

Corporate Assessment

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
January 2009



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Introduction

- 1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is the means by which the Audit Commission fulfils its statutory duty under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003 to make an assessment, and report on the performance, of local authorities.
- 2 The purpose of the assessment is to assess how well the Fire and Emergency Planning Authority engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of its activities. It seeks to answer three headline questions underpinned by five specific themes.
 - What is the Fire Authority trying to achieve?
 - Ambition
 - Prioritisation
 - What is the capacity of the Fire Authority to deliver what it is trying to achieve?
 - Capacity
 - Performance management
 - What has been achieved?
 - Achievement and improvement

Executive summary

- 3 The Audit Commission carried out a performance assessment of London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) in 2004 and assessed the Authority as 'good'. In 2008 LFEPA applied to the Commission for reassessment. This reports sets out the findings and conclusions of this new corporate assessment.
- 4 LFEPA has improved its performance since 2004 and it now assessed as 'excellent'.
- 5 LFEPA works in a challenging context. It meets the demands of delivering a reliable fire and rescue service in a major capital city made up of 33 distinct and diverse local authority areas. It plays a strong and influential role in emergency planning for London.
- 6 The Commissioner and Chairman of the Authority are effective ambassadors for LFEPA. As a result partners and communities understand its ambitions and support and value what it is trying to do. Internally the Commissioner is a strong and visible leader. He inspires the confidence of staff, unions and Authority members and this helps to drive organisational change. Members have clear roles and responsibilities and they carry out their duties effectively and diligently.
- 7 LFEPA has impact at local, regional, national and international levels. As well as delivering an effective and reliable fire and rescue service for Londoners LFEPA has a strong influence nationally in areas such as resilience and promoting equality and diversity. Through international roles such as its work with NATO it brings knowledge and expertise to improve emergency planning for London and the UK.
- 8 Protecting the most vulnerable and those at highest risk is at the heart of the Authority's ambitions and plans. The London Safety Plan (Integrated Risk Management Plan) balances prevention, protection and emergency response based on risk. LFEPA focuses efforts and resources where they can have the greatest impact. It is able to do this because it has a well-developed understanding of the social, economic, and environmental challenges facing London communities.
- 9 LFEPA works well at a London-wide level maximising the safety of residents, workers and visitors. It contributes to delivery of regeneration projects and developments. It has a key role in the preparations for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics games giving fire protection a high-profile and working with other emergency services on security measures including safe evacuation routes.
- 10 LFEPA knows its communities. Reliable risk profiling, good research and exchange of information with partners provides a good picture of the needs and risks in London boroughs. LFEPA has an excellent understanding of the diversity of London neighbourhoods and links this to needs and vulnerabilities.

- 11 Borough Commanders are good community leaders and play a key role in local partnerships and in delivery of Local Area Agreements. Partners value their work highly and this helps to gain local support for LFEPA ambitions. LFEPA is not only delivering better outcomes through its own priorities but also contributing well to delivery of partners' ambitions, such as reducing crime and improving neighbourhoods.
- 12 LFEPA is good at consulting with local people and partners on issues that directly affect them and takes account of their views. There are good examples of engagement with minority and potentially excluded groups informing local planning. Borough plans reflect the differing needs of communities.
- 13 Consultation on pan London strategies is challenging because of the size and diversity of London but LFEPA does not give stakeholders enough opportunities to shape or influence its plans. It often confines its approach to inviting comment on draft plans rather than providing opportunities to inform its policies.
- 14 Reliable internal systems such as performance management, risk management and procurement help LFEPA to deliver its aims, the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (the National Framework) and the priorities of the London Mayor.
- 15 Sound financial management directs resources to priorities and enables a flexible response to changing needs. LFEPA has delivered significant efficiency savings in recent years and there is a strong commitment to value for money. However, it is not grasping all opportunities for efficiency savings or fully analysing all its activities to make sure that they represent value for money.
- 16 Good business planning translates ambitions and priorities into actions and outcomes. Some Borough Commanders have negotiated challenging local targets which are included in Local Area Agreements. However not all corporate targets are challenging.
- 17 LFEPA is building the capacity it needs to deliver what it wants to achieve. Workforce planning is robust with an excellent focus on equalities and diversity. The Authority is building skills and expertise and is strengthening management. Working in partnership is also boosting capacity to deliver better outcomes. LFEPA has developed good partnerships in all 33 London authorities.
- 18 Performance is good and improving. Strong leadership around challenging ambitions for equality and diversity, sustainability and London resilience is bringing excellent results. LFEPA met the requirements of the National Framework 2006/08 and is progressing against the National Framework 2008/11. Performance against national indicators is good with clear steady improvement in important areas such as reducing accidental fires and arson and injuries from fire. Effective community safety projects are delivering the Authority's aims for protecting the most vulnerable; for example, older people and people whose lifestyles make them more vulnerable to fire and other emergencies. Good projects with young people are having real impact not only on the lives and prospects of those taking part but also in reducing anti-social behaviour in the most deprived communities. LFEPA has set challenging, London-wide, standards for emergency response although it does not meet them consistently.

Areas for improvement

19 LFEPA has a strong focus on improvement. It can point to successes but it is aware that it can do more. To sustain improved outcomes and deliver more effectively against its ambitions it should strengthen the following areas.

- The approach to target-setting needs to be more consistent to provide a better focus for improvement. The Authority needs to achieve a better balance between what is realistically achievable and what is going to drive improvement by stretching performance as far as possible.
- There are some good examples of consultation. The Authority should build on its approach so a wider range of stakeholders have opportunities to influence and shape its plans. It needs to make sure that partners and communities have more opportunities to express their views at an earlier stage in planning.
- Authority Members and managers have a firm focus on efficiency savings. They need to build on this by taking a more strategic and overarching approach to value for money. This means analysing all aspects of LFEPA business, including operational preparedness and emergency response to make sure that it maximises opportunities to achieve greater value for money.

Summary of assessment scores

Headline questions	Theme	Score*
What is the Fire and Emergency Planning Authority trying to achieve?	Ambition	4
	Prioritisation	3
What is the capacity of the Fire and Emergency Planning Authority to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	Capacity	3
	Performance Management	4
What has been achieved?	Achievement	4
Overall Corporate Assessment Score **		Excellent
* Key to scores 1 – below minimum requirements – inadequate performance 2 – at only minimum requirements – adequate performance 3 – consistently above minimum requirements – performing well 4 – well above minimum requirements – performing strongly		

**** Rules for determining the overall Corporate Assessment score**

Scores on five themes	Overall Corporate Assessment score
No scores of 2 or 1 At least 2 scores of 4	Excellent
No scores of 1 At least 4 scores of 3 or more	Good
No score of 1	Fair
No more than 2 scores of 1 At least 3 scores of 2 or more	Weak
Any other combination of scores	Poor

Context

The locality

- 20** London is a major capital city - home to the British parliament, British and European financial centre and Royal Palaces. World Heritage Sites include the Palace of Westminster, Tower of London, Westminster Abbey and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. It is one of the busiest tourist destinations in the world. Over 25 million people visited London in 2007. Central London has a high proportion of non-domestic buildings including shops, offices and entertainment settings.
- 21** Covering around 1,587 square kilometres, London is made up of 32 separate boroughs and the City of London which are governed by individual unitary councils. Nine of the most deprived local authority areas in England are London boroughs. These are Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Islington, Lambeth, Barking and Dagenham, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Southwark.
- 22** Around 7.5 million people live in London. The population is expected to grow by nearly 10 per cent by 2016 rising to 8.1 million. People moving into London are mostly young adults. Around 16 per cent of the population are aged 60 years and over and around 25 per cent are aged 19 years or younger.
- 23** London is one of the most diverse cities in the world. Residents speak over 300 different languages, there are at least 14 distinct faith groups and 50 distinct communities of more than 10,000 people¹. Currently 29 per cent of the working age population is of black or minority ethnic origin.
- 24** There are around 3.2 million homes in London. Most people live in the outer London boroughs. Most of the housing stock was built at the start of the 20th century and is older than the housing stock of England as a whole. Over a third of private housing and 40 per cent of social housing does not meet the government's decent homes standard. The Thames Gateway project is the largest regeneration project in Western Europe with almost 200,000 new homes proposed for an area stretching from East London to Southend-on-Sea.
- 25** Around 20 new skyscrapers are planned for the city. These include the Shard London Bridge which at 310m high will stand 75m taller than Canary Wharf and house 53,858 square metres of office, hotel and residential space and Bishopsgate Tower which will be 228m high. Fire safety and emergency evacuation are important considerations.
- 26** London Underground is the world's largest underground network. Three million people use it each day. London is home to City and Heathrow Airports and the UK's busiest rail terminals.
- 27** In 2012 London will host the Olympic and Paralympics Games. London's authorities including LFEPA have the task of planning for the games and for their legacy.

¹ London Development Agency - Equality and Diversity in London

- 28** London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority faces great challenges in preventing large-scale emergencies and being prepared to respond to major incidents and catastrophic events such as acts of terrorism or natural disasters.
- 29** The London Regional Resilience Forum and London Resilience Team were established by Government following the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001. The Forum is responsible to the Government for maintaining a strategic overview of London's preparations for large-scale disruptions such as terrorism and natural disasters. The Forum is jointly-chaired by the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for London and the Olympics. The Mayor of London is the deputy chair. The work of the Forum is managed by the London Resilience Team and co-ordinated by the London Resilience Programme Board which is chaired by the Head of the London Resilience Team. The Forum and the Programme Board are supported by a number of Panels which allow partners from all relevant sectors to focus on particular areas of London's resilience. At a local level, there are six Local Resilience Forums in London, each chaired by a council Chief Executive. These Forums meet four times a year and provide a co-operative, focused approach to emergency planning issues. LFEPA has a role in London resilience at all levels.
- 30** Metropolitan Police figures show that overall crime fell in London in 2007/08. There was a downward trend across all crime categories, apart from gun crime. The 33 London Boroughs are diverse and there are different challenges in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a statutory role in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) and should work with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) on delivery of their Local Area Agreements (LAA). For LFEPA this means engaging in 33 CDRP and LAA. It must understand and respond in partnership to the community safety needs and concerns of over 7.5 million residents.

London governance

- 31** Regional governance arrangements for London are through the Greater London Authority (GLA) comprising the London Mayor and the London Assembly. LFEPA, the London Development Agency, the Metropolitan Police Authority and Transport for London are the 'functional bodies' of the GLA. Each of these bodies is accountable to the Mayor and the London Assembly to different degrees. For LFEPA, this means that the Mayor appoints all but two authority members upon the recommendation of London Councils and the Assembly. Every financial year the GLA prepares and approves a 'component budget' for each body including LFEPA and a 'consolidated budget' for the GLA and functional bodies together.

- 32** Londoners elect the 25 London Assembly members when they elect the Mayor. The Assembly scrutinises the Mayor's activities and questions the Mayor about his decisions and those of GLA staff. The Assembly also scrutinises matters relating to the principal purposes of the GLA and matters in which the Mayor is able to exercise statutory functions. It also investigates and prepares reports on matters which it considers to be of importance for Greater London. While the Assembly has no specific role in relation to LFEPA, in practice the Chairman of LFEPA and the Commissioner are questioned regarding their decisions and the work of the service every six months.
- 33** The Mayor must consult the functional bodies in preparing or revising the mayoral strategies and consider their responses. The strategies cover transport; spatial development; biodiversity; waste management; air quality; ambient noise; culture, health inequalities; housing; climate change mitigation and energy; and, the activities of the London Development Agency. The Mayor also has powers to issue directions and guidance to LFEPA about the exercise of its functions and the conduct of litigation. Any such direction or guidance must be consistent with the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services and fire safety enforcement guidance.
- 34** LFEPA has a specific duty to have regard to the mayoral strategies in exercising its functions (except for the cultural strategy).
- 35** In 2007/08 the Mayor required each functional body to address the following priorities:
- mitigate the effects of, and adapt to, climate change;
 - deliver the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics Games effectively, maximising the economic, social, health and environmental benefits of the Games to London and Londoners;
 - ensure GLA Group services are provided by a workforce that reflects the diversity of London;
 - ensure effective counter terrorism operations and capacity to respond to major catastrophic events;
 - reduce crime and fear of crime;
 - improve skills and employment opportunities of Londoners to meet the specific needs of London's economy and reduced worklessness; and
 - increase London's housing supply, including affordable housing, focusing on the Thames Gateway.

36 Additionally, LFEPA had to:

- as part of the emergency planning function, identify strategic flood, excess heat and drought implications for London;
- implement the [fire and rescue] modernisation agenda and derive benefits from a risk-based approach to fire safety issues;
- invest in emergency planning equipment and staff resources;
- tackle and reduce arson related anti-social behaviour as a contribution to the London anti-social behaviour strategy; and
- make significant progress in implementing the Mayor's pledge to provide home fire safety visits and provide smoke alarms for pensioners.

37 In May 2008, Londoners elected a new Mayor and the functional bodies will address new priorities from 2009/10. This assessment considers the performance of LFEPA in relation to the previous Mayor's priorities set out above.

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)

38 LFEPA sets the strategy for providing the fire and rescue service in London. The London Fire Brigade represents around 20 per cent of the total UK fire and rescue service. It is the third largest fire-fighting service in the world. The London Fire Brigade is lead by the Commissioner. Its corporate management team consists of the Commissioner; Deputy Commissioner; Director of Operational Policy and Training; Director of Resources; and, Director of Corporate Services.

39 LFEPA has 17 members all appointed by the Mayor. The Mayor chooses one of them to be the Chair of the Authority. Eight come from the GLA, seven from the London Boroughs and two are direct Mayoral appointees. The choice must reflect the balance of political parties in the bodies from which the members come. The current political composition of the Authority is six Conservative members, six Labour members, two Liberal Democrat members, two Mayoral appointees and one Green Party member. The Chairman is Conservative.

40 The Authority has five executive committees with decision making powers. These are the Appointments; Audit; Finance, Procurement and Property; Standards; and Urgency Committees. Membership of these committees reflects the political balance of the Authority. The Standards Committee Chair is independent of LFEPA and its business. Two panels advise the Authority. The Human Resources, Equalities and Health and Safety Panel and the Performance Management and Community Safety Panel. These panels scrutinise and challenge performance.

41 LFEPA employs over 7,260 staff including around 6,000 firefighters. There are 111 fire stations and 1 river station. Many fire stations are over 60 years old. LFEPA has 168 fire appliances and 70 special appliances such as aerial appliances and Fire and Rescue Units.. In 2007/08 the service answered around 254,000 emergency calls and attended over 144,000 incidents. These included 31,000 fires, 63,000 false alarms and 44,000 special services calls which include road traffic collisions.

42 For 2007/08 the total revenue spending was £443 million. LFEPa made £29 million in income giving a net outlay of £414 million. The Authority used around £14 million from reserves to support extra spending in areas such as resilience in responding to major incidents. Expenditure per head of population in 2007/08 was £52.9. The council tax precept was £47.1 (Band D equivalent) - an increase of 3.3 per cent on 2006/07. The new Mayor's budget requires no addition to the GLA council tax precept for Olympic security costs and that LFEPa budget increases do not exceed 1.53 per cent in 2009/10 and 1.25 per cent in following years.

What is the Fire and Emergency Planning Authority trying to achieve?

Ambition

- 43** LFEPA is performing strongly in this area. The Commissioner and Chairman are good ambassadors for the Authority and LFEPA provides excellent, influential leadership at pan- London level especially for resilience and emergency planning. Community leadership is also good at borough level. Ambitions are clear and link well to those of partners so LFEPA is not only achieving its own aims but also contributes well to wider social outcomes. The strength of the Authority's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable people is impressive and clear in its ambitions and supporting strategies.
- 44** LFEPA works in a challenging context and its ambitions reflect this. Its vision is to provide a world-class fire and rescue service for London, Londoners and visitors. LFEPA is clear about what this means. It means an organisation in which everyone focuses on contributing to making London a safer city. An organisation that improves community safety; deploys resources based on anticipated and actual risk; encourages partnership; champions sustainable development; and has a leadership role in the fire and rescue service nationally and internationally. This clarity enables staff, Authority Members and partners to understand and support the vision.
- 45** Ambitions balance prevention, protection and emergency response. They reflect the National Framework and incorporate the priorities of the London Mayor. The London Safety Plan (the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan – IRMP) is the delivery mechanism. LFEPA summarises its ambitions through six strategic aims.
- Prevention: engaging with London's communities to inform and educate people in how to reduce the risk of fires and other emergencies.
 - Protection: influencing and regulating the built environment to protect people, property and the environment from harm.
 - Response: planning and preparing for emergencies that may happen and making a high quality effective and resilient response to them.
 - Resources: managing risk by using resources flexibly, efficiently and effectively, continuously improving the way we use public money.
 - People: working together to deliver the highest quality services within a safe and positive environment for everyone in the organisation.
 - Principles: operating in accordance with our values and ensuring that safety, sustainability, partnership and diversity run through all our activities.

Organisational values of fairness, integrity, respect, service and trust underpin the aims. This makes it clear what LFEPA is trying to achieve for itself as an organisation and for London's communities.

46 In 2005/06 LFEPA set ambitious five-year headline performance targets to:

- reduce accidental fires in homes by 5 per cent;
- reduce the number of accidental fire related deaths in homes by 20 per cent;
- reduce deliberate fires by 10 per cent;
- reduce hoax calls by 5 per cent;
- maintain the average time taken for the first fire appliance to arrive at an incident; and
- improve the time it takes a second fire appliance to attend incidents.

These targets have driven the overall performance of the organisation since 2005. Other long-term targets link to delivery of the Mayor's priorities. For example targets for carbon reduction, improving the diversity of the workforce and delivery of the Olympics. In this way LFEPA sets a clear path towards achievement of its ambitions.

47 LFEPA contributes well to delivery of the Mayor's strategies and GLA ambitions. It has an important role in major projects such as Thames Gateway and Crossrail. It has a project team seconded to the Olympics programme. They are driving a firm focus on fire prevention and protection issues, influencing safe working practice on the Olympic sites and ensuring effective security and civil contingency arrangements. In this way LFEPA is helping to make sure there are robust plans and procedures to ensure the safety of residents, visitors and participants.

48 Through excellent leadership and sound emergency planning LFEPA is strengthening London resilience and improving preparedness for London wide emergencies. LFEPA manages the London Local Authority Co-ordination Centre. This enables London's 33 authorities to act as a single entity if there is an emergency incident that requires a pan London response. LFEPA also co-ordinates the arrangements for London Local Authority Gold so one local authority chief executive can represent all 33 authorities. It provides 24-hour support through the 'gold office' and leads annual training and exercises to test London's collective response. It receives funding from London boroughs for this work. Partners value the Authority's approach to emergency planning. It brings clarity to roles and responsibilities and confidence that London authorities can deal with emergencies in a joined up and effective manner.

49 LFEPA plays a key role in other pan London partnerships, for example in Capital Ambition, London's Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. Its vision is for London's public services to be leaders for innovation, fairness, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness. Key to this is strong collaboration. By working in partnership at this strategic level LFEPA is able to promote its ambitions and have a direct influence on plans to improve the quality of life for Londoners and visitors.

- 50** Leadership on equality and diversity is strong and effective. LFEPA advises ministers and works to drive improvements in the fire service nationally. Internally the Commissioner and Chairman keep the profile high. Members act as champions driving an organisation wide commitment to improve and setting good examples through their own behaviour. Externally LFEPA promotes awareness of its commitment to improving equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity. LFEPA is number 13 on the Stonewall index - the highest ranked fire authority. In 2007/08 it had 24 feature stories in London media to support recruitment campaigns for women and black and minority ethnic (BME) applicants. The strength of leadership means that planning and policy making fully integrate equality and diversity issues and corporate targets are challenging and closely monitored.
- 51** LFEPA also has an influential role internationally. In its role as a NATO 'expert partner' it contributed to the development of the NATO non-binding guidelines for response to CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) incidents. Last year it designed the evaluation and assessment regime for NATO Civil Emergency Planning exercises. LFEPA also helps to improve the response of other NATO countries to significant incidents, for example supporting several Nordic countries in developing their approaches. LFEPA uses knowledge and expertise gained in this international role to inform London resilience planning supporting its aim to deliver high quality effective and resilient response to emergencies.
- 52** Borough Commanders are effective community leaders with influential roles in Local Strategic Partnerships. The Borough Commander for Havering is the Community Safety theme delivery champion for the LAA and Chair of the CDRP Implementation Group. LAA and partnership working reflects LFEPA priorities. The Hammersmith and Fulham LAA includes a target to reduce house fires. In Islington the LAA includes a three-part indicator to increase home fire safety visits (HFSV), reduce accidental house fires and have no injuries in homes that had an HFSV. In Bromley strong partnership working is reducing deliberate fires through the multi-agency Arson Reduction Strategy. In Redbridge good collaboration with the Police and the Volunteer Compact is providing LFEPA with access to around 800 local groups. As a result partners understand and contribute to achievement of LFEPA ambitions.
- 53** LFEPA also contributes well to delivery of partner's ambitions. In Islington the fire team contributes to LAA indicators for promoting independence. In Redbridge the Borough Commander Chairs a crime solving group which met all of its targets for the past year including tackling bogus callers. In Hillingdon the Borough Commander encouraged the CDRP to fund a Community Safety Officer to work with MIND and the Alzheimer's Society. A local station manager Chairs the Lambeth Safety Council - a joint initiative aimed to co-ordinate safety and citizenship across the borough. The team also took part in Operation Fresh view, a multi-agency clean up in the worst wards. The Borough Commander in Greenwich co-chairs the Youth Crime Prevention Project Board. In this way LFEPA improves the overall well-being of residents.

- 54** LFEPA bases ambitions on robust understanding of need and assessment of risk. At a strategic level it considers future challenges and pressures such as the Thames Gateway development and preparing for and delivering the Olympics. Up-to-date research and demographics help identify the most vulnerable. The corporate plan 2008/11 has a good summary of London's population and built environment and how it is changing. Reliable tools predict risk. The Incident Risk Analysis Tool (IRAT) uses around 50 data sets including incident data, data from partners and information about different lifestyles and their likely risks. This enables LFEPA to identify where fires are most likely to occur. It informs borough risk profiles which focus local prevention and protection work. It is producing 'priority postcodes' for HFSV. In Lambeth the borough profile identified the top 30 most vulnerable streets and focused support has reduced the number of accidental fires in the Waterloo area. Emerging risks at local level also feed up into corporate and borough planning. This means that LFEPA can have confidence that its ambitions and aims target the right risks for Londoners.
- 55** LFEPA has a good understanding of the diversity of London communities and the impact this has for its work. Community engagement is effective at borough level both through the local teams and the area-based Fire Community Safety Officers (FCSO). For example, delivering fire safety messages to the Turkish community in North London and more isolated groups such as the Ethiopian community in Haringey and young people from Somalia in Enfield. Partnership working with the largest Sikh Gurdwara in the UK in Southall led to training community fire wardens. Such engagement not only helps to identify differing needs and vulnerabilities but also engages communities in local solutions that support deliver of LFEPA ambitions.
- 56** Borough Commanders combine their excellent knowledge of risk with data from partners to build a shared picture of local needs so local interventions target the most vulnerable people. For example, the housing department at Croydon Borough Council shares the names and addresses of tenants so the fire service can reach those at highest risk. Information sharing protocols with Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council help the local fire team to target vulnerable older people. In Newham an arrangement with local letting agencies enables the borough team to find out where new tenants are and target homes in multiple occupation or homes that change hands often. This is important in a borough with a high transient population of around 30 per cent. In Islington the local team has good links with statutory and third sector organisations working in mental health. The Mental Health Trust involves the fire service in case conferences of known or potential fire setters.
- 57** Partners, London politicians and some community representatives have good opportunities to comment on and influence the LSP through responses to early drafts of the plan. E-consultation is available via the LFEPA website and the Authority provides questionnaires from outlets such as Citizens Advice Bureaux and libraries. LFEPA also targets borough partners and specific interested parties using the Third Sector Alliance Portal and the London Civic Forum. It is expanding its approach at the policy development stage to involve more people in shaping the LSP.

- 58** Authority members, staff and partners help shape the ambitions and the strategies to deliver them. For example through horizon scanning exercises for members and managers and events with staff such as 'roundtable on risk'. Members and managers use joint away days to identify key issues and set the strategic direction. This drives a strong commitment to the ambitions which Members promote vigorously.
- 59** Communication is good and makes clear what LFEPA ambitions and organisational values mean. The Public Affairs function is effective at managing the Authority's relations with senior London stakeholders lobbying support for the ambitions. The aims and values are obvious in all strategies and plans providing a clear focus for the organisation. Internal communications through the intranet and staff magazines focus on the aims. Managers use 'Hot talk' and staff briefings to communicate plans. The Commissioner promotes the aims and models the values. Staff, members and partners are clear about what matters to LFEPA.

Prioritisation

- 60** LFEPA is performing well in this area. Ambitions translate into clear priorities, objectives and action plans. Strategies effectively balance local, regional and national priorities. Business planning firmly aligns finances to priorities. Sound delivery frameworks turn ambitions into real deliverables on the ground and staff, partners and the public can easily see how well the Authority is doing. Plans have clear performance measures but not all targets are challenging. LFEPA is good at consulting with local people and partners on issues that directly affect them and takes account of their views. At borough level good community engagement and strong partnerships support debate on local plans and priorities. At pan-London level consultation focuses too much on partners and community representatives commenting on draft plans rather than informing policy.
- 61** Corporate strategies, departmental and borough plans, station and team plans link well to each other and clearly reflect the corporate aims. For example the Communications Departmental Plan makes clear links to reducing fire deaths and improving the diversity of the workforce. It is clear how the department leads on or contributes to corporate performance indicators. Fire safety plans link clearly to the organisational aim of 'Protection'. Plans have resources earmarked and responsibilities and accountabilities assigned. The personal development review system (PDR) is in place for all non-uniformed staff and all senior uniformed staff. Where it is in place staff have individual targets that link to the corporate objectives. Such robust planning means that staff and managers understand how their work contributes to achieving the overall organisational aims and are held to account.

- 62** Resources follow priorities. The corporate plan sets out clearly the actions over the next three years to achieve the ambitions. It incorporates the Medium Term Financial Strategy showing how finances support delivery. Following a thorough analysis of the impact of the terrorist attacks in July 2005, LFEPA has diverted capacity to strengthen its response to major incidents and to fulfil the New Dimensions Programme. Fundamental Reviews result in diversion of resources to priority areas. For example, the review of community safety in 2007/08 led to greater investment in specialist practitioners and creation of the Community Action Team. LFEPA is also investing in its priorities for emergency response and sustainability. It is piloting an all terrain vehicle to improve access to off-road incidents and investing in new hose reels to improve efficient use of water/foam and reduce environmental impact. The 'strategic resource' programme secures firefighter resources for essential training and prevention work. The programme releases appliances and firefighters from emergency response duties each day (with minimal impact on emergency cover) so that crews can take part in risk critical training and community safety activities.
- 63** Borough Commanders target resources towards priority areas. The Authority sets a target for the percentage of firefighter time spent on community safety. Borough risk profiles help Borough Commanders to make sure that they prioritise people and areas at highest risk. Priorities are regularly revised following annual updates to profiles.
- 64** Members and managers take difficult decisions to support delivery of priorities. LFEPA moved appliances from central to outer London to support the five-year targets to improve response times. This included closing Manchester Square fire station and reducing firefighters by one each shift from larger stations released efficiency savings without impact on emergency response. The Authority redirected these to prevention work.
- 65** When LFEPA proposes to change or reshape priorities it consults well with those most affected listening to their views and giving them a chance to shape its plans. For example engaging with young people and their parents and carers in developing schools packages. This improved the final product making it more child-friendly and more suitable for children with special needs, physical disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language. This gives the approach more impact and helps LFEPA reach more families. The Authority carried out extensive consultation and communication with local communities around the closure of Manchester Square fire station. This was a difficult decision politically but LFEPA members and managers worked hard to gain the confidence of local people and they managed the closure well.

- 66** Engagement at borough level is good. LFEPA uses joint consultation events with partners. Safer Neighbourhoods groups focus on community issues and shape partnerships actions. In Redbridge they raised road traffic collisions as a priority. The Bromley Borough Commander works with the Community Engagement Forum which includes representatives from 40 local organisations. In Lewisham the fire team are on the steering group of the Lewisham Community Police Consultative Group. LFEPA also includes questions in local Citizens Panel surveys. There are examples of good direct engagement with potentially excluded groups such as with Faith Forums and traveller communities. As a result borough working reflects well the differing needs of communities.
- 67** LFEPA works hard to give stakeholders opportunities to comment on draft plans and test reactions to its proposals. Responses are taken on board in the final plans. LFEPA does not yet give sufficient opportunities for people to shape or influence its policies. Consultation on pan London strategies is challenging because of the size and diversity of London and the Authority recognises that it could do more. The Corporate Plan 2008/11 includes a commitment to expand community engagement so that more people living and working in, or visiting London can help to shape future services.
- 68** Consultation with staff is generally good although some front-line staff would like more involvement. Borough Commanders have a good influence over the shape of the borough action plan and targets. The Authority consults with staff groups on the equality and diversity issues of new policies and developments. These include staff support groups such as the Asian Fire Service Association and local support groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT staff) and women. It uses 'Hot Talk' and internal newsletters to seek the views of staff. This helps gain their commitment to delivery of priorities.
- 69** Having set its priorities and plans LFEPA sets some challenging targets to make sure performance improves. For example in 2008/09 it is aiming for 10 per cent of recruits to be women and 18 per cent from BME communities. It aims to recycle 50 per cent of waste. Ambitious targets aim to reduce sickness levels to no more than 4 per cent of shifts/days lost for fire fighters and no more than 3 per cent for non-uniform staff. Fire control targets match the standard the government is expected to set for regional control centres. This is 95 per cent of calls answered within five seconds. Current performance is 86 per cent within seven seconds. These stretched targets drive up performance.
- 70** Targets in other areas are less challenging and not always realistic. For example, LFEPA risk modelling has identified 630,000 vulnerable homes that need an HFSV. The current target of 40,250 HFSV each year means that it will take LFEPA several decades to reach all these homes by itself. In 2007/08 it set more targets to deliver HFSV in partnership but these proved to be unachievable. The target was around 65,000 but LFEPA only achieved 19,000. As a result it is not clear what LFEPA is trying to achieve for these vulnerable homes.

71 Borough Commanders have negotiated some challenging targets in LAAs but corporate targets for Borough Commanders are not consistently stretching. In Tower Hamlets the fire team spent 10 per cent of time on community safety in 2004/05 but work to a corporate target of only 8 per cent in 2007/08. On the other hand the borough has a very challenging target for HFSV. This inconsistency reduces the potential for targets to drive improvements.

What is the capacity of the Fire and Emergency Planning Authority to deliver what it is trying to achieve?

Capacity

- 72** LFEPA is performing well in this area. Reliable internal systems and effective partnerships support delivery of aims and priorities. Sound financial management and good people management provide the necessary resources. Members and managers work well with a strong focus on outcomes for the most vulnerable communities. LFEPA is a national leader on equality and diversity. It has achieved Level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. Its policies have significantly improved the diversity of its workforce, development opportunities for staff and engagement in communities. Governance is sound and effective. LFEPA committees provide good support for delivery of priorities. Members are clear about their roles and are good leaders for the organisation. LFEPA delivers efficiency savings but it is not grasping all opportunities to achieve value for money.
- 73** The Commissioner and Chairman share a common vision for the Authority. Although they have different styles of leadership they work together to plan and deliver organisational change. Examples include the move to a new headquarters and changes to conditions of service for watch managers. The Commissioner is highly regarded by staff. He inspires their confidence and trust. This has helped achieve changes such as introducing performance-related pay that would have been difficult in the past. The Chairman is robust and challenging but staff and some external stakeholders find his style too confrontational. Implementation of the Operational Efficiency Programme in 2009/10 represents significant organisational change in areas such as shift patterns, resting arrangements and station work routines. The programme is likely to test industrial relations and need good, agile leadership to take staff forward and drive through such challenging changes.
- 74** Governance arrangements are effective with clear responsibilities and accountabilities that lead to sound decisions. Relationships within the corporate management team are productive and based on open challenge and debate. The Corporate Management Board (CMB) has good leadership with consensus around what LFEPA is trying to achieve and a clear focus on problem solving. A sound understanding of performance and risk underpins decisions. LFEPA Members are hard-working and conscientious. They bring a high level of experience and expertise to the Authority. As a result LFEPA committees work well and support delivery of Authority aims and the Mayor's priorities.

- 75** Business risk assessment and management is good. Corporate and departmental planning fully integrates risk. Risks identified in three-year departmental plans and departmental risk registers feed into corporate risk management. Reporting against risks is integral to performance management. Risk awareness is high and managers routinely consider controls to mitigate risks in their work. Members are fully involved and so risks are considered and reviewed at all levels of decision making.
- 76** Financial management arrangements follow GLA guidelines and make sure the Authority has the financial capacity to deliver its ambitions and priorities. Financial planning is robust. The Mayor sets the net revenue spending and LFEPA decides on the best way to achieve this considering growth bids. Members take part initially at an away day and then via two distinct scrutiny sessions. Members scrutinise under spends and reinvest funds in priority areas. For example last year diverting funds to occupational health to tackle sickness absence. The Authority has a good understanding of costs. Higher spending links to priority areas. Expenditure per head of population in 2007/08 was above the average for metropolitan authorities and above the national average for all fire and rescue authorities. However the council tax precept was significantly below average with a comparatively low increase. LFEPA boosts its financial capacity by generating income. Chasing insurance company payments due under the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Act produced £1.4 million this year. Workplace fire safety training for public and private organisations also brings in funds. In total LFEPA generated around £29 million in income in 2007/08. This helps reduce costs to taxpayers.
- 77** The Authority is achieving value for money securing efficiency savings alongside performance improvement. Between 2004/05 and 2007/08 it delivered around £33.5 million in cashable savings and around £5.8 million non-cashable - largely from reducing sickness absence. LFEPA has also achieved efficiency savings through flexible crewing. This includes new crewing arrangements for Urban Search and Rescue vehicles. A good approach to procurement helps achieve value for money. For example savings through changes to catering on fire stations and a renegotiated clothing contract. LFEPA led two projects for the London Centre of Excellence - the Contracts Relationship Management project and the Strategic Supplier Intelligence Project involved collaborative working with London Boroughs to achieve cost savings.
- 78** Procurement supports delivery of priorities. The procurement strategy links to the corporate aims and the Medium Term Financial Plan. It helps achieve objectives for sustainability. For example, LFEPA avoided significant energy cost increases through a 3-year contract costing on average 30 per cent less than market prices. In 2007 LFEPA won the Corporation of London Sustainable Procurement Award. It was highly commended for the Mayors Green Procurement Code - Going the Extra Mile award. In 2008 it won a Sustainable Development UK award its furniture disposal project which recycled 80 per cent of furniture from the old headquarters. Procurement also helps achieve aims for equality and diversity. LFEPA suppliers and contractors must comply with good practice on equalities and diversity. Service providers must have comprehensive equal opportunities policies; use open recruitment; address imbalances in applicants and employees according to race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and faith; and, report and consult on equality in the workplace.

- 79** Although LFEPA delivers its efficiency targets it is not assessing all aspects of its business to make sure that it delivers value for money. This year the Mayor requires LFEPA to save £7.7 million. The Chairman has pledged to deliver £9.2 million. These savings are coming from restructuring support systems and non-uniform staff. This fits with the Mayor's commitment to more efficient back office systems across the GLA group. When it comes to operational systems LFEPA risk modelling shows that it could provide existing levels of emergency cover with fewer appliances and staff. Despite this it does not plan to decrease appliances or uniformed posts but plans to use the capacity it has more effectively through increased productivity achieved via the Operational Efficiency Programme. However this is not in place yet and so the current capacity does not represent good value for money.
- 80** Project management is sound and helps achieve value for money. Projects clearly link to corporate aims with defined and measurable outcomes. Regular reviews monitor status and progress. Examples include the Respiratory Protective Equipment Replacement project which has a clear business case based on risks, benefits and costs. The move to the new headquarters this year was achieved on time and £3 million below budget. Project management integrates fully with performance management and the effectiveness of the approach contributes to delivery of ambitions and priorities.
- 81** LFEPA has robust and effective strategies for managing people. It has completed an equal pay review and implemented single status. It has family friendly policies. A rigorous approach to managing absence is reducing sickness and ill health retirements. Sickness levels have fallen consistently since 2004/05.
- 82** Workforce planning is good. The skills and diversity of the workforce are improving. Rigorous analysis helps target recruitment and development and identifies trends. Successful schemes are building management and leadership capacity and helping to provide equal opportunities. LFEPA is using the national leadership model (Aspire). It has two fast track routes to management roles: The Targeted Development Programme (TDP) and the Graduate Entry Scheme (GES). A third of participants in the TDP are BME staff. Nearly half of the GES entrants are women. The GES staff are completing their firefighter training and expected to undertake the Middle Management Assessment Centre by 2012, significantly quicker than typical progression. TDP participants have completed a development programme of secondments and are ready for middle management promotion. LFEPA evaluation shows that TDP participants contribute effectively to organisational projects. GES participants are positive about their experience and receive good feedback.
- 83** LFEPA uses good approaches to maximise staff capacity and to plan and manage workloads. For example the electronic station diary helps staff to plan their working day. Other software provides details on staff profiles, availability of staff and staff skills. It links to other software to provide information on appliance skill requirements and use of appliances at incidents. This helps managers to use staff time productively.

- 84** A firm focus and good leadership is delivering aims for equality and diversity. LFEPA has a comprehensive Combined Equality Scheme. All departmental plans have identified equality leads and equality targets. Equality Impact Assessments are part of routine policy development and action planning. Staff receive regular, good quality training and are held to account for following Authority guidelines. Performance development reviews requires staff to address equalities in their job role. LFEPA reached level 5 of the Equality Standard this year and is exceeding the 2008/09 national targets. Staff have good support. Newly appointed women firefighters are placed at stations where there are support networks. A clear corporate message about unacceptable behaviour has reduced harassment and bullying. Internal support groups enable staff to network and to provide good challenge to policies and service delivery. Members of the groups support front-line staff and firefighters in engaging with minority groups. They also provide good support for new staff. This is improving retention of staff from minority groups and giving them an effective voice in the organisation.
- 85** LFEPA has implemented the Integrated Personal Development System. It has a clear focus on upholding skills and competencies. Personal reviews identify training needs. However attendance at training is below target. The Strategic Resource programme (see paragraph 62) releases firefighters from emergency response duties for part or all of a daily shift to undertake essential training. However the available time is not fully used because, other than to respond to emergency calls, appliances cannot leave fire stations until any crewing shortages across London are resolved by transferring firefighters between stations. Typically, these transfers take around an hour and a half from the start of the shift to complete. This reduces the time available for productive work or training.
- 86** Partnership working and collaboration is increasing capacity. Borough Commanders inspire the confidence of partners so they are more willing to fund joint work. For example several LSPs contribute to cost of delivering Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE) courses with young people. The prison service also supports LIFE courses in local institutions such as Feltham Young Offenders Institution. In Bromley and Hounslow the CDRP focuses resources on tackling arson. Partnerships with third sector groups such as Age Concern, Help the Aged, and the Hindu Cultural Heritage Society are helping to reach and provide HFSV to vulnerable older people in line with the former Mayor's priorities and LFEPA objectives. A three-year partnership between LFEPA, Lambeth Council and British Gas means that British Gas carry out HFSV in social housing as part of annual gas appliance checks. In Tower Hamlets the local partnership supports a borough-based arson reduction officer. In Hillingdon, to support a stretch target to reduce dwelling fires, partners fund a community safety officer to forge links with organisations such as MIND, Alzheimer's Society and the Drug and Alcohol team. Schemes like these provide valuable extra capacity.
- 87** There are some areas where a lack of investment or planning by LFEPA compromises capacity to continue to deliver in partnership. Some partnerships, such as those with the third sector to provide HFSV, rely on national government funding for smoke detectors. Although LFEPA has rolled forward some residual government funds to 2009/10 there are no clear plans for funding these partnerships in the longer-term .

- 88** The Authority is improving accessibility to information and services. This year it has launched an improved and updated website following substantial user testing both internally and externally. The new site has greater functionality (for example visitors can book an HFSV online) and AA rating for accessibility. Monitoring shows much higher use. Ongoing testing with the public and staff will continue to improve the site.
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Performance management

- 89** LFEPA is performing strongly in this area. The Authority has a good picture of how it is performing. Performance reporting internally is strong and effective and developing well in partnerships. Up-to-date, reliable performance information clearly links to the strategic aims, costs and risks. Information is clear and accessible. LFEPA takes prompt and suitable action when performance starts to go off track. Members are clear about what is important and this helps them to focus interventions and channel resources and efforts towards priorities.
- 90** Staff have access to good quality performance information. The annual report 'Our Performance 2007/08' outlines performance levels and trends against national and local indicators and the corporate aims. The 'Our Borough Digest' reports provide a concise outline of performance borough by borough. Station quarterly reports set out detailed performance against indicators comparing it to the same period in the previous two years. Rates of improvement and levels of performance are compared across stations. Station posters provide a quick overview for the station with watch performance against four specific measures which are currently - average crew turnout time; time spent on community safety; shifts lost to sickness; and, HFSV completed against target. In fire control performance in call handling is reported daily and collected weekly, monthly and quarterly to identify trends and target actions. This means that staff have a good picture of where they need to target improvement.
- 91** Public reporting of performance is clear and easy to understand. Performance information is reported in the corporate plan, the LSP plans and on the LFEPA web site. Public leaflets and media presentations make it clear what standards the public can expect of their fire and rescue service. Staff, partners and the public can get a clear picture of how well LFEPA is performing against its organisational priorities and the Mayor's priorities.
- 92** CMB reviews performance in a culture of open debate and productive challenge. Reports are clear and accessible. They integrate performance, costs and risks. CMB holds heads of service and directors to account for performance against corporate and departmental indicators, risks and progress of projects. It seeks explanations when performance is declining or not improving at an acceptable rate and there is good challenge from senior managers and the Commissioner. Remedial action is agreed with the manager responsible. Directors take a lead role in championing one of the Authority's cross-cutting objectives (partnership, sustainability, diversity and safety). CMB holds them to account for delivery. This approach makes sure that LFEPA stays on track and keeps a clear focus on priorities.

- 93** Members have an effective role in managing performance. The Performance Management and Community Safety Panel reviews performance information and presents progress reports to full authority meetings. The panel can also commission thematic reports which focus on issues in more detail. For example, in October 2008 a thematic report on secondary fires focused resources on the 20 per cent of areas that cause 80 per cent of incidents. In March 2008 a report on vehicle fires drove more effective partnership working with the police, CDRP and insurance companies. A report on deliberate primary fires provided good analysis of causes including the profile of those at risk. This led to a new Juvenile Fire setter Intervention Scheme. In this way Members drive improvements.
- 94** The London Assembly also provides effective challenge and scrutiny of performance via its quarterly meetings with LFEPA. These focus on performance outcomes and financial reporting against the budget. This scrutiny makes sure that LFEPA stays on track to deliver its own and the mayoral priorities.
- 95** A rigorous approach to audit and review of incidents and health and safety events targets training to improve performance although evaluation of its impact is not always robust. The Dynamic and Intelligent Operational Training (DIOT) system identifies emerging issues and trends. Health and Safety audits flag issues for attention. These appear in the Operations newsletter and feed into training events for firefighters. Evaluation of the resulting impact of such training is not always robust but there is evidence that the Authority's approach improves performance of individuals and crews.
- 96** The Authority makes good use of internal and external challenge to diagnose problems and identify improvements. Fundamental reviews involve LFEPA staff and staff from other fire and rescue authorities to provide good challenge. As part of the Authority's fundamental review of partnerships it commissioned an external peer review. The review of the effectiveness of community safety and review of organisational capacity both resulted in changes to business management arrangements and restructures to improve effectiveness.
- 97** LFEPA and its partners know how they are performing against planned outcomes through good evaluation of partnership projects. For example external evaluation of the LIFE project showed that it has successfully engaged with challenging young people and produced good quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Evaluation of the Community Safety Cycle Project aimed at reducing deliberate fires, strengthening multi-agency approaches and raising the profile of the fire service showed clear local outcomes. At Borough level the Authority engages in performance management frameworks of the LAAs and partnerships such as CDRPs with routine reporting of progress against shared priorities.
- 98** LFEPA learns from its experiences. There are examples of good practice being shared so that new communities can benefit from successful schemes. Borough Commander meetings include 'master classes' to share good practice. Borough Commander Meetings with Deputy Assistant Commissioners also focus on performance outcomes. Examples of extending good practice include the roll out of LIFE schemes to boroughs where they have the potential for the greatest impact and work with Somali community in Haringey reproduced in other boroughs. The FCSO work well as a team sharing experience and good practice.

- 99** The Authority improved its ability to respond quickly and effectively to major emergencies including learning from its response to the July 7 2005 terrorist attacks. It procured new Fire Rescue Units and Command Support Units; improved respiratory protection equipment for firefighters trained for urban search and rescue; and, placement of six high volume pumps at strategic locations throughout London. The Authority has made sure that staff training and competence has kept track with the new equipment. This contributes to its vision of being a world service for Londoners and its aim of planning and preparing for emergencies. It also contributes to the Mayor's priority for investments in emergency planning.
- 100** The Authority also learns from the good practice of others. For example in trying to engage better with traveller communities it considered the approaches used by Essex, Tyne and Wear and Merseyside fire and rescue authorities. LFEPA makes good use of benchmarking information. Thematic reports include comparisons with national performance information. LFEPA also compares its performance with other London emergency services. This helps the Authority to identify and learn from best practice.
- 101** LFEPA also learns from the experience of service users. It has effective complaints procedures and it uses feedback to shape service delivery well. For example following a series of complaints from residents across London it changed its policy on fitting smoke detectors. In addition the language used around HFSV has changed in response to feedback. The visits were referred to as checks but this terminology became a barrier in some communities so they were changed to visits. LFEPA seeks feedback on its performance for example from people receiving HFSV and receiving fire safety advice. This helps it to understand service users' opinions.

What has been achieved?

- 102** LFEPA is performing strongly in this area. Performance against mayoral priorities is good with excellent achievement in sustainability and improving the diversity of the workforce. Performance against LFEPA priorities is good and improving. LFEPA has met the requirements of the National Framework 2006/08 and is progressing against the National Framework 2008/11. Performance against national indicators shows positive trends with clear sustained improvement in some areas. Effective partnership projects are improving community safety especially for those at highest risk. LFEPA has set response standards although performance against these is mixed.
- 103** Since the last corporate assessment in 2004 LFEPA has made great progress. The 2006 Operational Assessment of Service Delivery (OASD) rated the Authority as performing strongly with top scores in all five areas. The OASD identified five issues for improvement and the Authority has delivered on these. In Audit Commission annual performance assessments over the past three years LFEPA have consistently performed well. The 2007/08 Direction of Travel assessment was 'improving strongly'.
- 104** Since 2004 there has been a 17 per cent reduction in all fires. Primary fires fell by 19 per cent; secondary fires by 50 per cent; deliberate fires by 30 per cent and vehicle fires by 76 per cent. Deaths from fire fell by 21 per cent. Hoax calls fell by 47 per cent. LFEPA is making good progress against the 2005 five-year targets especially in deliberate fires, accidental dwelling fires and hoax calls.
- 105** This year 74 per cent of all LFEPA indicators improved although only 65 per cent of national indicators improved compared to a national average of 69 per cent. LFEPA has 35 per cent of national indicators in the top performing band compared to the national average of 34 per cent. Hoax calls have reduced in all boroughs since the Authority introduced call challenge with an overall reduction of 59 per cent in the 30 months before and after introduction. Arson is also reducing. Injuries from fire reduced by 13 per cent this year. Deaths from fire have been falling in recent years but rose this year. However the increase was small and the Authority is working hard on prevention.
- 106** Attendance at false alarms from automatic fire detection equipment is an area where LFEPA does not perform well when compared to others. Currently this is a drain on resources through unnecessary attendances. It has decided not to change its attendance policy but to prioritise working with owners and occupiers of the buildings with the highest volume of calls to change behaviours and improve equipment. LFEPA is struggling to improve and this year stemmed previous decline in performance. Authority analysis shows the growth rate of such equipment is greater in London than anywhere else and it has proportionately more in sensitive locations such as hospitals.

- 107** LFEPA also did not achieve its 2007/08 targets for scheduled inspections of known and unknown premises. It has restructured the fire safety department and changed working practices to improve performance. Its main priority for 2008/09 is inspection of unknown premises to identify new risks.
- 108** The percentage of people satisfied with the service LFEPA provides fell in the last survey in 2006/07 but at 61 per cent is above the national average of 59 per cent. LFEPA analysis shows the public value advice given after fires and it gets good feedback from HFSV work.
- 109** The Authority is making good progress against delivery of relevant Mayoral priorities achieving impressive outcomes in sustainability, improving the diversity of the workforce and delivering HFSV to older people. It has delivered the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Service 2006/08 and this aligns with the Mayor's priority for fire service modernisation.
- 110** Set out below are examples of how LFEPA is delivery against its six strategic aims.

Prevention

- 111** LFEPA is diverting firefighter time to community safety work. In 2007/08 firefighters spent 10 per cent of their time on community safety against a target of 8 per cent.
- 112** LFEPA delivers education and awareness campaigns for young people. Firefighters in Romford received Special Achievement Awards for designing a model fire engine which they take to schools in a modular frame and use to teach children about fire safety. Over 1 million children have received schools packages. Every child in London has the opportunity to receive this package. LFEPA seeks formal feedback from teachers and this confirms the relevance and effectiveness of its approach.
- 113** Work with young people is effective. The LIFE programme targets vulnerable young people aged 13 to 18 years who are not in education, employment or training. Nine LIFE teams work in the most deprived boroughs. So far LIFE courses have engaged and educated around 1,000 young people per year helping many to return to education or enter employment. The programme encourages new values and working co-operatively with others. It improves basic skills and attitudes to learning. External evaluation shows it achieved its targets for young people completing the programme and improving their educational attainment. A change in attitude was obvious to young people themselves and to those who dealt with them. Support from the Careers Service enabled young people to reflect on their learning and provides continued support. This project has made a real difference to vulnerable and disadvantaged young people giving them the confidence to learn and achieve.
- 114** As well as benefiting the participants the LIFE programme has helped improve the quality of life for residents. In Redbridge - 89 per cent of local people surveyed showed that they felt safer. Malicious calls reduced in one ward from 45 in 2005/06 down to 7 in 2007/08. In Tower Hamlets attacks on firefighters and levels of hoax calls also reduced in areas where the programme has been delivered.

- 115** Other examples of good projects with young people include those delivered by the Crossfire team in Croydon which is local emergency services and voluntary groups working to encourage young people to make sensible life choices. The Junior Fire setter Intervention Scheme is available in several boroughs seeks to discourage young people who have an interest in fire setting. Specialist advisers have visited more than 1000 young people to influence their behaviour. Independent evaluation shows that 93 per cent of participants have shown no return to fire setting.
- 116** Partnership projects in Lambeth are also bringing good results. For example, Junior Citizens Events, a gun crime event, Lambeth Safety Quiz, and the Lambeth Safety Ambassador Award Scheme. In the last three years the number of malicious calls in the borough has dropped from over 400 a year to 119.
- 117** The Community Safety Cycle Project involves teams of specifically trained firefighters patrolling across twelve boroughs. The scheme aims to reduce deliberate fires, strengthen multi-agency approaches, and improve contact with local communities and raising the profile of the fire brigade. The scheme has led to speedy identification of and removal of fly-tipping resulting in tidier streets and reduced risk of fires. The cyclists gather information for example about dangerous materials unsuitably stored and send this to partners to ensure enforcement and safe disposal. The scheme has delivered 1887 Action Report Forms (multi-agency reporting form) and delivered 19 presentations in the community. During the summer of 2007 there was a decrease of 48 per cent in deliberate fires in the areas in which the scheme ran.
- 118** Borough Commanders work with councils to make sure the issue of vehicle fire has a high priority and councils remove abandoned and unwanted cars quickly to reduce fire risks. The total number of vehicle fires in 2007/08 was 4,723 a decrease of 14 per cent since the previous year and less than half the number in 2003/04.
- 119** The Acetylene Cylinder Campaign is successfully improving quality of life for residents and travellers. LFEPA has led this campaign and secured the support of all relevant stakeholders. It contacts owners of properties rented by businesses that use gas cylinders and advises them about restrictions and control measures for their storage. Incidents involving cylinders are disruptive to residents and travellers in London because of the safety cordons needed around incidents. In 2006 an incident at Kings Cross led to evacuation of 1,000 residents and major disruption to London's business community. Because of LFEPA campaigns incidents have reduced from one every 14 days to 1 every 26 days. In addition it is in the final stages of agreeing a protocol with borough councils and the three main gas cylinder companies to find, remove and recycle discarded cylinders. This will result in a cleaner environment and the removal of a dangerous fire risk.
- 120** Effective partnership working is reducing arson. Joint initiatives include fireworks and bonfire night strategies and estate days which focus on the most high-risk areas and deliver local clean-ups. Working with borough councils to board up or demolish derelict properties visited by drug users and migrant workers is reducing risk of fire. Such initiatives in Tower Hamlets decreased incidents from 2,500 incidents in 2004/05 to 800 in 2007/08. In Lambeth joint approaches reduced firework related anti-social behaviour by 25 per cent in 2007/08.

121 At risk communities receive good information to protect them in the home. For example 'fire safety in the home' leaflets are available in different languages. Community engagement teams work with Polish and Somali groups on particular fire safety issues. In 2007 LFEPA achieved external recognition for its work with the Gypsy and Traveller communities. In Lambeth firefighters work closely with the Portuguese community. In Islington the fire team works with the local housing association to target vulnerable people for example including a fire safety quiz in tenant's newsletters.

Protection

122 Completed home fire safety visits (HFSV) are at the heart of the LFEPA's plan to improve fire safety in the home and reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires and fire related injuries and deaths. In 2007/08 it increased HFSV by 21 per cent. Currently, 70 per cent of homes in London have a working smoke detector.

123 The Authority uses good approaches to deliver HFSV to older people in line with carrying out the former Mayor's pledge to provide home fire safety visits and smoke alarms for pensioners. For example a partnership agreement with Age Concern and Croydon Care-line who identify vulnerable older people complete HFSV for LFEPA. Both partnerships have been running for at least two years. Quality assurance makes sure that HFSV meet the Authority's standards. In Redbridge firefighters work with the borough's Meals- on- Wheels service using the trust that this service had built up to get HFSV referrals from elderly people.

124 LFEPA works well in partnership to reduce risk and make public spaces safer - especially those at risk of major incidents. At Canary Wharf fire safety staff work with developers and security services on joint risk assessments and evacuation plans. They provide specific training for local fire stations so firefighters are well prepared for potential incidents. Fire teams covering Heathrow airport work well with airport staff and contributed to the design of Terminal 5 to ensure maximum protection for the public. At both Terminal 5 and Westfield, fire safety officers were members of the project teams and were funded by the developers. Fire safety staff were also actively involved in the design and development of the Westfield shopping centre helping to reduce potential for crime and disorder and develop policies for effective responses and emergency evacuation plans. Fire safety staff also work closely with borough councils planning major public events using their inspection powers and giving advice and guidance.

Response

125 LFEPA has set London wide standards of fire cover. It used risk modelling to set a first appliance average response time of minutes. It is achieving an average of 5.4 minutes overall but there are many boroughs in London where LFEPA is finding the target of six minutes hard to achieve because of the historic location of fire stations. It did not achieve its 2007/08 target for first appliances arriving in 6 minutes on 65 per cent of occasions achieving only 59 per cent. The standard for a second appliance response time is 8 minutes. LFEPA is achieving its target of 90 per cent of second appliances arriving in 8 minutes with an average attendance time of 6.3 minutes.

- 126** The Authority has improved its ability to respond quickly and effectively to major emergencies. Its core operational response was tested by the July 7 2005 terrorist attacks and this informed development of its capabilities. Since then it has deployed 77 new special appliances provided under the New Dimension and London Resilience Programmes and delivered relevant specialist training for crews. Its Urban Search and Rescue teams have performed well at several incidents.
- 127** LFEPA is improving London wide emergency planning. Through its work in Local Resilience Forums it has ensured that authorities adopt Minimum Standards for London (MSL). This means that all local authorities meet a minimum standard of capability in several critical areas relevant to the London Local Authority Gold arrangements. Local Authority planning fully integrates MSLs and they are scrutinised at regular meetings of Local Authority Emergency Planning Officers. This helps to build and uphold resilience across the region.
- 128** LFEPA has also led a common approach to community risk registers and LRF business planning. It co-ordinates annual exercises. This year, 32 of the 33 boroughs activated emergency planning arrangements within 3 minutes.
- 129** LFEPA works with other fire and rescue authorities across borders. It works with Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority on emergency preparedness for high-risk property in Hounslow including the West London Oil Terminal and Feltham Young Offenders Institution. Havering borough fire teamwork with neighbouring Essex teams to provide good emergency response at the borders of their areas especially a speedy response to road traffic collisions.

Resources

- 130** An ambitious and enthusiastic approach to sustainability combined with targeted investment is bringing good results. LFEPA has committed £4.4 million to its sustainability reserve. All its vehicles meet the Low Emission Zone requirements. It has reduced its overall energy use and committed to an annual fall of 2 per cent in total energy use rising to 3 per cent from April 2009. It has started a programme for renewable energy with photovoltaic cells, solar heating panels and wind turbines fitted at some fire stations. In 2007/08 its decreased overall water use in buildings by 1.73 per cent. LFEPA has already exceeded the Mayor's CO2 emission reduction target of 20 per cent by 2010 (from 1990 levels). It has reduced levels by 17.4 per cent so far - achieving 3.6 per cent in 2007/08. A new waste and recycling contract is achieving an average recycling rate of 44 per cent a month. In June 2008 the LFEPA was one of only six public bodies to be awarded the new Carbon Trust Standard and in December LFEPA won the National Energy Efficiency Award for Energy Management in Buildings
- 131** Levels of sickness are reducing year on year with nearly 20,000 less shifts lost to sickness in 2007/08 when compared to 2004/05. In 2004/05 the proportion of days lost to sickness absence for operational staff was 5.96 per cent. This figure as a proportion reduced by 7 per cent in 2005/06, by a further 18 per cent in 2006/07 and by a further 7 per cent in 2007/08. Long-term sickness for fire fighters was at zero for 2007/08 although LFEPA did not reach its target for non-operational staff. Ill health retirements are well below national averages.

- 132** As part of this strategic aim LFEPA seeks to pay more invoices on time. It improved its performance this year to 90 per cent compared to 81 per cent last year. This compares to the national average of 93 per cent.

People

- 133** The diversity of the workforce is improving. In 2007/08 the number of women firefighters rose from 3.4 per cent to 3.5 per cent (the national average is 3.5 per cent). BME firefighters rose from 9.9 per cent to 10.6 per cent (the national average is around 3.2 per cent). The percentage of top earners who are women or from BME groups is significantly above national averages. For women it is 11.1 per cent compared to the national average of 8.8 per cent. For BME groups it is 7.3 per cent compared to the national average of 1.4 per cent. Numbers of top earners with a disability is 4.3 per cent compared to the national average of 2.1 per cent. This year levels of operational staff with a declared disability stayed roughly the same and staff from lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender rose slightly. Non-operational women staff fell from 47 per cent to 45 per cent but is now rising again. The percentage of non-operational staff from BME communities is close to the average in London's population although it fell from 29 per cent to 27 per cent this year.
- 134** LFEPA did not achieve its 2007/08 target for working days lost due to work related injuries although the long-term accident rate is reducing both in lost time and non-lost time accidents. The Authority is carrying out analysis to identify better prevention measures. Injuries or dangerous events recorded under RIDDOR increased slightly in 2007/08 (from 224 to 230) compared to 2006/07. RIDDOR events have been increasing slowly since 2004/05.

Principles

- 135** LFEPA has a strategic aim to operate in accordance with its values and ensure that safety, sustainability, partnership and diversity runs through all activities. Evidence for delivery against this aim is shown in performance against the other five aims.

Appendix 1 – Framework for Corporate Assessment

- 1 This corporate assessment was carried out under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, under which the Audit Commission has power to inspect local authorities' arrangements for securing continuous improvement. The results of the corporate assessment forms the overall CPA category for a Fire and Rescue authority, which the Audit Commission is required to assess and report on under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 2 The Fire and Rescue Authority's self assessment provided a key resource in focusing the assessment activity which included consideration of:
 - key documentation, including the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan and Corporate Plan;
 - updated performance indicators and performance data; and
 - interviews and meetings attended.
- 3 The assessment for London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority was undertaken by a team from the Audit Commission and took place over the period from 27 October 2008 to 7 November 2008.
- 4 This report has been discussed with the Authority which has been given the opportunity to examine the Audit Commission's assessment. This report will be used as the basis for improvement planning by London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Our work across local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services means that we have a unique perspective. We promote value for money for taxpayers, auditing the £200 billion spent by 11,000 local public bodies.

As a force for improvement, we work in partnership to assess local public services and make practical recommendations for promoting a better quality of life for local people.

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