Putting the frontline first: Meeting the local government challenge.

Publication of Task Force Report.

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Addressed to: Please forward to:
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The Chief Executive of the County Council Finance Directors
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority RMB Chairs
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer

Summary
This circular is to draw FRAs attention to the publication on the Department’s website of the report compiled by a Task Force set up to develop proposals to identify how authorities can be made more efficient and save money without negatively impacting the quality of frontline services.

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1.0 **Background**

1.1 In December 2009 the Government published its White Paper “Putting the frontline first: smarter government” which sets out Government’s case for smarter government to meet citizens’ demands for greater local accountability and transparency of public services.

1.2 Following publication of the White Paper, the Secretary of State asked Sir Richard Leese (Leader of Manchester City Council) and Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor of Lewisham Council) to lead a Task Force to develop proposals to identify how local authorities could be made more efficient without affecting frontline services.

2.0 **Task Force Report**

2.1 The Report was published on the Department's website on 1 March 2010: [http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/puttingfrontlinefirst](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/puttingfrontlinefirst). It challenges local authorities to take a strategic approach to managing their budgets and to take urgent and radical action to transform services. In doing so, the Report sets out ten strategic questions for local authorities to evaluate themselves against, and a framework of actions, tools and resources to help councils protect frontline services.

2.2 The taskforce report includes practical advice on how to go about the process, where to find help and examples of savings that can be achieved by making changes. Regional efficiency experts will provide advice and support.

2.3 Below are the contact details for the sector improvement bodies mentioned in the report:

- **Audit Commission**
  [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

- **CIPFA - the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy**
  [www.cipfa.org.uk](http://www.cipfa.org.uk)

- **IdeA - Improvement and Development Agency**
  [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

- **Leadership Centre**
  [www.localleadership.gov.uk](http://www.localleadership.gov.uk)

- **Local Partnerships**
  [www.localpartnerships.org.uk](http://www.localpartnerships.org.uk)

- **LGE - Local Government Employers**
  [www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk)

- **RIEPs - Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships**
  [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8595384](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=8595384)

- **SOLACE - Society of Local Authority Chief Executives**
  [www.solace.org.uk](http://www.solace.org.uk)

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