

# Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

Humberstone Fire Authority

Audit 2007/08

March 2009



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## Status of our reports

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any member or officer in their individual capacity; or
  - any third party.
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# Key messages

1 The key messages for the Authority are as follows.

- Humberside Fire and Rescue Authority continue to improve services in support of its mission to 'improve people's lives'. Humberside is the only fire authority in the country which received improved scores for both use of resources and the service assessment.
- Despite this improvement performance remains below that of other authorities, for example, fire prevention performance remained amongst the worst.
- Planned efficiency savings have been delivered, though the Authority remains high cost and did not achieve all of its strategic plan targets.
- There are risks to the Authority's ability to accelerate improvement. The strategic plan is unclear on the outcomes required and resources are not aligned to priorities.
- Decisions taken to reject some proposals that would have improved value for money and modernised services whilst reducing risk have limited the Authority's ability to implement its strategic plan which has forced reprioritisation of strategic plans and resource allocation for 2008/11.

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## Action needed by the Authority

2 In order to progress in improvement the Authority needs to:

- ensure that the strategic plan sets out clearly desired outcomes and align resources to priorities;
- reduce costs whilst improving performance at a faster rate than other fire and rescue authorities. In particular, key areas of fire prevention which are in the worst quartiles need to be addressed;
- consider the recommendations arising from the Audit Commission national report on improving the efficiency of the Fire Service, Rising to the Challenge. For example making further efficiencies through improvements in shift and duty arrangements;
- improve the measurement of outcomes so that you can evaluate whether the benefits from initiatives are commensurate with cost. For example it needs to provide evidence of improved outcomes from partnership working; and
- ensure that inconsistent resourcing across its areas is not adversely affecting your ability to provide an effective and value for money service.

























