An Overview of the English Fire and Rescue Service

Police and Crime Panel Workshop – 12 July 2017

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Central Trends in UK Fire and Rescue Service Reform

1. **From national to local (de-centralisation)** – From nationally-prescribed standards and a central inspection regime, to local standards and ‘sector-led improvement’.

2. **From response to prevention** – From managing community risk by responding quickly and effectively when things go wrong, to trying to stop things going wrong in the first place.

3. **From public sector investment to austerity** – From Central Government investment linked to performance targets, to a programme for fixing the budget deficit by reducing public expenditure.
# Key Changes to the Fire and Rescue Service Landscape

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| **Fire Services Act 1947:**  
• Statutory responsibilities rest with fire authorities (discharged by officers via schemes of delegation)  
• Duty to respond to fires  
• National Standards of Fire Cover (property focused)  
• Powers to do other things  
• Assurance of operational performance by Her Majesty’s Fire Service Inspectorate | **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004:**  
• Statutory Responsibilities remain with fire authorities  
• Duty to promote fire safety  
• Duty to respond to incidents involving fires, road traffic collisions, CBRNE, trains, trams, aircraft and building collapse (USAR)  
• Powers to do other things remain  
• National Framework introduced:  
  • Integrated Risk Management Planning (Prevention, Protection, Response)  
  • National resilience  
  • Assurance of operational performance by Audit Commission (2008); then fire authorities (2012) |
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<td>Appointments and Promotions Regulations; Statutory promotion exams; &amp; Core Progression Courses at the Fire Service College.</td>
<td>National Occupational Standards, met through locally-determined arrangements</td>
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Opportunities and Challenges

1. From national to local (de-centralisation)
   ✓ Flexibility to focus on *REAL* risk in local communities (not just fire)
   ✓ Match resources and interventions to the *REAL* risk
   ? New expertise in risk analysis required
   ? Challenge from trade unions
   ? ‘Postcode lottery’
   ? Benign neglect of Central Government

2. From public sector investment to austerity
   ✓ A catalyst for change across the whole public sector (collaboration)
   ? Much reduced budgets (c20% in real terms)
   ? Challenge from trade unions (sometimes in connection with national issues)

3. From response to prevention
   ✓ Safer communities…from much broader perspective
   ? Potential victims of our own success
   ? Emerging issues with staff morale
The UK Fire and Rescue Service Operating Model in 2015

- Standards set locally by fire authorities
- Balanced Approach to Community Risk Management, through Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP):
  - **Prevention** – A 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Revolution
  - **Protection** – Risk-based audit programme of industrial and commercial buildings
  - **Emergency Response** – Locally determined standards, with networked specialist capability to provide national resilience
- **Outcomes** – Number of fires reduced by two-thirds and fire deaths and injuries halved
- **Performance Improvement and Assurance** – ‘Sector-led Improvement’ (Peer Review), and Fire Authority Statements of Assurance
Changing Political Landscape

• The Conservative Party won 2015 General Election - manifesto commitment to…

“Enable fire and police services to work more closely together and develop the role of elected and accountable police and crime commissioners.”

• ‘Consultation’ on enabling closer working between the emergency services

• Move from Department for Communities and Local Government back to the Home Office

• Introduction of new legislation

• The fire and rescue service reform programme was born…
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