

## report

meeting	<b>NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE &amp; RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>	
date	<b>9 June 2006</b>	agenda item number

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

### COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

#### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the forthcoming Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process and its content.

#### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 CPA for Fire & Rescue Services was introduced in 2005 as part of the Governments modernisation of the Service. CPA replaced the previous regime of inspection which was conducted by HMFSI.
- 2.2 CPA for Fire & Rescue Services is a three yearly inspection process with an interim inspection to ensure that the Service is continuing with its improvement.
- 2.3 Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority received its first CPA inspection in February 2005. A rating of "fair" was given following the inspection.

#### 3 REPORT

3.1 The forthcoming CPA process will assess the Service through a performance framework with three key elements:-

- A use of resources assessment. This will assess the Authority across a broad range of financial issues and provide a scored assessment including whether the Authority is providing value for money.
- A direction of travel assessment. This will be an assessment if improvement or deterioration from the previous CPA. It will be outcome focused and will draw together all of the other assessments of the Authority.
- Operational Assurance. A scored assessment which will have a emphasis on service delivery and will include an assessment of the quality of that delivery.

3.2 In all cases the scoring awards will focus on attaining a grade between 1 – 4. In respect of use of resources and operational assurance the scores are reflective of the following :

- 4 - Performing Strongly
- 3 - Performing Well

- 2 - Adequate Performance
- 1 - Inadequate Performance

The direction of travel assessment will be scored this :

- 4 - Improving Strongly
- 3 - Improving Well
- 2 - Improving Adequately
- 1 - Not improving adequately/Not improving

- 3.3 The Audit Commission are currently consulting on the methodology with all responses due 30 May 2006. However, it is not anticipated that there will be any major changes to the methodology and Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service are preparing for the assessment based on the consultation framework. A summary of the consultation responses alongside the confirmed framework will be published at the end of July.
- 3.4 The Service has already been notified that the 'Operational Assurance' inspection will be conducted on 6 – 8 November 2006. This will be undertaken by teams organised by the DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government), comprising of practitioners from Fire & Rescue Authorities. A separate consultation is being held for this element.
- 3.5 In respect of the other key focus areas the inspection will be undertaken by the current auditors during September and October. During November the Service will receive its interim inspection to ensure that it is meeting the outcomes of the previous inspection and moving forward with its agenda.
- 3.6 The final assessment will be drawn together during December to February 2007 with the final reports being declared in March 2007.
- 3.7 At present the Audit Commission are still considering the issue of recategorisation. However, this is not yet defined and they are proposing to undertake consultation during AUTUMN 2006. It is anticipated that should this be the case a full corporate assessment will have to be undertaken. Those Authorities showing signs of deterioration and those classified as weak/poor showing significant signs of improvement will be given priority.

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Although there are no direct costs associated with CPA the inspection regime does bring significant indirect costs. Staff time, allocation to preparation and administrative requirements all bring some financial burden. These are all met from within existing budgets.

#### **5 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

Personnel implications are primarily confined to the allocation of staff to the preparation of self assessments prior to the inspection taking place.

#### **6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

There are no direct equality issues arising from this report itself, the Services' progression to a more diverse workforce, will be measured as part of the direction of travel assessment.

#### **7 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

CPA is the primary measure of performance for Fire & Rescue Authorities and its laid down in statute by the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 through the Fire & Rescue Services

National Framework 2006 – 2008. This legislation is quite explicit in that the Secretary of State reserves the right to intervene in those Authorities not meeting expectations.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That Fire & Rescue Authority note the contents of this report.
- 8.2 That Fire & Rescue Authority delegate responsibility for monitoring preparation for this round of CPA to the Performance Monitoring Committee as per the Terms of Reference for that committee.
- 8.3 That Members are updated at the June seminar on the CPA process and the Authority's approach to it.

## **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION**

- Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004
- Fire & Rescue Services National Framework 2006 –2008
- Fire & Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07 (Consultation Document) – Audit Commission
- Fire & Rescue Services, Use of Resources 2006/07 Consultation Key Lines of Enquiry – Audit Commission
- Operational Assurance inspection framework Consultation – DCLG

Paul Woods  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**