

Fire and rescue

July 2006

# **Fire and rescue performance framework 2006/07**

**Guide to direction of travel assessments**

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## Introduction

- 1 This document is a guide to the direction of travel assessments for CPA 2006/07 for fire and rescue authorities. It is intended to be read alongside *Fire & Rescue Performance Framework 2006/07* (available at [audit-commission.gov.uk/fire](http://audit-commission.gov.uk/fire)) which sets out the overall CPA framework for fire and rescue services 2006/07 and the overarching methodology for direction of travel assessments.
- 2 A scored direction of travel assessment is an important element of the performance framework for fire and rescue authorities from 2006/07. The purpose of this assessment will be to provide a concise statement on an authority's improvement, or deterioration, since the baseline Fire and Rescue CPA assessment. The assessment will recognise progress since the fire and rescue CPA and qualify it by stating how well the authority is performing and whether or not it is considered that it will continue to improve.

## Key lines of enquiry and evidence sources

- 3 Set out below are the proposed KLOEs which we will use to inform the scored direction of travel assessments for fire and rescue authorities.

**Table 1 Key lines of enquiry and evidence sources**

Fire and rescue authorities.

Key lines of enquiry (KLOE)	Areas for investigation and likely evidence source	
<p><b>1. What evidence is there of the fire and rescue authority (FRA) improving outcomes?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Achievement of priorities</b></li> <li>• <b>Measurable improvements in outcomes and impact</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FRA self-assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>Field work</b></li> <li>• <b>Document review</b></li> </ul>
<p>1.1. Are services improving in areas the FRA has identified as priorities and areas the public say are important to their communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance against local targets including progress against IRMP annual action plans</li> <li>• Measurable impact from prevention activities and community safety projects</li> <li>• Track record of improvement, including in user satisfaction results</li> <li>• Delivery of outcomes based on the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate plan/ IRMP; BVPP</li> <li>• IRMP, Action plans 1,2,3</li> <li>• FA reports and minutes</li> <li>• Report on the operational assessment of service delivery (may still be in draft at the time of the DoT assessment)</li> <li>• Examples of evaluation reports and case studies showing the impact of local projects</li> <li>• Relevant PI data pack</li> <li>• FRA reports of progress against national framework requirements</li> </ul>
<p>1.2. What contribution is the FRA making towards wider community outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to achievements through the LSP and CDRP and specific initiatives to tackle local priorities such as community safety, anti social behaviour and health</li> <li>• Working across sectors to deliver outcomes for children and young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community fire safety strategy</li> <li>• Examples evaluations and case studies showing the impact of joint work</li> <li>• LPSA outcomes</li> <li>• Road safety initiatives</li> <li>• Youth engagement projects</li> <li>• Examples of outcomes and impact of work with</li> </ul>

Key lines of enquiry (KLOE)	Areas for investigation and likely evidence source	
<p>1.3. To what degree is the FRA improving both access and the quality of service for all its citizens focusing on those who have been 'hard to reach' or previously excluded?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of local communities and how they are changing</li> <li>• Community safety work is targeted to protect the most vulnerable and reach those at highest risk</li> <li>• Access to information and services is improving for the most disadvantaged, isolated and potentially excluded groups</li> </ul>	<p>young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable, up to date knowledge based on consultation; data sharing with partners and research – visible in key plans and strategies including IRMP and community safety strategy</li> <li>• Examples of community safety projects that are successfully reducing risk in the most vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Approach to and impact of Home Fire Risk Assessments</li> <li>• Examples of projects that have led to improvements in access and service</li> <li>• delivery to 'hard to reach groups'</li> <li>• FRA website and publications</li> <li>• Progress against Race Equality Scheme; LG Equality standard</li> </ul>
<p>1.4. Is value for money improving as well as quality of services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of resources value for money areas for investigation (questions 5.1 and 5.2)</li> <li>• The extent to which the FRA is delivering and planning for value for money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual efficiency statement</li> <li>• Pooled budgets and external funding</li> <li>• Capital programme</li> <li>• Asset management strategy</li> <li>• Deployment of resources - IRMP</li> <li>• Integration of performance and financial information</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. How much progress is being made to implement improvement plans to</b></p>	<p><b>Leadership and strategic planning</b> <b>Internal systems to support delivery of</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation of the FRA self-assessment</b> <b>Field work</b></p>

<b>Key lines of enquiry (KLOE)</b>	<b>Areas for investigation and likely evidence source</b>	
<b>sustain future improvement?</b>	<b>improvement Partnership working</b>	<b>Document review</b>
2.1 Does the FRA have robust plans for improving? (Aligned with other plans, SMARTI, detailed, resourced, agreed and widely communicated?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Key plans are SMART; integrated with each other; cover the medium to long term; and, support the vision and aims of the authority</li> <li>• Plans are clearly communicated internally to staff and authority members and externally to the public and to partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRMP/corporate plan</li> <li>• Medium term financial strategy</li> <li>• HR strategy and work force development plans</li> <li>• Asset management</li> <li>• Communication strategy</li> <li>• FRA website</li> <li>• Interviews with staff and members</li> </ul>
2.2 How well is the improvement planning being implemented: are key objectives and milestones being achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of leadership and strategic direction</li> <li>• Implementation of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities</li> <li>• Progress against current improvement plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with staff and members</li> <li>• CPA improvement plan</li> <li>• Action plans from internal service reviews</li> <li>• Progress report to members and senior management team</li> <li>• Discussion with the Business Change Manager</li> </ul>
2.3 Does the FRA have the capacity to deliver its plans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial capacity</li> <li>• Organisational development</li> <li>• Workforce planning</li> <li>• Member development</li> <li>• Diversity and equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium Term Financial Strategy</li> <li>• HR and organisational development strategies</li> <li>• Training and development plans</li> <li>• Equality and diversity strategy and action plans</li> <li>• Range of approaches and use of staff to deliver community safety and prevention projects</li> <li>• Interviews with staff and members</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed

Key lines of enquiry (KLOE)	Areas for investigation and likely evidence source	
<p>2.4 Is the FRA working with partners and Regional Management Board to improve its capacity to deliver its own priorities and outcomes and contribute to overall improvements across the area?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of partnership working including governance arrangements and cost effectiveness</li> <li>• Working across sector to deliver outcomes for children and young people and the most vulnerable, disadvantaged or potentially excluded groups</li> <li>• Quality and impact of contributions to the RMB at staff and member level</li> <li>• Involvement in RMB work streams</li> <li>• Degree of influence on RMB issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership register; protocols, performance management arrangements</li> <li>• Examples of improving capacity through collaboration and joint work to deliver shared goals for local people</li> <li>• Audit Commission review of the RMB</li> <li>• Examples of increasing FRA capacity to deliver its local priorities</li> <li>• Examples of joint solutions to shared problems and goals</li> <li>• Interviews with staff and members</li> <li>• Discussion with Business Change Manager</li> </ul>
<p>2.5 Are there any significant weaknesses in arrangements for securing continuous improvement or failures in corporate governance that would prevent improvement levels being sustained?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance management</li> <li>• Business risk management</li> <li>• Project management</li> <li>• Governance arrangements</li> <li>• Member engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Resources assessment</li> <li>• Operational assessment</li> </ul>

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## Judgement labels and descriptors

- 4 Set out below are the judgement labels and descriptors we propose to use to produce direction of travel assessments for fire and rescue authorities in 2006/07.



**Table 2 Judgement labels and descriptors**

Fire and rescue authorities from 2006/07.

<b>Judgement labels</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>
<b>Improving strongly</b>	<p>The FRA has a strong record of improvement in its priority areas and in making an effective contribution to wider community outcomes. Where comparisons can be made it has a record of achieving strong improvement relative to the performance of other FRAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FRA has a strong record of implementing the requirements of the National Framework for fire and rescue authorities.</li> <li>• The FRA is delivering improved outcomes to all its diverse communities and providing improved value for money.</li> <li>• The FRA has robust plans for further improving its corporate ability and can demonstrate it is delivering its planned improvements. As a result the FRA provides high levels of confidence that the better outcomes are sustainable.</li> <li>• The FRA can clearly show that it has the capacity it needs to deliver its future plans. The FRA has no weaknesses in its arrangements for securing continuous improvement, or failures in corporate governance, that would prevent improvement levels being sustained.</li> </ul>
<b>Improving well</b>	<p>The FRA has a record of improvement in its priority areas and in contributing to wider community outcomes. Where comparisons can be made it is improving well relative to the performance of other FRAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FRA can evidence improvements in outcomes for its diverse communities and in providing improved value for money.</li> <li>• The FRA has a record of implementing the requirements of the National Framework for fire and rescue authorities.</li> <li>• The FRA has robust plans for further improving its corporate ability and its service outcomes. The FRA is delivering improvements in line with most of its plans, so providing confidence that outcomes will continue to improve. It may need to improve delivery against some of its plans.</li> <li>• The FRA can show it has the capacity to deliver its future plans.</li> </ul>

Judgement labels	Descriptors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no significant weaknesses in how it delivers improvement or failures in corporate governance that would prevent improvement levels being sustained.</li> </ul>
<b>Improving adequately</b>	<p>The FRA is meeting only minimum requirements for securing continuous improvement. The FRA is generally making improvements to services, but its record may be inconsistent. The FRA has contributed to wider community outcomes but significant contributions may be isolated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where comparisons can be made, the FRA is improving relative to the performance of other FRAs in some service areas.</li> <li>• The FRA may be still identifying the needs of the National Framework for fire and rescue authorities in its area.</li> <li>• The FRA is addressing some sectors of its diverse communities, and may be still in the process of identifying how to effectively engage with all its communities. The FRA is generally improving value for money.</li> <li>• The FRA has reasonably robust plans for further improving its corporate ability. It needs to make some of its plans more robust.</li> <li>• The FRA is generally delivering improvements as planned, so providing some confidence that better outcomes will be secured in the future. It needs to improve delivery against its plans in some areas.</li> <li>• The FRA generally has the capacity to deliver its plans but there may be uncertainty about the capacity to deliver some of its plans.</li> <li>• There are no failures in corporate governance that would prevent improvement levels being sustained.</li> </ul>
<b>Not improving adequately or Not improving</b>	<p>For FRAs in this category a judgement will be made as to whether or not the failure to improve adequately can be reasonably described as 'not improving'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is no overall improvement in the FRA's performance, especially in relation to its priorities for improvement, the label 'not improving' will be applied.</li> </ul>

Judgement labels	Descriptors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If overall there are some signs of improvement, but the extent or speed of improvement is inadequate, the label 'not improving adequately' will be applied.</li> <li>• The FRA is struggling to implement the requirements of the National Framework for fire and rescue authorities.</li> <li>• The FRA is failing to improve priority service areas and performance in some services may be deteriorating. The FRA does not have a consistent record of improvement. Contributions to wider community outcomes are weak. While there may be some absolute improvements, where comparisons can be made there is no overall relative improvement.</li> <li>• The FRA is still identifying how to reach sectors of its diverse communities and is still in the process of identifying their needs. The FRA cannot provide clear evidence of improving value for money.</li> <li>• The FRA has poor plans for improving its corporate ability and/or is not meeting objectives and milestones for improvement. The FRA is not providing confidence that better outcomes will be achieved in the future.</li> <li>• The FRA may lack the capacity to deliver its plans. It may have serious weaknesses in its arrangements for securing continuous improvement, or failures in corporate governance.</li> </ul>