"Putting the frontline first: Smarter Government": performance benchmarking data for the Fire and Rescue Service

Issued by:
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Addressed to:
The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chair of Regional Management Board
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer
CFOA President
CFOA Performance and Improvement lead
Fire LGA
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority

Please forward to:
Finance Directors & Treasurers
Performance and Improvement leads

Summary
This circular advises that performance benchmarking data for the Fire and Rescue Service is being developed with sector stakeholders and where additional information can be found.

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1.0 In April 2009, Government published its final report for the Operational Efficiency Programme (OEP). OEP aims to ensure that efforts to drive efficiency in public services keep pace with developments in the private sector. Five private and public sector leaders with relevant expertise were asked to examine key areas of operational expenditure in the following public sector areas:

- Back office operations and IT
- Collaborative procurement
- Asset management and sales
- Property
- Local incentives and empowerment

1.1 In December 2009 Government published its White Paper “Putting the frontline first: smarter government”. It builds on the OEP work and sets out Government’s case for smarter government to meet citizens’ demands for greater local accountability and transparency of public services. The publication of FRAs and RMBs Annual Efficiency Statements are an example of this: see Fire and Rescue Circular 2/2010 http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/1472056.

1.2 The White Paper confirmed that local authority benchmarking measures, currently being developed, would be extended to the Fire and Rescue Service as soon as practicable.

1.3 CLG is working with stakeholders such as CFOA to progress appropriate benchmarking measures for the Fire and Rescue Service drawing on the wider local government work. Two Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships and the Improvement and Development Agency are piloting the development of corporate measures, including peer challenge processes for local authorities.

1.4 The following links provide access to the three publications outlined in this circular:

- Putting the frontline first: smarter government: http://www.hmg.gov.uk/frontlinefirst.aspx

1.5 Further information will be issued as the local government pilots and FRS benchmarking data is developed. In the meantime, if you have any queries regarding this circular please contact Andy Swyer: andy.swyer@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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