

MANAGING PERFORMANCE
IN
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



A GUIDE FOR MEMBERS AND STAFF

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1. What is the purpose of this Guide?

Performance management is a term that we frequently use, but one that is not always understood.

Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service has in place a Performance Management framework to assist in achieving its strategic aims and service objectives.

This Guide outlines the mechanisms, approaches and policies that we use to monitor, report and improve performance.

This short Guide is designed to provide information on aspects of the Services Performance Management Framework.

2. What is Performance management?

There are many definitions of Performance Management, but put simply, it is about agreeing and identifying what needs to be done, setting objectives, monitoring performance against targets, identifying opportunities for improvement and making the necessary changes.¹

To effectively manage performance, fire board members, service managers and other employees must be able to demonstrate:

- * What they are aiming for (AIMS)
- * What they must do to achieve these aims (OBJECTIVES)
- * How we measure progress toward these aims (PERFORMANCE INDICATORS), and
- * How we detect and take action to solve problems that occur (PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT).

At Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service, effective performance management requires a co-ordinated approach to planning and review, to enable key decision makers, political and managerial, to take action based on facts about performance.

¹ Making Performance Management Work, Improvement & Development Agency, (IDeA) July 2002

3. Why manage performance?

Performance Management is an essential component for maintaining, improving and developing the high quality fire and rescue services desired by our communities. Improving performance management will help us to achieve this and will demonstrate to our stakeholders that making life better in our communities is the focus of what we do.

The principles that underpin performance management were first discussed by Osborne and Gaebler in their publication "Re-inventing Government", 1998. Among the principles they identified were:

- * What gets measured gets done
- * If you don't measure results, you cannot differentiate between success and failure
- * If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.

These principles have since been endorsed by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), an agency established to work in partnership with local authorities and other organisations to deliver first class services.

4. Characteristics of effective performance management

The characteristics include:

- * A clear vision and purpose and a focus on outcomes
- * Effective democratic, community and internal communication, and
- * Robust planning, monitoring and review systems.

Our performance management framework allows Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service to demonstrate all of these characteristics beginning with a clear vision and purpose.

5. Why our strategic aims are so important

Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service recognises that to be successful, it must be aware of what it is aiming for, and have a clear vision and focus.

This vision and focus is expressed through our strategic aims and service objectives, which are set out in our Service Plan.

6. What about finance?

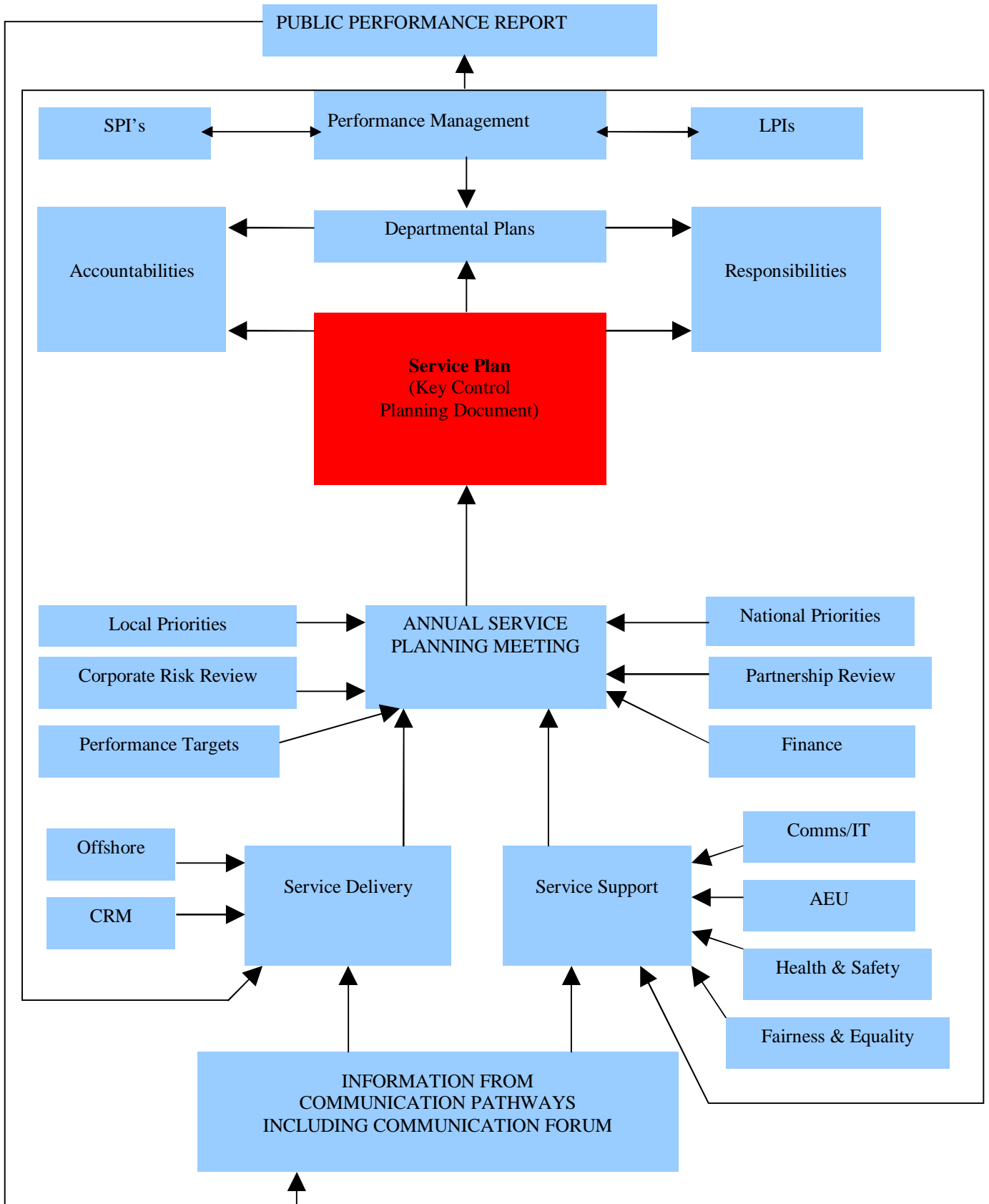
The direction of resources to priorities is a vital part of performance management. This requires co-ordinated planning and review systems to enable members to agree plans, priorities and facilitate distribution of resources.

To ensure this co-ordinated approach, within the service plan, our strategic aims and service objectives and budget information is considered simultaneously by the Fire Board at its meeting in January each year.

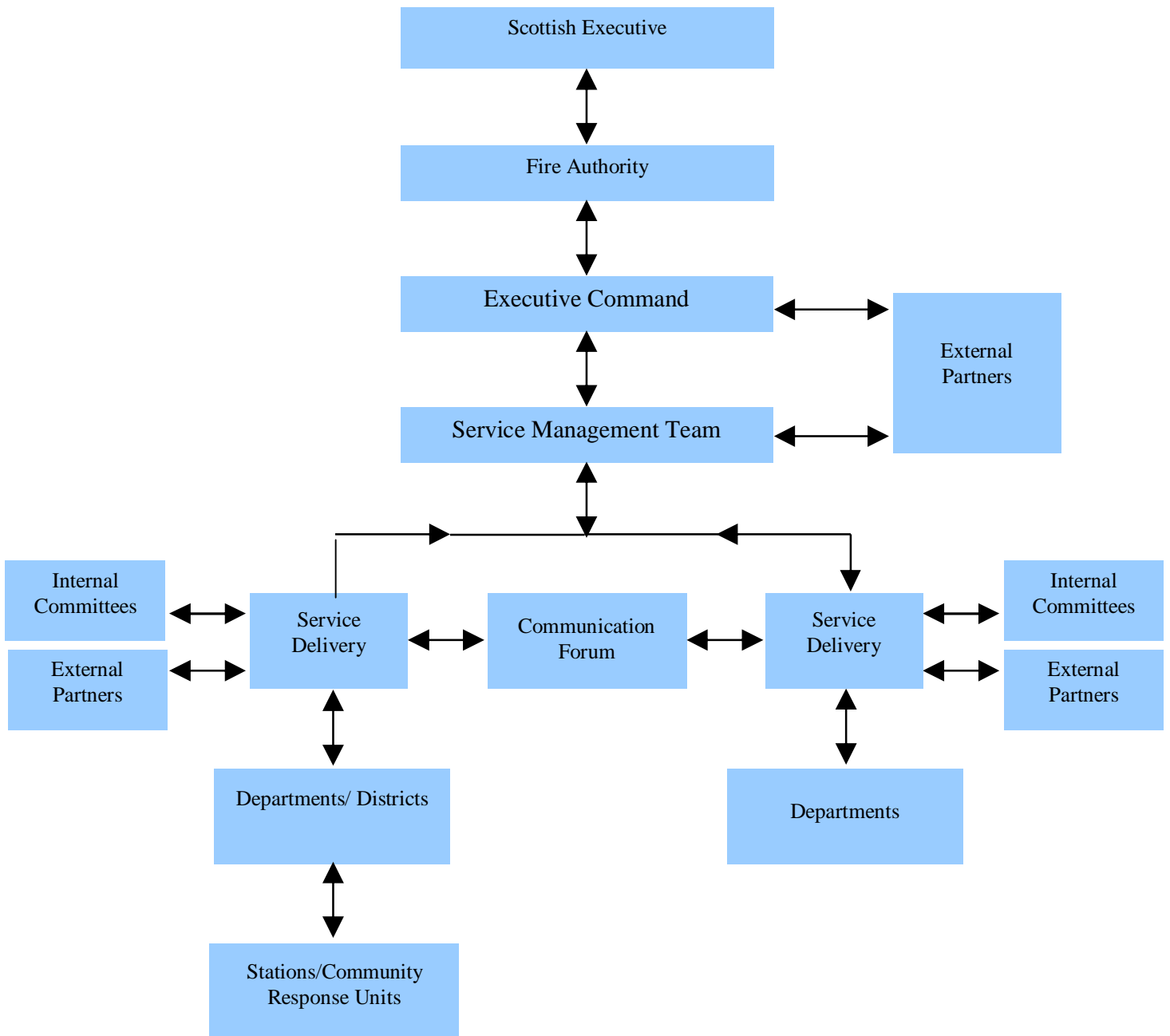
Our Service Plan also contains an outline of the Service's financial requirements for the forthcoming year.

7. What are the key components?

7.1 Management & Communication Forums
 Components of the Performance Management Framework



**7.2 Management & Communication Forums
Communication Pathways**



8. How does this all work in practice?

Management and Communication Forums

There are a number of management and communication forums within the Service.

These perform a range of tasks which includes identifying objectives which will allow the Service to continue to meet its aims. These include:

- **Fire Board**

The board is the legal fire authority constituted under the Fire Services (Scotland) Act 2005. It discharges a range of duties in accordance with this act, the Fire Service Framework and the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003. Its principal activities are budget setting and policy scrutiny and adoption but it is also responsible for the management systems that ensure the effective and efficient delivery of fire services to our communities. The board meets on a quarterly basis.

- **Executive Command**

This is the Service's policy making forum and consists of the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer. In addition, the Head of Corporate Services and Human Resources attend in an advisory capacity. This group meets on a weekly basis.

- **Service Management Team**

This consists of the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and all Heads of Department. This group acts as a policy advice and "sounding board" forum. It also serves as a strategic communication forum. This group meets on a fortnightly basis.

- **Service Delivery**

This group is made up of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Commanders Community Risk Management, North, South and Operations Support and meets every four weeks. It is responsible for policy development and implementation, management of service delivery resources, implementation of objectives, performance management and Service Planning. It also serves as an internal communications forum and is responsible for the management of departments, districts, stations and Community Response Units.

In addition, a number of committees and working groups, including Community Risk Management and Offshore Firefighting, report to this forum.

- **Service Support**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer leads this group which is made up of the Commander Operations Support, Commander Development, Head of Human Resources, Head of Corporate Services and Head of Engineering and Supplies. Service Support meetings are held on a four weekly basis and although it has the same broad responsibilities as Service Delivery outlined above, it is the Appliances, Equipment and Uniform Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Fairness & Equality and Communications and Information Technology meetings that report to this group.

All the services management and communications forums meet to discuss many issues regarding the operation of the service. Principal among these are:

- The Corporate Risk Register
- Partnership Working
- Financial Monitoring
- Performance Management
- Service Planning

These are monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis and annual basis. Progress on all these issues is considered along with other information to assist in reaching decisions regarding our objectives for the forthcoming years.

The Service Plan and Service Planning Process

The Service Plan is the document which brings together the components detailed in the previous paragraphs and details the higher level, strategic aims, service objectives, accountabilities and responsibilities.

In addition, the SMART² Service Plan sets the direction and parameters for departmental plans which establish activities, tactical and operational accountabilities and responsibilities.

The Service Plan is formulated at an annual meeting attended by the members of Executive Command, Service Delivery and Service Support. At this meeting national priorities as outlined within the National Framework document are considered as are the plans of our Strategic Partners. In addition to agreeing the content of the plan, they will review previous years progress and will set targets that will allow the Service to measure its performance.

Target Setting

For performance measurement to be meaningful, there needs to be a clear idea of what it is trying to achieve.

Targets are statements of the level of performance or the outcomes we intend to achieve.

These targets are expressed as service plan outcomes and as Performance Indicators. Some of these indicators are national indicators (Statutory Performance Indicators), others are locally set, (Local Performance Indicators). In addition, others have been agreed by the Chief Fire Officers Association (Scotland) to allow each service to benchmark their performance, (Scottish Local Performance Indicators).

² Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic. Timebound

Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs)

SPIs are a simple way of monitoring performance against targets, identifying opportunity for improvement and making necessary changes and these are set by the Accounts Commission. This allows the Accounts Commission and other interested parties to compare the performance of Highlands and Islands Fire & Rescue Service with that of other fire and rescues services.

Local Performance Indicators (LPIs)

LPIs are set by the Service and reflect local priorities. Once again they are a way of monitoring performance against targets, identifying opportunity for improvement and making necessary changes and also a demonstration of progress against our targets for the year.

Scottish Local Performance Indicators (SLPIs)

These have been agreed by all Scottish services as a way to benchmark performance against each other.

All of these performance indicators are reported on at Departmental, Service Delivery and Service Support meetings on a quarterly basis, and at the annual service plan meeting, when the person responsible for achieving particular objectives will identify progress to date and, at the annual service plan meeting, whether objectives have been achieved.

Our performance against our targets is published in our Public Performance Report (PPR), which is published at the end of each financial year.

Details of all of our performance indicators can be found in our Service Local Performance Indicators Document. They can also be viewed on the Service web site www.hifrs.org

Further information is available in our Service Plan.

Appendix 1

Every member of the Service has the opportunity to submit proposals for inclusion in the Service Plan and such proposals are welcome.

Proposals should be channelled through to members of the Service Delivery and Service Support Groups. If the proposal is a bid for growth, it will need to be fully rationalised, justified and costed. In the current financial climate it may not automatically be successful.

Implicit within all these stages is a consultation process.

The following timetables are used to prepare the Service Plan and Revenue Budget.

Service planning process		<i>Completed during</i>
1.	Proposals from staff forwarded to Key Managers.	September
2.	Proposals considered by Service Delivery and Service Support functions.	October
3.	Proposals and completion reports from Service Delivery and Service Support functions, considered at annual Service Plan meeting.	November
4.	Draft Plan submitted to Budget Sub Committee of Fire Board together with draft Revenue.	Mid January
5.	Together with the Revenue proposals, submitted to the Full Fire Board. Plans approved.	Late January
6.	Printed and Issued.	March

Budget Planning Process	<i>Date</i>
Service Delivery and Service Support Groups and Executive Command meet to consider budgetary timetable and bids emanating from proposals arising as part of service planning process and formulate a draft budget.	November
Standing Budget Sub-Committee of the Fire Board considers budgets and Service Plan.	Mid January
Fire Board considers detailed budget and Service Plan and recommendations of the standing Budget Sub Committee	Late January
When final detailed budget is approved, constituent authorities can be advised of their respective requisitions for the forthcoming year.	Late February