution. This is a decision on which it is important that the FRS achieves consensus. It may not be desirable or practical to set up a body which does not have the full support and commitment of all FRAs and FRSs.
- 38. The following table provides an indication of the costs and contributions for an NDPB (the most expensive body to establish) delivering the full range of functions.

	Communities and Local Government costs £m			FRS costs £m		
	08-09	09-10	10-11	08-09	09-10	10-11
<b>Total contribution</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>

## Funding Options for FRS contribution

- 39. Two possible models for FRAs to make their contributions have been identified and offered for consultation: subscription and a combination of subscription and charges. Both allow FRAs to decide individually whether they wish to buy into the CoE.

40. An assessment of their advantages and disadvantages are outlined in the following table:

	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Subscription only	<p>Maximises buy in from stakeholders and supports greater collaboration and hence helps achieve CoE objectives including sharing of best practice and common standards</p> <p>Greater certainty for FRS and CoE business planning purposes – enables CoE to deliver services efficiently</p>	<p>Authorities may choose not to contribute, reducing the benefits to them but also to other FRAs because of narrower area of activity of CoE eg reduced sharing of best practice. May increase cost burden on others.</p> <p>FRAs pay for full range of products irrespective of individual circumstances and perceived need</p>
Subscription and charges	<p>Most flexible model from FRA perspective allowing 'opt outs' from particular functions in line with individual needs</p> <p>Discipline of market defines outputs and exercises maximum cost control</p>	<p>Provides reduced degree of certainty for planning and governance purposes.</p> <p>Sub optimal delivery of some functions.</p> <p>Less consistency in national standards.</p> <p>Administration required to monitor and collect contributions.</p> <p>Reduced certainty for subscribers with possibility of additional retrospective levy if product sale budgets are not achieved to meet CoE cash flow/funding needs.</p>

## Other funding options considered

### Top slicing

41. An organisation funded by top slicing Local Authority allocations is not considered deliverable. It would remove flexibility by setting the budget for the CoE which might not align with its funding requirements. A top slice could also only be justified if offsetting efficiency savings could be identified. We do not have evidence of sufficient efficiency savings to justify the level of top slice that would be required to fund the CoE. In addition it is felt that the discipline of a subscription recovery service will act as an incentive to the efficient delivery of CoE operations.

### Other income sources

42. The CoE will be able to pursue income from sources other than the FRS, for example from providing services to the private sector, devolved administrations and other countries and by seeking sponsorship. Such income will be used to offset its costs and will reduce the level of charges/subscription to the FRS. Such sources of income have yet to be confirmed and have not therefore been factored into forecasts.

## Basis for allocation of costs

43. We have identified and exemplified two bases which FRAs may choose for apportioning FRS costs between them:
- equal shares for all FRAs
  - by population
44. Equal shares would be simple, but would not make any allowance for the different amount of use made by individual FRAs or the benefits they might secure. Population is used as a simple indicator of likely levels of use and benefits. We have invited FRAs to indicate their preferred option or to suggest alternative methods of apportioning costs. Whilst it would be possible to devise other possibly more complex options it is worth considering whether this is necessary in view of the likely relatively small level of contribution required to fund the CoE.

## Specific Impact Test

45. The social impact of the proposals (i.e. on race, disability and gender equality) are likely to be positive with the CoE able to provide support and challenge to the FRS in delivering the planned 10 year Equality and Diversity Strategy which will come into effect in 2008. We have considered whether any of the other specific impact tests apply and have concluded that there are no specific impacts for this proposal.

### Specific Impact Tests: Checklist

Use the table below to demonstrate how broadly you have considered the potential impacts of your policy options.

Ensure that the results of any tests that impact on the cost-benefit analysis are contained within the main evidence base; other results may be annexed.

Type of testing undertaken	Results in Evidence Base?	Results annexed?
Competition Assessment	No	No
Small Firms Impact Test	No	No
Legal Aid	No	No
Sustainable Development	No	No
Carbon Assessment	No	No
Other Environment	No	No
Health Impact Assessment	No	No
Race Equality	Yes	No
Disability Equality	Yes	No
Gender Equality	Yes	No
Human Rights	No	No
Rural Proofing	No	No