

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

# RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION PAPER ON LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

### 1 Purpose of Report

To give the Human Resources Committee the opportunity to comment on the consultation paper from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on Leadership and Development in the Fire and Rescue Service.

### 2 Recommendations

Members are asked to comment on the proposed response.

### 3 Background

Fire Service Circular 61-2005 (19 December 2005) issued the consultation document on Leadership and Development in the Fire and Rescue Service. The document is lengthy and, therefore, the Executive Summary is included within this report. Should Members wish to view the full version, it is available from the ODPM website at

[www.odpm.gov.uk/fire/consult](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/fire/consult)

### 4 Elements of the Consultation Paper

The main themes of the proposals detailed in the Executive Summary have been extracted below and cover the following areas:

- a) A Transformational Model of Leadership for the Fire and Rescue Service;
- b) Executive Leadership Programme;
- c) Professional Reference Group for Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Leadership Development;



- d) Higher Potential Management Development Scheme; and
- e) Redirection of Current Training and Development Programmes and Creation of Efficiencies.

The document is limited in its reference to the role of elected Members. It states:

*“We believe that leadership in the Fire and Rescue Service can be construed also as a partnership approach between elected Fire Authority Members and their executive officers. This recognises also the Government’s increased emphasis on the local leadership agenda, reflected in recent discussion papers. The adoption of the Local Government Leadership Centre capacities model for officers creates an opportunity to consider the adoption of a similar set of leadership capacities for elected Members.*

*We would recommend further consideration of this issue as a way of extending the partnership aspect of local leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service.”*

Members may wish to take this opportunity to comment on these statements and their comments can be fed back with the completed response questionnaire.

## 5 Executive Summary

- a) Public services deserve excellent leaders. The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) faces current and future challenges, the scale of which demands clear leadership from within. The nature and scope of the fire modernisation agenda requires an active and positive response from the Service in order to meet the demand for continuous improvement in standards.

Historic traditions of strong, command-based models of service leadership are evolving to meet new challenges posed both by the modernisation agenda and the increasing expectations of those who use the Service. Increasingly flexible and varied working patterns, more diverse communities, an increased range of risks and statutory responsibilities and a growing emphasis on accountability and governance, demand competent leaders with a new and flexible blend of skills and experience to get results.

- b) It is now widely recognised that achieving these objectives will require a new focus on leadership development. The FRS has already made an historic commitment to the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). The IPDS shifts the focus – it puts people first and looks at the risks that can arise from workplace activity. It then considers the options for risk reduction and management through effective training and development arrangements. IPDS allows the FRS to be confident that its leaders are actually able to do what is expected of them.
- c) Risk reduction in its widest terms cannot be achieved through the prescriptive and formulaic approaches to leadership training that the FRS has traditionally employed. Instead, the FRS needs a more modern, flexible, and risk-based approach to leadership development. This means that the FRS must become much more outcome focussed and recognise that those outcomes are best achieved by making sure that people have the skills, knowledge and understanding to support competent performance. This is as true of our leaders – and those who aspire to lead – as of anyone else. For this reason



the suggestions contained in this document integrate seamlessly with the vocational approach that forms the foundation of the IPDS.

- d) In many respects, the FRS is similar to many other public services. In areas, such as local government, health, and police, considerable advances have been made to develop new approaches to leadership and we have drawn upon the lessons learned from those experiences. At the same time, the FRS and the Government have devoted effort and resources to developing key components of the modernisation agenda, particularly the IPDS. The development of the new approach to leadership in the FRS accommodates much of what is already available. A new leadership model will also support the recruitment of talented people from outside the Service to complement the wealth of ability within it.
- e) This consultation paper reflects the work of two Task and Finish Groups established by the IPDS Project Board (IPDSPB) in 2004. These groups have included representatives from the FRS, Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Fire Service College, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate, the Scottish Executive and the ODPM.
- f) The proposals deal with leadership throughout the Service and make recommendations for a new approach which embraces the principles of fair and open selection and develops leaders capable of meeting the new challenges for the Service. It is intended to complement IPDS and other aspects of the modernisation agenda.

The proposals in this consultation only apply to the FRS in England. The Scottish Executive has, however, contributed significantly to the development of the proposals and we hope that these proposals will be considered suitable for adoption by all the Devolved Administrations.

- g) Achieving a national transformation in culture and approach, including a more diverse workforce, requires a consistent approach to be applied at every level of the Service. Moreover, it is important to recognise the legitimacy of the leadership function so that it is appreciated by those who are led, those who lead (or aspire to lead) and the public, who need and use the Service. It is hoped and intended, therefore, that the model can be used as a tool for developing FRS leaders in all roles.
- h) We, therefore, seek your views on:
  - A transformational leadership model, the principles of which are applicable to all levels of the Service, where leadership is required.
  - A framework for leadership learning and development, providing a structured approach that ensures the development of current and future leaders and managers.
  - A Strategic Leadership Development Programme, providing managed programmes of learning and development for individuals identified as having the potential to reach and succeed at the strategic manager levels. This will include an



Executive Leadership Programme and a Chief Officers' / Chief Executives' Development Programme.

- A High Potential Management Development scheme, providing accelerated progression through a managed programme of learning and development for individuals identified as having the potential to reach and succeed at middle manager levels.
- i) We believe that the model that has been developed, and the learning and development framework, which will underpin that model, should support current and future demand for FRS leadership. It provides a new template, which brings together beliefs, behaviours, outcomes and contexts to form a coherent model against which effective development leading to competent performance can take place.

## **6 Response to Consultation Paper - Questionnaire**

The response questionnaire, in its draft form, is attached as an appendix to this report. For ease of explanation, officers' comments have been annotated as necessary against the relevant question.

## **7 Regional Considerations**

At the next West Midlands Regional Management Board Human Resources meeting Shropshire Fire and Rescue has requested that the matter of the regional/national role and employment of the Higher Potential Management Development Scheme be discussed. Should Members wish to comment on the matter, their opinion will be taken forward to that meeting as well as being included in our response.

Seminars on this matter were announced in early February with invitations for Chief Officers and Chairs of Authorities to attend. Due to diary commitments, however, the response of this Service had already been drafted and officers are not available to attend at the venue closest to Shropshire.

## **8 Legal Comment**

There are no legal comments arising directly out of this report.

## **9 Financial Implications**

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report. There are, however, likely to be financial implications relating to decisions regarding joint-funded posts, such as the Regional Scheme Managers, if that proceeds after consultation.

There will also be financial implications in terms of putting staff through development opportunities, although these would need to be balanced against the benefit accrued and the cost of achieving a similar result via an alternative means, if this approach is not developed nationally, and those are likely to be considerable.



## **10 Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no Equality or Diversity implications arising directly from the report.

## **11 Appendix**

Response to Consultation Paper – Questionnaire

## **12 Background Papers**

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister**  
Fire Service Circular 61-2005 (19 December 2005)

For further information about this report please contact Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Officer, on 01743 260280.

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## Response to Consultation Paper - Questionnaire

**Q1: Do you agree that a transformational model of leadership is more appropriate than a transactional model for a modern FRS?**

Strongly agree  agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

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**Q2a: Do you agree with the three leadership contexts? Please delete as appropriate:**

Critical Incident Management: Yes/~~No~~      Local leadership: Yes/~~No~~

Team Leadership: Yes/~~No~~

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**Q2b: Are there any others which need to be included? Please LIST below:**

No

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**Q3: Do you agree that the primary focus of the leadership model should be behaviourally based?**

Strongly agree  agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

We agree that it should be behaviourally based but would not wish to totally disregard the role that other skills and abilities play in leadership.

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**Q4: Do you support the principles of the Executive Leadership Programme outlined above?**

Strongly agree  agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

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**Q5: Do you agree with the proposal to set up a Professional Reference Group for FRS Strategic Leadership Development?**

Strongly agree  agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

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We agree strongly on this point but feel that the organisations listed as suggestions for inclusion are too 'Fire Service Centric' and we would suggest that bodies such as the Institute of Leadership and Management and/or the Chartered Management Institute should be included to provide a more generalised advice base to help us to move forward and maintain awareness of the external environment.

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**Q6: Do you support the approach outlined for Chief Officer / Chief Executive development?**

Strongly agree  Y agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

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**Q7: Do you think that the management of the HMPD scheme should be approached:**

a) regionally  or  Y b) nationally

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**Q8a: Do you agree with the concept of Regional Scheme Managers for HMPD?**

Yes/~~No~~

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**Q8b: If yes, how should they be employed?**

Nationally. These roles are key to ensuring the consistent application of the scheme and we see them employed centrally and working 70:30 regionally

Members should be aware that this point has been raised regionally. We are looking to agree a regional response to the question as this is likely to be a key issue for the future.

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**Q9: Do you agree that there should be no requirement for formal educational or other qualifications for entry to the HMPD scheme?**

Strongly agree  agree  Y neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

We are in agreement as long as appropriate qualifications are built into the scheme and this appears to be the case at Q11.

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**Q10: Is it reasonable to expect a scheme member to reach the middle management level in 5 years?**

Yes/~~No~~

**If 'Yes', what is an appropriate period?**

5 years is an appropriate timescale

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**Q11: Do you agree that HMPD members should work towards an appropriate qualification as part of the scheme?**

Strongly agree  Y agree  neutral  disagree  strongly disagree

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**Q12: We would welcome your views on the extent to which the proposals can be accommodated by a redirection of current training and development programmes and through efficiencies, such as greater regional co-ordination**

**Comment:** There is undoubtedly the argument that this type of development should be occurring within the Service nationally and, therefore, resources could be diverted from existing provision, e.g. Command Courses. However, development for elected Members in combined authorities has not been something consistently provided by Fire and Rescue Services, and may have been done by the constituent authorities, and so will generate additional costs for many.

The High Potential Management Development Scheme is new to FRS's and again additional resources are likely to be required over and above those required for general management development. This is particularly the case where new entrants with no previous Fire Service experience are likely to be joining with a training need specific to the management and operation of the Service.

Regional co-ordination can generate savings in terms of prevention of wasted resources through the elimination of duplication of effort but, as with the ADC process, it remains to be seen if cost savings are to be generated. To do this properly means resourcing it sufficiently and additional costs may therefore be incurred.

**Any additional comments:** None to date.