

Fire Services Management Committee

Agenda

Friday, 17 November 2017
11.00 am

Smith Square Rooms 1&2, 18 Smith Square,
London, SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Fire Services Management Committee
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



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Fire Services Management Committee
17 November 2017

There will be a meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee at **11.00 am on Friday, 17 November 2017** Smith Square Rooms 1&2, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be available after the meeting.

Attendance Sheet:

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

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Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3334	email: Labour.GroupLGA@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Location:

A map showing the location of 18 Smith Square is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

Felicity Harris
0207 664 3231 / felicity.harris@local.gov.uk

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Fire Services Management Committee – Membership 2017/2018

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (6)	
Cllr Rebecca Knox (Deputy Chair)	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Nick Chard	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Mark Healey MBE	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Simon Spencer	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Substitutes	
Cllr Tony Hunter	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Roger Reed	South Bucks District Council
Labour (6)	
Ms Fiona Twycross AM (Vice-Chair)	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
Cllr David Acton	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Cllr Judith Hughes	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Thomas Wright	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
Substitutes	
Cllr John Robinson JP	Durham County Council
Cllr Brian Grocock	Nottingham City Council
Liberal Democrat (1)	
Cllr Keith Aspden (Deputy Chair)	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Substitutes	
Cllr Stuart Bray	Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Independent (1)	
Cllr Ian Stephens (Chair)	Isle of Wight Council

LGA Fire Service Management Committee Attendance 2017/2018

	22/9/17	17/11/17	26/01/18	12/03/18	22/06/18
Councillors					
Conservative Group					
Rebecca Knox	No				
Jason Ablewhite	Yes				
John Bell	Yes				
Nick Chard	Yes				
Mark Healey MBE	Yes				
Simon Spencer	No				
Labour Group					
Fiona Twycross	Yes				
David Acton	No				
Les Byrom CBE	Yes				
John Edwards	Yes				
Judith Hughes	No				
Thomas Wright	Yes				
Lib Dem Group					
Keith Aspden	Yes				
Independent					
Ian Stephens	Yes				
Substitutes					
Tony Hunter	Yes				
John Robinson JP	Yes				

Agenda

Fire Services Management Committee

Friday 17 November 2017

11.00 am

Smith Square Rooms 1&2, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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Date of Next Meeting: Friday, 26 January 2018, 11.00 am, Smith Square Rooms 1&2, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ



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National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

Purpose

For information.

Summary

Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Roy Wilsher, will be attending to update members on how the NFCC is progressing 6 months on. Roy will also discuss the NFCC's broader work programme and outline how the organisation hopes to develop going forward.

Recommendations

Fire Services Management Committee members are asked to note the issues set out in the presentation.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed by members.

Contact officer:	Lucy Ellender
Position:	Adviser
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Fire service funding

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

At the Committee's September meeting members indicated that the priority around funding for the service should be developed in light of the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) work on fire finance. This paper sets out the immediate funding issues facing the sector, outlines the work the NFCC has been doing around finance and seeks members' view on next steps to develop the Committee's work in this area. Phil Hales, Deputy Chief Fire Officer at West Midland Fire and Rescue Service will attend the meeting to set out the work NFCC have been doing around fire finance.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the work of the NFCC Finance Coordinating Committee on fire finance, and the NFCC's response to the Local Government Finance Settlement: Technical Consultation Paper.
2. Consider the questions set out in paragraph 19 and provide a steer on future LGA work related to the funding of fire and rescue services.
3. Make any further recommendations relating to the funding of fire and rescue services.

Actions

Officers to note members' comments and decisions and take action as appropriate.

Contact officer:	Charles Loft
Position:	Senior Adviser
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Email:	Charles.loft@local.gov.uk

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Fire service funding

Background

1. Over the last year the demands on fire and rescue services have increased. After a period in which the number of primary fires attended by fire and rescue services in England fell by over half, and then a plateau in the figures, the last two years have seen a rise in the number of primary fires. Since the Grenfell Tower fire, services have also had to carry out fire safety assessments on those high rise residential buildings with aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding systems.
2. These increasing demands are likely to be sustained. The UK population is forecast to continue to rise over the coming decade. A growing proportion will be elderly people, many of whom will live alone. The numbers of people in rented accommodation are also predicted to continue to grow until 2025. These are factors the Department of Communities and Local Government identified in 2008 as ones that will increase the number of dwelling fires. Replacing cladding systems on all the high rise residential buildings where this needs to be done could take several years. In addition the review of building regulations and fire safety by Dame Judith Hackitt could result in extra responsibilities being given to fire and rescue services.

Implications for funding fire and rescue services

3. These pressures have implications for Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) budgets, as was [highlighted](#) by the LGA in a media release at the end of October. The LGAs 2017 [Autumn Budget Submission](#) also raised the pay pressures in the fire and rescue service and argued they should be funded by the Government in full, alongside investment in new ways of working. The submission pointed out the benefits of the collaborative work the fire service is undertaking with health services, ambulance services, local authorities and the police, and that this work has the potential to deliver a return on investment of up to £14.40 per £1 invested.
4. The submission called on the Government to:
 - 4.1. Commit to work with us to ensure practical costs, for example, equipment, training and inoculations, are fully funded in order to ensure no detrimental impact on 'fire' related activities.
 - 4.2. Provide sufficient funding to ensure that fire service employees are fairly rewarded for such change.
 - 4.3. Not make any further reductions to fire service funding. Fire services are driven not by demand but by risk and the funding levels should reflect this.

National Fire Chiefs Council Finance Coordinating Committee

5. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has also been highlighting the pressures on fire and rescue services. Following the establishment of the NFCC as a replacement for the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), the NFCC set up a finance coordinating

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committee. The terms of reference and membership of this committee are set out in the report to the Committee from the NFCC at **Annex A**.

6. The NFCC's recent response to the technical consultation on the 2018-19 local government finance settlement (at **Annex B**), makes a link between reductions in funding for fire and rescue services, reduced staff numbers, longer response times and the plateauing of reductions in fires. It goes on to argue that 'further funding cuts will pose an unacceptable risk to communities' and that demand is likely to increase in future.
7. A number of other issues are currently relevant to the funding of FRAs.

Precepts

8. The LGA has consistently argued for greater flexibilities for local authorities when it comes to setting council tax. In the LGA Autumn Budget submission we argued that council tax should be made a truly local tax, with referendum limits abolished.
9. The NFCC has not gone as far as this but has proposed that the rules around council tax precepts are relaxed for FRAs. Bearing in mind that fire accounts for on average 5 per cent of council tax, the NFCC has called for FRAs to be given similar levels of precept flexibility to those given to the shire districts or PCCs. This would allow FRAs to increase the precept by £5 or 2 per cent whichever is the greater without a referendum. Currently FRAs can raise the precept by up to 2 per cent only.
10. If this were agreed, thought would have to be given as to how this could work in county FRA areas.

Policing and fire

11. Now that the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has become the first Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and other PCCs have submitted proposals to take on the governance of the fire and rescue service in our area, this raises questions over asset transfers and finance for FRAs. Will the flexibility to increase precepts by £5 given to PCCs apply to PCC-style FRAs?
12. In 2014/15 and 2015/16 the transformation and efficiency fund for fire and rescue services provided £75 million that services could bid into. A similar transformation fund exists for the police for projects that will transform policing by investing in digitalisation, a diverse and flexible workforce and new capabilities to respond to changing crimes and threats. Almost £150 million has been awarded to police forces this financial year.
13. The above figure includes £248,000 to help PCCs bid to become FRAs. This raises the possibility that PCC-style FRAs may be able to access the transformation fund for projects that other FRAs cannot bid for.
14. Although the joint CFOA and LGA submission to the 2015 spending review called for the government to provide further transformation funding to fire and rescue services, FRAs do not currently have access to a similar fund.

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Fire Safety costs

15. Increased numbers of safety checks in the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire have imposed significant additional costs for some FRAs, although this may be obscured by a reduction in checks that would otherwise have taken place to transfer resources to high-rise checks. The NFCC has estimated that “the amount of additional advice, audit, inspection, reassurance and enforcement that is already taking place is significant and expected to continue for many months, possibly years. This additional work in support of the Government’s response to Grenfell is already causing many services to divert already reduced resource away from other areas of risk and in some cases use financial reserves to meet demand.”
16. However, our understanding is that the government sees this additional work as ‘business as usual’ and not eligible for new burdens funding.
17. In addition it is possible that new powers and duties in relation to fire safety will arise from the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety under Dame Judith Hackitt, or from the Public Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower Fire under Sir Martin Moore-Bick. The LGA has made a number of relevant suggestions in its submission to the Hackitt Inquiry:
 - 17.1. Uncertainty over the relative roles of councils and fire and rescue services and the relationship between the FSO and the Housing Act must be addressed. This could be done either by establishing that fire services or councils are the sole enforcement body or by clarifying powers and responsibilities of each. However, councils should not be put in a position where they are both the proprietor/landlord and regulator. Partnership with the fire and rescue service will be crucial in these instances.
 - 17.2. The enforcing authority needs to be able to treat fire safety in high rise buildings as a whole with the powers to inspect dwellings as well as common parts (including the external envelope).
 - 17.3. The enforcing authority needs greater powers to act when a serious issue is identified. These should include taking control of a building as de facto freeholder where the freeholder fails to address a serious safety issue.

Fire Services Management Committee response to these funding issues

18. While some of the funding pressures facing FRAs have been previously raised with government, those related to Grenfell have only arisen in the last few months and the extent of the work is not yet clear. Councils are only now sending the Department of Communities and Local Government the returns on how many private residential high rise buildings there are in their area. The number that may have ACM cladding, and therefore the amount of work fire and rescue services will need to carry out is not yet clear. While Dame Judith Hackitt is expected to produce an interim report on building regulations and fire safety in December, we are unlikely to know what recommendations her Review will make until April 2018. It is also unclear whether the Home Office has a considered approach to potentially differential arrangements for differing FRAs around access to transformation funding and precept increases going forward.

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19. In order to inform the LGA's future work on funding for the sector and its response to the Hackitt building regulations and fire safety review, members' views are sought on the following questions:

- 19.1. Do members agree with the points raised by the NFCC in their submission to the Local Government Finance Settlement: Technical Consultation Paper set out in Annex B? Are there any additional points members believe the LGA should be raising around funding for the fire and rescue service?**
- 19.2. Should the LGA lobby to ensure that all FRAs have the same option to increase their precepts as PCC-style FRAs?** This is a less ambitious objective than the LGA's proposal to abolish council tax referendum requirements. Members may therefore wish to consider pressing for the referendum requirements to be removed from FRAs, but pending the legislation needed to achieve this asking for all FRAs to have the same ability to increase their precepts. This would mean that if PCCs are granted greater flexibility on the fire precept then all FRAs would enjoy the same level of flexibility. It would have particular implications for the funding of county fire and rescue services.
- 19.3. Should the LGA lobby for the creation of a new fire transformation fund or should we push for the police transformation fund to be expanded to allow bids relating to fire transformation?** As the police transformation fund is effectively top sliced from the police grant the latter option would require a change in funding arrangements if all FRAs were to be able to access it.
- 19.4. Should the LGA work with NFCC to raise awareness of the impact additional safety checks post Grenfell are having on the finances and work of the fire and rescue service?** Initial discussions with the NFCC suggest that we would need to survey FRAs to gather the information we require to arrive at a comprehensive picture of the cost of carrying out additional safety checks as part of the government's building safety programme post-Grenfell. In many cases the work has been carried out by diverting resources away from other work. Quantifying the impact will require more detailed work.
- 19.5. Should the LGA work with the NFCC to model costs for the sector associated with new powers and duties that may come out of the Review of building regulations and fire safety?** Kent FRA have made an initial assessment of what it would cost to carry out fire safety audits on all premises covered by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in the services' area on the basis of a schedule of annual or longer frequency inspections rather than risk based inspections. Members may consider it helpful to supplement this information with the costs that other services might incur and to consider the costs of other options that the Review of building regulations and fire safety might consider.

Implications for Wales

20. Responsibility for fire and rescue services is devolved to the Welsh Government.

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Financial Implications

21. The questions set out in paragraph 19 include calls for greater flexibility in setting fire authority precepts (with implications for the treatment of fire funding by county services) and additional funding for fire and rescue services.

Next steps

22. Members are asked to:

- 22.1. Note the work of the NFCC Finance Coordinating Committee on fire finance, and the NFCC's response to the Local Government Finance Settlement: Technical Consultation Paper.
- 22.2. Consider the questions set out in paragraph 19 and provide a steer on future LGA work related to the funding of fire and rescue services.
- 22.3. Make any further recommendations relating to the funding of fire and rescue services.

Annex A: NFCC Fire Finance Coordinating Committee

Report to the LGA Fire Services Management Committee (LGA FSMC) from Phil Hales, Chair of the Fire Finance Coordinating Committee

This report is to provide LGA FSMC with an overview of the National Fire Chiefs Council Finance Coordinating Committee. A presentation providing an update of the current work of the committee will be provided at the meeting.

The NFCC Finance Coordinating committee (FinCC) was set up as a new committee at the same time as the NFCC. Previously technical support to the CFOA board was provided through the 'Fire Finance Network' (FFN). It was agreed by the CFOA that the synergy between the strategic leaders in the sector and the finance experts at a national level should be strengthened to give the NFCC the best opportunity to respond to the increasing difficult financial scenario the sector faces.

The FinCC seeks to develop the direction of Fire Service funding in support of the strategic commitments set out in the NFCC's strategy, specifically the finance strategic commitment to:

*"Work with partners to deliver multi-year budget settlements, collaboration and transformational funding, giving UK fire and rescue services the opportunity to plan for the future and support the delivery of sustainable transformation and reform."*¹

The current focus of the FinCC is responding to the 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement, promoting the need for more flexibility in funding and working with the HO Fire Finance Policy team to develop options for reviewing the Fire Funding Formula.

Technically qualified support is provided to the FinCC by nominated senior finance officers who are members of the FinCC. The Chair is nominated by the NFCC and the Vice Chair will normally be the current Chair of the FFN. This provides a direct link between the two groups. The FinCC is also supported by a 'Senior User Group' made up of 9 CFO's from across the UK. This group provides non-technical strategic advice to the FinCC to enable work to be carried out in a timely manner.

FinCC – Scope, Priorities & Membership

The scope of the FinCC is to:

- Provide effective strategic Fire Service leadership for the development of fire funding and fire related investments across all Fire Service governance arrangements.

¹ National Fire Chiefs Council Strategy 2017 – 2020 www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk

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- Provide effective strategic Fire Service leadership to assure and advise NFCC Coordination Committees and programmes on finance and commercial considerations.
- Provide effective strategic Fire Service leadership for change programmes in the Fire Service relating to finance.
- Provide direction and support to the Fire Finance Network and technical officers in support of the NFCC
- Provide effective strategic and technical Fire Service leadership concerning financial rules, procurement, charges, pensions, taxation and VAT.
- To support the professional development of Fire financial leaders.
- To support the professional development on finance of non-finance leaders.

The Priorities of the FinCC are:

- Future funding basis for the Fire Service, including;
 - negotiating a fair deal for the FRS
 - evaluating the risks associated with funding options
 - consider appropriate funding mechanisms across the FRS
 - making recommendations to NFCC and HO
- Securing future capital funding, including;
 - negotiating access to capital funding for the FRS
 - understanding the capital funding requirements across the FRS
 - identifying options and criteria to use capital funding
- Funding for national programmes and associated risks, including;
 - understanding financial risks from national programmes
 - developing options to sustain funding for national programmes
 - making recommendations to NFCC and HO
- Accessibility of transformational funding, including
 - negotiating access to transitional funding for the NFCC
 - identifying criteria and options for transitional funding
 - making recommendations to NFCC and HO

Membership of the NFCC Finance Committee is:

- Chairperson elected by the NFCC

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- Vice Chair who will normally be the chair of the Fire Finance Network
- Representative of a Metropolitan Fire Service
- Representative of a Combined Fire Service
- Representative of a County Fire Service
- Representative of London Fire Brigade
- Representative of Metropolitan Mayor Governance model
- Representative of a PCC governance model
- Representatives of the devolved administrations
- Firefighters' Pension Adviser LGA
- Portfolio holders for specific subject matter areas and projects, as required (e.g. ESMCP & Fire Funding Formula working group & HMICFRS)



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Annex B: NFCC response to the 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement: Technical Consultation Paper

Roger Palmer
Department for Communities and Local Government
2nd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

LGFConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk

26th October 2017

Dear Roger

The 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement: Technical Consultation Paper

This letter represents the response from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Finance Coordination Committee to the Technical Consultation on the 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement. The Committee also refers the Department to individual responses from fire and rescue authorities.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) came into effect in April 2017 and is comprised of all Chief Fire Officers from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Finance Coordination Committee is a sub group of senior fire and technical officers who represent the combined financial interests of the UK fire service. In some parts of the UK the funding of the fire service is a devolved function. Therefore, this response represents the views of the English fire and rescue authorities only.

Whilst the fire service is currently funded by the business rates retention scheme, the Committee is only responding to the specific questions relating to the referendum principles. The NFCC are asking for additional council tax flexibility for the fire and rescue service along the lines of that offered to shire districts or police and crime commissioners. That is £5 or 2% whichever is the greater for fire and rescue services. Our members believe that accountability should rest with the authority or, in some cases, the directly elected PCC or Mayor. In addition, our members would like to make some points regarding the pressures on their budgets.

Funding Reductions

Unlike the police service, the fire service has not been offered protection through recent austerity. Since 2010 the funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government to stand-alone fire and rescue services (FRS) has been cut by over a third. According to CIPFA statistics; between March 2010 and 2016 the total number of whole time firefighter posts in England fell by 19.5%. Over the same period the total number of retained firefighters fell by 12.1%. The number of fire safety audits carried out reduced by 25% whilst the number of hours spent on safety checks fell by over a quarter (26%).

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Over these years' average response times increased from 8.2 minutes to 8.8 minutes. All of the available research highlights the relationship between response times and survivability. And, whilst most Fire and Rescue Services have integral Prevention, Protection and Response Strategies within their Integrated Risk Management Plans, which contribute to local response standards, this increase in response times cannot be ignored.

The fire and rescue service has reformed and driven efficiencies whilst attempting to maintain its core emergency response function within an acceptable risk profile. However, the NFCC are concerned that the funding reductions of recent years are unsustainable. Whilst the number of primary fires fell in the early 2000s; in 2012 the year-on-year reductions began to slow and, since 2013 the number of primary fires has plateaued and is now beginning to increase.

Stand-alone FRS in England forecast net current expenditure in 2017-18 is approximately £1.26bn. This spending is generated from both central governments grant funding and council tax. Whilst the government funding has been cut the service has been unable to raise sufficient revenue through the local precept due to the introduction of a "referendum threshold". A 2% council tax increase still represents a real terms cut in funding for the FRS. Whilst Authorities have the ability to undertake a referendum if a council tax increase of more than 2% is proposed, the cost of a referendum for a fire service is disproportionate to the potential additional income. This is therefore a more difficult option for fire and rescue services which carries additional financial risks, which we believe is an unintended consequence of a government policy designed to control 'excessive' increases in council tax.

Increasing Demand

The fire and rescue service funding is not based on demand but on measures of risk and resilience (NAO report: Impact of funding reductions on the fire and rescue service). The NFCC believe that, whilst funding reductions have been managed to date, that the FRS is now at a tipping point where further funding cuts will pose an unacceptable risk to communities. The Fire and Rescue Service plays a key role in protecting the Critical National Infrastructure. We have recently seen a number of major incidents across the UK which have placed an increased demand on all emergency services, and with the current threat planning assumptions it is unlikely that this demand will decrease for the foreseeable future.

The public inquiry into the Grenfell tragedy earlier this year is ongoing but the service remains concerned that without investment in the UK FRS the number of local, regional and national incidents will increase and subsequently put the safety of communities at an increased risk. In the days following the Grenfell fire the Government announced a review of the current building regulations and the NFCC anticipates that this is highly likely to impact on demand. Indeed, the amount of additional advice, audit, inspection, reassurance and enforcement that is already taking place is significant and expected to continue for many months, possibly years. This additional work in support of the Governments response to Grenfell is already causing many services to divert already reduced resource away from other areas of risk and in some cases use financial reserves to meet demand.

On 4 July 2017, the Fire Service Minister, Nick Hurd, spoke at the annual fire safety conference and reflected on the Grenfell tragedy. In his speech he said that it was crucial that the public are reassured about the safety of the buildings that they reside in and that it is imperative to increase public confidence in the management of the risk of fire.

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Mr Hurd outlined the vital role that the FRS will play in that reassurance role; including increased safety checks and enforcement action where fire risks are found to be unacceptable. As highlighted by the statistics above, the number of these inspections has fallen dramatically in recent years; mirroring the funding available to the service. An increased demand for fire safety inspections in the future will require investment, without which further cuts to fire service budgets will lead to a degradation of services. Since 2010-11 there has been a 28% reduction in the number of specialist Fire Protection Officers. Predictably, there has also been a 25% reduction in the number of fire safety audits carried out.

Resourcing Challenges

Whilst this consultation only applies to English FRS our members across the UK are reporting that they have reached an irreducible number of whole-time and on-call firefighters that are required to maintain the existing level of service and many are now recruiting firefighters for the first time in a number of years. We still do not know the full impact of the 2015 pension regulations on staff retention however it is anticipated that turnover of staff will continue to increase adding an additional burden on core funding.

Whole-time firefighters provide cover to most urban areas whilst rural areas are more reliant on on-call or part-time firefighters. With on-call firefighters tending to only stay in the role for between 4 and 6 years, this presents a huge challenge for the service that needs to plan for higher than previous turnover and the associated costs of recruitment. Our members estimate that it costs approximately £7,000 to fully train, equip and enrol an on-call firefighter. With the majority of services detailing a turnover of between 7% and 10%, this would equate to an annual expenditure of approximately £7.3 million per year, just to maintain the number of personnel at current levels.

The NFCC believe that investment in retention and recruitment strategies would attract more applicants, help to retain them for longer as well as attracting a more diverse workforce. A number of FRSs have tried to ensure levels of competence as well as expand the role of firefighters for more service delivery options. However, these all have a direct cost. Every additional hour of an on-call firefighter costs £13.53 – this means that for a FRS with 300 on-call personnel, one additional hour a week of training costs in excess of £0.2m plus on-costs per year.

Fire Safety & Operational Resilience

As highlighted earlier, there is a strong link between response times and survivability underpinned by academic research, but that is not the only factor of an effective response. The weight of the response is equally important.

The Grenfell Tower incident served as a very stark example of the impact of a significant fire. In headline terms Grenfell was a 40 pump fire. This however only reflects the number of conventional fire appliances in attendance at the incident.

What is not captured is the number of special appliances and Officers in attendance, all of which are essential to maintaining safe systems of work and providing an effective response

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capability. What is also not captured is the impact of maintaining 40 pumps over a protracted period of time. A 20 pump rolling relief results in 60 pumps being deployed at any given time. The Home Office have asked fire colleagues what the response to a Grenfell-type incident would look like during nationwide industrial action. The reality is that if Grenfell had occurred anywhere other than London in normal circumstances, let alone during a strike, it would be a significant challenge for any FRS to resource even when drawing extensively on mutual assistance.

With the exception of the urban search and rescue capability, all other national resilience capabilities are drawn from normal FRS budgets. The reductions in firefighter numbers directly impact on the availability of personnel to support national resilience capabilities.

Question 9: Do you have views on council tax referendum principles for 2018-19 for principal local authorities?

Question 10: Do you have views on whether additional flexibilities are required for particular categories of authority? What evidence is available to support this specific flexibility?

The NFCC are asking for additional council tax flexibility for the fire and rescue service along the lines of that offered to shire districts or police and crime commissioners. Our members believe that accountability should rest with the authority or, in some cases, the directly elected PCC or Mayor.

In 2017-18 the stand-alone FRS precept ranged from £57.14 to £97.65. The lowest shire district precept in 2017-18 is £80.46 whilst the lowest police precept is £98.33; both of which will be offered additional flexibility in 2018-19. The NFCC suggest that, given the similar levels of precept, that the fire service be offered similar referendum principles to those given to the shire districts or the police and crime commissioners. That is £5 or 2% whichever is the greater for fire and rescue services.

The fire element of the average local authority council tax band D bill in stand-alone FRS areas is worth just 5% of the total bill. Even allowing stand-alone FRS to increase their precept by £5 would only increase average local authority council tax band D bills by approximately 0.5%.

We have already outlined the pressures being faced by the service and the likelihood that these demands will increase as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire. Many of our members are working as part of a larger county or unitary authority and whilst those larger organisations will likely be responding to this consultation it is possible that pressures in fire and rescue services may be overshadowed by the well-publicised pressures in adults and children's social care. The NFCC would like to highlight that the fire and rescue services within these larger authorities will still be facing the same pressures as their stand-alone FRS colleagues.

The Technical Consultation paper states that the DCLG will soon be publishing fire and rescue Assumed Notional Amounts (ANAs) – the NFCC suggests that these can be used to allow fire and rescue services which are part of larger local authorities to increase their precepts in line with more flexible principles, above the set limits, thus allowing further investment in those fire and rescue services.

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Summary

Funding cuts since 2010 have seen a reduction in the number of firefighters and fire safety audits whilst the response times have been increasing. The fire service is not funded based on demand but on risk and resilience. Whilst the number of primary fires fell in the early 2000s, numbers are now beginning to increase and the FRS are concerned that levels of risk and national resilience are close to unacceptable levels.

This response has outlined the specific pressures that the service is currently under, including the potential for further pressures as a result of ongoing reviews of the building regulations and specifically fire safety procedures. The Grenfell Tower tragedy was a stark reminder of the dangers posed by fires, the importance of fire safety and of national resilience. Similarly, to the rest of the public sector, the FRS are also dealing with pressures of general and wage inflation, increases to national insurance contributions and the demands caused by an aging population; 21% of fires occurring in a home are in those where the residents are aged 65 or over. We are seeing an increase in many societal issues, such as drink and drugs, social housing issues leading to homelessness and new risks such as 'beds in sheds', these all impact on the demand of the fire and rescue service.

The NFCC are calling for additional council tax flexibility for the fire and rescue service – both for stand-alone FRS and those within larger local authority organisations. This will help the service maintain a risk-based service that can respond to new threats and provide local and national resilience in its prevention, protection and response functions.

The Fire and Rescue Service are keen to work alongside the DCLG and colleagues in the Home Office to review the fire and rescue funding formula but whilst the distribution is important the sufficiency of funding nationally is also critical.

The NFCC would welcome the opportunity for further dialogue with ministers to ensure the service provided to the UK matches the expectations of both local communities and the government.

Yours sincerely



Philip Hales
Chair of NFCC Finance Coordination Committee
National Fire Chiefs Council

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Fire safety in high rise buildings update

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper updates the Committee on the work of central and local government since the last meeting to ensure that high rise buildings are safe, including the LGA's submission to the Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review, and sets out some implications for Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Recommendations

That Fire Services Management Committee members:

1. Note the ongoing work at a national and local level to improve fire safety in high rise buildings.
2. Consider and discuss the implications this work may have for FRAs, which need to be taken into account in the LGA's work.
3. Note the LGA's submission to the Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review and consider if there are any additional points to be raised with the Review team.

Actions

Officers to proceed as directed.

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Fire safety in high rise buildings update

Background

1. Since the last meeting of the Committee, LGA work has continued to deliver the three lobbying priorities identified by the LGA's Leadership Board, which are to ensure that:
 - 1.1. National action focuses on what needs to happen to make buildings safe.
 - 1.2. Government agrees to find the necessary resources for any required changes, both for remedial work and for any new tighter requirements.
 - 1.3. A review of building regulations and fire safety guidance and systems is undertaken.
2. The LGA's work over the last two months has predominantly centred on three areas: remedial work to council tower blocks that need their cladding replaced; the data collection work the Department of Communities and Local Government has asked councils to undertake to help identify private high rise residential buildings where the cladding needs to be replaced; and finalising the LGA's submission to the Review of building regulations and fire safety.

Social Housing Tower Blocks

Remediation work

3. As was reported to the last Committee meeting fifteen councils have been identified who own 45 tower blocks with combinations of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding and insulation that failed the full systems tests carried out by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) over the summer. In addition over 100 housing association tower blocks in 34 local authorities also require remedial work. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has continued to liaise closely with social landlords about the remediation work they need to carry out to their tower blocks, and requested an update from them on the progress with the remediation works by 10 November.
4. The fifteen councils have raised a number of issues with the Housing Solutions Team in DCLG, which is responsible for this area of work. A significant concern has been finding the expertise to carry out the remediation work, including the number of civil and fire engineers and chartered surveyors available to provide professional advice about further action and to check on the quality of work, as well as finding competent contractors to strip and replace cladding systems from the blocks. Other concerns have included how to prioritise buildings in work programmes and the capacity of the building and construction industry to do the work.

Alternatives to ACM Cladding

5. A further key question for councils has been what they replace the ACM cladding and insulation on their tower blocks with; an issue that is of wider interest as private high rise residential buildings with ACM cladding are identified. In the consolidated advice it issued on 5 September, DCLG indicated it would be asking the Independent Expert

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Advisory Panel (established to provide advice on how to make buildings safe) to consider whether there may be heightened risks associated with other cladding systems.

6. It is understood that the first stage in the review of whether there are any other cladding systems that present a similar fire safety risk to ACM cladding systems has been concluded, and that consideration is being given to commissioning BRE to research other materials that might be used in cladding systems, and using this as the basis for a catalogue. BRE has already started to publish the results of full system tests where the cladding system has passed. There are concerns with how useful it is to just publish test results where the system has passed. The LGA has therefore called for the results of failed full system tests conducted by BRE to be published.

Industry Response Group

7. Further advice for councils and building owners on carrying out remediation work is due to be provided by the Industry Response Group (IRG) established by DCLG in July. It has been working on a series of briefing notes about the key stages of remediation. These will include a decision tree for owners of buildings with ACM cladding to use, a myth-busting glossary (covering the meaning of a range of terms including materials of limited combustibility, insulation, and responsible person), the different professional advice (eg architect, fire safety engineer, quantity surveyor) available to advise on elements of the work, and assessing fire safety and identifying remedial works. These briefing notes were due to be published in October.
8. The LGA has raised a number of issues in relation to the IRG's work, not least being the speed with which advice is being made available to building owners. In the absence of a definitive list of products that have passed or failed the full systems tests perhaps the most useful advice the IRG could produce would be to give a clear steer to building owners about what products could be used to safely replace ACM cladding. We do not anticipate however that the IRG will be providing building owners with that advice due to differing views between different parts of the industry.

Interim fire safety mitigation measures

9. While remediation work is commissioned to replace ACM cladding on social housing tower blocks, councils and housing associations have to continue to ensure the safety of residents in those blocks. To assist with that DCLG and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have produced additional guidance for building owners. DCLG issued updated advice on interim fire safety mitigation measures at the end of September. This recommends that building owners check for example, that they have a suitable fire risk assessment, that residents understand emergency fire procedures, and that doors that open on to escape corridors and stairwells are fire resistant.
10. Fire and rescue services have been carrying out inspections with building owners to assess the risks in individual buildings following the issuing of this advice, which has required the deployment of considerable resources. London Fire Brigade for example will have to inspect around 200 buildings.
11. Having completed these checks, an assessment has to be made about whether a 'stay put' strategy remains appropriate for the building taking into account a range of factors. If

it is decided that a 'stay-put' approach is temporarily unsuitable for the building, then a simultaneous evacuation policy should be implemented. If the risks are very serious then consideration should be given to decanting residents from all or part of the building until the remediation work is complete. The NFCC have produced complementary guidance to DCLG's on implementing a simultaneous evacuation policy, such as the use of a Waking Watch or a common fire alarm system to detect fire and initiate an evacuation. We understand that in a number of social housing tower blocks there has had to be a move to simultaneous evacuation, following assessments by the fire and rescue service.

Funding

12. Funding the remediation work is of course a crucial issue for the affected councils, as is the cost of the fire safety checks for fire and rescue services. In order to get a sense of the cost to the fifteen councils, the LGA has asked them to provide estimates of the cost of conducting remediation work. So far we have had responses from fourteen out of the fifteen. These indicate work is either underway or already completed to remove the cladding from 26 tower blocks, and in a small number of cases replacement work has already started. Councils were also asked to provide estimates of the cost of additional fire safety measures such as installing alarms or sprinkler systems.
13. We have not yet gathered information on the cost of this work to fire and rescue services, but in the paper on fire service funding on the agenda for this meeting, members' views are sought on whether we should work with the NFCC to obtain similar information from Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs).
14. There may also be financial implications for local authorities who have transferred tower blocks to housing associations. Housing associations are not being provided with funding by government to undertake the remediation work needed to the buildings they own, and as a result they have been exploring other avenues to find the funding for the work. We understand some are examining the 'stock transfer warranties' provided at the time of the transfer by the relevant council.
15. At an evidence session before the Communities and Local Government Select Committee on 11 October the Secretary of State repeated the Department's position on funding. DCLG take the view that fire safety is the responsibility of the building owner and is not making any additional funding available to councils to carry out remediation work. The expectation is that councils will fund this work themselves. Where councils are unable to afford the work they can discuss this with the Department. Currently 32 councils have approached DCLG and seven are in detailed discussions with officials about providing them with greater flexibility to borrow from their Housing Revenue Account (HRA), or make a transfer from their general fund to the HRA.

Private sector blocks

Data collection

16. DCLG's programme for ensuring that private high rise residential buildings are safe continues to develop. Having written out to councils at the start of September to ask them to gather data on the number of private high rise residential buildings in their area, DCLG wrote on 19 October to owners of these buildings to request key pieces of

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information. At the same time DCLG have also written to local authority chief executives confirming that gathering the data on private high rise residential buildings represents a new burden and funding will be made available for this work. DCLG's assessment is that the additional costs amount to £289,000 across the sector.

17. In order to assist the seven authorities with the largest number of private high rise residential buildings, DCLG has appointed relationship managers for each council. DCLG is also holding regular teleconferences with these authorities to enable them to discuss issues. Those councils involved have raised concerns about the time and resource required to collect the information DCLG have requested be returned by 10 November. There has also been debate about the respective roles of councils and fire and rescue services in gathering this data.

Legal powers

18. The other main concern that councils have raised with DCLG are their powers to take action where landlords do not prove co-operative. DCLG wrote to councils in a letter dated 8 October setting out the powers they believe are available to councils under the Housing Act 2004 and the associated Housing Health and Safety Rating System. DCLG's view is that the powers in the legislation can be used in relation to external cladding systems.
19. There is concern among local authorities that, irrespective of DCLG's legal advice, private landlords will challenge attempts by councils to compel them to take action through the courts. Any dispute of this sort would have significant implications for the local authority concerned, especially if it is a smaller council with limited resources, and more widely for fire safety if the landlord's case was successful. If a building owner was to successfully challenge a council's attempts to take a sample of cladding to identify whether it was an ACM panel or not then we could be left with a number of buildings with cladding on them that represents a fire hazard, but the owner cannot be compelled to do anything about under the Housing Act. In these circumstances the onus may be on fire and rescue services to take action under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. We have therefore urged DCLG to support any council that faces a legal challenge from a landlord, including appearing alongside the council in court.

Outcomes from the programme

20. We have also suggested that DCLG give more thought to what happens as this programme develops. From what we have heard from the construction industry, it seems ACM cladding has been more widely used on private high rise residential buildings than on social housing tower blocks. The proportion of private high rise residential buildings with ACM cladding that needs to be removed may well be greater than in council and housing association buildings. The number of affected council tower blocks amounted to no more than three per cent of the total number of council owned blocks. If the number of private residential high rise buildings with ACM cladding is higher than in the social housing sector this will have significant resource implications for FRAs.
21. DCLG has been clear that owners are responsible for the safety of their buildings, with the expectation being that private landlords will undertake the necessary remedial work.

However this raises a number of issues. Some building owners may not be able to afford the remedial work needed to make a building safe. In this circumstance who will carry out the remedial work and who will pay for it? Fire and rescue services would then have to consider who if anyone might be made to take responsibility for carrying out the work. Resolving any disagreements over who is responsible could be a complex and time consuming legal process.

22. Other building owners will pass the costs of the remedial work on to leaseholders. When these include the costs of any interim fire safety measures, the bills leaseholders could face may be substantial, and it is possible some may lose their homes as a result. It is also unclear if every building owner of a block with ACM cladding could afford to pay for interim fire safety measures until remedial work was carried out. We may therefore see pressure placed on fire and rescue services from private building owners to change their advice on the interim fire safety measures needed in a particular block.
23. This also raises the question of what action can be taken where a building owner stops providing interim fire safety measures, such as a waking watch. The powers fire and rescue services have under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Service) Order 2005 are not extensive and the ultimate sanction available would be to close a building; which would mean having to rehouse the residents living in the block. In these circumstances it is not clear if any of the powers councils have under the Housing Act, would provide a better tool short of closing the building to take action against a building owner.
24. Councils may feel compelled to take action in these circumstances. As has been reported in the press, Slough is taking action to acquire a private high rise residential building which has ACM cladding that needs to be removed. While others may wish to go down this route to ensure their residents are safe, the costs of carrying out the remediation work could well be prohibitive, even if councils are able to recover the costs of the work from the leaseholders or insurers.

Large Panel System built buildings

25. Following the inspections commissioned by the London Borough of Southwark into the tower blocks on the Ledbury estate, DCLG wrote out to all councils about large panel system-built buildings in early September. The Department recommended councils check any large panel system buildings they are responsible for to see if they have piped gas, and if they do ensure the building can carry gas safely. Whether or not large panel system buildings have a gas supply, councils were told it was important for them to understand their structural history and monitor their condition and structural integrity.
26. Councils have been told they will have to examine the records they have, which may be incomplete, to aid this process. We have therefore searched the National Archives to help councils ascertain if there are any large panel system buildings in their area that were strengthened after the explosion at Ronan Point in 1968. This information has been provided to the LGA's principal advisers in the regions to share with councils. If FRAs are interested in this information they can also request it from their appropriate principal adviser. DCLG have indicated that they are considering whether to produce further advice to building owners on large panel system buildings, and the further investigations that Arup have been commissioned to carry out on the Ledbury estate is due to complete at the end of November.

Building regulations and fire safety review

27. At was reported to the last Committee meeting Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building regulations and fire safety issued a call for safety in September. Following consideration by the Lead Members of Fire Services Management Committee and the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, by the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, as well as the LGA's Grenfell Task and Finish Group, the LGA's evidence was submitted to the Review on 13 October. A copy has been attached at Annex A. Subsequently the Review team invited the LGA to participate in a roundtable event with tenants and leaseholders in London on 6 November, and there has also been a meeting with the Review team.
28. The Review's interim report is expected before the end of the year, with the final report and recommendations ready in spring 2018. This is still a work in progress, so if there are additional points members wish to see raised for consideration by the Review team these can be included in any future discussions.

Implications for Wales

29. The issues set out in this document are being addressed by the devolved administration and local authorities in Wales.

Financial Implications

30. The LGA's work in response to Grenfell Tower continues to be intensive; however it has been met so far from existing resources.

Next steps

31. Members are asked to:
- 31.1. Note the ongoing work at a national and local level to improve fire safety in high rise buildings.
 - 31.2. Consider and discuss the implications this work may have for FRAs, which need to be taken into account in the LGA's work.
 - 31.3. Note the LGA's submission to the Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review and consider if there are any additional points to be raised with the Review team.



LGA submission to the call for evidence for the independent review of building regulations and fire safety

13 October 2017

About the Local Government Association (LGA)

The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government. We work with councils to support, promote and improve local government.

We are a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government. We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to councils so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems.

Introduction

The LGA welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the independent review of building regulations and fire safety. Councils across the country are clear that no one should have to live in fear about their safety, be that in the buildings they live in, work in or visit.

The tragedy at Grenfell Tower has clearly exposed a systemic failure of the building regulation system, which needs to be addressed urgently to ensure such an incident never happens again.

Whilst the primary focus since Grenfell has, understandably, been fire safety in high-rise towers, we urge the independent review to look more broadly at building regulation and fire safety issues that affect all buildings, to ensure there are robust procedures in place across the board. Furthermore, recommendations arising from the review should be given clear deadlines for implementation.

Whilst our response covers the specific questions in the call for evidence, it can be split broadly into two themes. Those looking at fire safety when buildings are being constructed and post-construction fire safety.

In relation to both themes we feel that there needs either to be a single point of responsibility or greater clarity over the responsibilities of those building and/or owning blocks and the regulators of construction and ongoing safety. All of these arrangements need to be clear to residents, to those responsible for construction at the sharp end and to those with day-to-day responsibility for managing buildings.

A summary of our proposals can be found at the end of this document.

Submission

Response to specific questions in the call for evidence

1 The overarching legal requirements

Q1 To what extent are the current building, housing and fire safety legislation and associated guidance clear and understood by those who need to follow them? In particular:

- What parts are clear and well understood by those who need to follow them? and, if appropriate*
- Where specifically do you think there are gaps, inconsistencies and/or overlaps (including between different parts of the legislation and guidance)? What changes would be necessary to address these and what are the benefits of doing so?*

The requirement under section B4 (1) of the Building Regulations 2010¹ relating to the spread of fire across the external walls of the building is perfectly clear and does not need to be revised. This specifies that *'The external walls shall adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls and from one building to another, having regards to the height, use and position of the building'*.

Approved Document B Volume 2

However, this is not the case with the Government's guidance Approved Document B (fire safety) volume 2²: buildings others than dwelling houses, which deals with fire safety in tall buildings and is unclear.

The lack of clarity in the guidance has been recognised at least since 2013 when the Coroner in the case of the 2009 Lakanal House deaths wrote in a Rule 43 letter to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) stating that "[Approved Document B] is a most difficult document to use" and recommended that the Department "provides clear guidance in relation to Regulation B4 of the Building Regulations, with particular regard to the spread of fire over the external envelope of the building".

The Coroner went on to recommend that the guidance "is expressed in words and adopts a format which are intelligible to the wide range of people and bodies engaged in construction, maintenance and refurbishment of buildings"

The concerns of the Coroner are supported by evidence from the Fire Sector Federation titled "Why does Approved Document B need to be reviewed?" The document cites findings from a survey of Fire Sector Federation and Construction Industry Council members suggesting that a large proportion of the members of both organisations have serious concerns as to the adequacy and clarity of Approved Document B. More than half of the CIC members responding to the survey are said to find Approved Document B difficult to use.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2214/schedule/1/made>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-approved-document-b>

In its response to the Coroners rule 43 letter DCLG stated that a new edition of the Approved Document would be produced in 2016/17. This did not happen.

Approved Document B is of no use if the individuals fixing cladding systems to buildings do not understand both the document, its purpose and its importance. It is clear that terms such as 'filler' (in paragraph 12.7) mean different things to lawyers than to builders. This is a serious failing in a document that the building industry is supposed to understand and apply. Approved Document B2 as a whole is arguably not fit for purpose in this respect. The revised version - and the definitions section in particular - should be subjected to a reality-check to ensure it is comprehensible to those working in the industry.

Our specific concerns with the guidance are listed here:

- The tone of the opening introductory paragraphs invites the reader to find alternative ways to those in the guidance with which to comply with section B4 (1) of the building regulations; it states that "there is no obligation to adopt any particular solution contained in an approved document if you prefer to meet the relevant requirement in some other way".³ There is a risk that this leeway undermines the authority of the guidance and establishes a contestable space in which manufacturers, builders, and regulators must operate
- There are both national and European classifications of non-combustible materials and materials of limited combustibility. Approved Document B Vol 2 rightly refers to both and states that "the national classifications do not automatically equate with the equivalent [European] classifications" and that products "cannot typically assume a European class unless they have been tested accordingly".⁴ However, there is a lack of clarity as to when a national or European standard should apply. This is of particular importance and becomes increasingly confusing when the guidance is being read in conjunction with other documents such as Agrément Certificates
- In general it is important to note that the guidance can only be interpreted by further reference to a number of other complex documents including various British Standards and BR 135⁵
- Paragraphs 12.5 to 12.9 of Approved Document B Vol 2 provide the relevant guidance for external wall construction and external surfaces for blocks of flats that are 18 metres or taller. These paragraphs set up two separate routes to compliance and are problematic:

³ AD B Vol 2 p5

⁴ AD B Vol 2 Appendix A Tables 6 and 7

⁵ [BR 135](#)

- Whilst paragraphs 12.6 and 12.7 may appear to set absolute requirements for 18m plus buildings if read alone, that is not the case because paragraph 12.5 offers an alternative route to compliance stating that “External walls should either meet the guidance given in paragraphs 12.6 to 12.9 or meet the performance criteria given in the BRE Report Fire Performance of external insulation for walls of multi storey buildings (BR 135)”
- In doing so the guidance appears to set up no absolute requirement for the external surfaces of walls to meet the provisions of paragraph 12.6 and Diagram 40 or for insulation materials in cladding systems used on 18m plus buildings to be of “limited combustibility” as specified in paragraph 12.7. The guidance allows not just for two separate routes to compliance but for two completely separate standards. The continuation of such an approach must now be questionable
- The confusion in these important paragraphs is compounded further by a tension between the requirements of 12.6 and Diagram 40 (“Provisions for external surfaces or walls”), which appear to set a B threshold for external wall surfaces, and the requirements of 12.7 which set an A2 threshold for any external cladding.

A practice has built up in the industry whereby a *third* option to achieve compliance is available.⁶ This approach, allows that if no actual fire test data exists for a particular system, a desk-top study report by a suitable independent UKAS accredited testing body (BRE, Chiltern Fire or Warrington Fire) can be submitted instead to building control stating whether, in their opinion, BR 135 criteria would be met with the proposed system. These reports are a matter of judgement and cannot be verified by building control. Subsequent to the Grenfell Tower fire a number of cladding systems which have been used on tall buildings have proved not to meet the required standard of non-combustibility. This raises serious questions about the appropriateness of a route to compliance which does not depend on an actual fire test.

These concerns suggest that the efficacy of the approach to guidance, including allowing various routes to compliance and dual standards must be questioned and that a substantial rewrite of Approved Document B is required. The rewrite should ensure that the updated document is comprehensible to those industry professionals that use it and ultimately delivers the key outcomes it seeks to address, which is fire safety.

As a minimum:

- Paragraph 12.7 should be rewritten to say that all the material used in external cladding systems should be of limited combustibility (this would still allow products that do not meet this standard to be used where a system has passed BS 8414). The existing references to the materials

⁶ BCA Technical Guidance Note 18

(e.g. filler) involved allows room for confusion although the reference to gaskets and sealants in parenthesis may need to be retained

- Approved Document B should also make it clear that a fire-engineering approach cannot override the requirement of section B4 (1) of the Building Regulations and that desktop studies cannot substitute for test BS 8414.

BR 135 and BS 8414 and the transparency of test results

BR 135 specifies criteria to assess whether an entire cladding system meets pass/fail thresholds for external and internal fire spread when tested using the method set out in BS 8414. BS 8414⁷ is a British Standard describing test methods to assess fire safety of cladding applied to the external face of a building.

The details of the BS 8414 test need to be reviewed and clear guidance provided on how far a cladding system may in practice differ from the test rig used if it is to rely on an existing test result. This provision is required to avoid repeating the test where a system is identical in key respects to those already tested (for example the same materials and no significant difference to the layout). It should not be capable of providing the same effective loophole that desk top studies have in practice become.

The BS8414 tests undertaken by independent UKAS accredited testing bodies (BRE, Chiltern Fire or Warrington Fire) are a commercial activity. As such the results are treated as commercially confidential and are not available publicly without the approval of the manufacturer that has submitted a product or system for testing. This has proved frustrating as councils and other landlords and building owners have grappled with the challenge of assessing the cladding on their buildings, particularly if the cladding systems are not one of those that the Government has recently tested.

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, it is now unsustainable that test results, particularly those that fail under BS 8414, can be treated as commercially confidential. There should be a duty on accredited testing bodies to make this information publicly available. It should also be the case that the granting of an Agrément Certificate is dependent on the publication of *all* fire safety test results.

The test relating to BS 8414 is based on the assumption that systems are properly fitted. Evidence suggests, for example around wind loading, that this cannot be relied upon. It would be helpful if the BS8414 testing regime were able to provide information on how sensitive the tests are to commonly found mistakes in building envelopes.

Consideration should also be given as to whether retrospective installation of BS8414 tested cladding systems onto older buildings (which may have been built under broader construction tolerances than might be allowed today), could impact on the integrity and fire safety of that system.

⁷ [BS 8414](#)

The details of the BS 8414 test are not widely known and are not publicly available without the purchase of a BRE publication. These details need to be made more widely available in order to aid understanding of why the test matters.

Wind loading

A separate and distinct issue has risen in respect of cladding on tower blocks. Following investigations of cladding that fell from buildings in Glasgow, it was found that some cladding systems may be designed and installed in such a way that they could fail in strong winds. It is our understanding that a survey by the British Board of Agrément has shown that wind loading calculations for cladding systems are not properly understood by the industry. Approved Document B needs to refer to the need for accurate wind loading calculations.

Energy performance and Approved Document L

The Buildings Energy Performance Directive¹ (EPBD) was approved on 16 December 2002 and brought into force on 4 January 2003. EPBD required Member States to take measures to ensure that minimum energy performance requirements for buildings were set. Building Regulations were amended in 2006 and a new set of Approved Documents L were introduced. Targets for heat loss, a U value, apply for new build and for renovations. For example Table A1 of AD L1 B sets a U value of 0.30 for the renewal of cladding, or applying cladding for the first time to an external wall. This has implications for the type of insulation and rain screen used in a cladding system. We need to ensure that in complying with Approved Document L there is an appropriate regard for fire safety. Approved Document L may need amending to ensure that requirements in respect of energy efficiency do not obscure requirements elsewhere in respect of fire safety.

The possibility that changes of use under permitted development that see buildings over 18m transferred from commercial, in particular office use to residential, may add an additional gap in the regulatory framework, needs to be properly investigated.

The points made above require a wide-ranging review of building regulation guidance. However, in our view the changes which can be made quickly should not be delayed pending the outcome of a wider review. In particular the guidance around cladding systems must be revised quickly so that it can inform the recladding that needs to be carried out now.

Post construction safety and the Fire Safety Order

Following the Lakanal House inquest, the Coroner wrote to the Department for Communities and Local Government in a Rule 43 letter recommending that the Government give clear guidance on:

- The definition of 'common parts' of buildings containing multiple premises

- Inspection of a maisonette or flat which has been modified internally to determine whether compartmentation has been breached
- Inspection of a sample of flats or maisonettes to identify possible breaches of the compartment.⁸

Clear guidance is still outstanding and these uncertainties remain.

In addition there appears to be uncertainty over:

- Whether cladding systems are ‘common parts’ of buildings for the purpose of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) order 2005 (the FSO)
- Whether cladding issues should be inspected and enforced under the FSO by fire and rescue authorities or the Housing Act
- Whether cladding which would not pass building regulations is a category one hazard under the health and safety rating system under the Housing Act.

In general there is insufficient clarity on the relationship between the Housing Act 2004 and the Fire Safety Order and the division of responsibilities and powers between councils under the former and fire and rescue services under the latter. This could be solved by a single body (either the local authority or the fire and rescue service) being given exclusive responsibility for fire safety issues in multi-storey blocks. Or, alternatively, clarifying the respective roles of councils and fire and rescue services may prove equally effective. To avoid any perceived conflict of interest, councils should not be put in a position where they are both the proprietor/landlord of a building and the regulator. In these instances partnership with fire and rescue services will be crucial.

Either way it is essential that there is a collaborative partnership approach between all agencies involved in ensuring the safety of residents, albeit relative responsibilities need to be clarified and formalised. Our concern is to see the issue addressed and the solution properly funded, rather than to ensure it is addressed in a particular manner, although we intend to consider that issue further and seek our members’ views on it. For the sake of concision this point is not repeated below where reference is made to a single enforcement body.

Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC)

The Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC)⁹ is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by DCLG. The Committee advises on making building regulations and setting standards for the design and construction of buildings. Given the previous Government’s drive to “reduce the regulatory burden on the housing industry”¹⁰, and “make it

⁸ <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ec-letter-to-DCLG-pursuant-to-rule43-28March2013.pdf>

⁹ [Building Regulations Advisory Committee \(BRAC\)](#)

¹⁰ [Ministerial Statement 13 March 2014](#)

easier and cheaper to build homes”¹¹, consideration should be given to the impact that this deregulation has had on the overall safety and quality of new builds over successive Governments. For example, whether the drive to reduce costs has led to a race to the bottom in terms of building standards, rather than the most appropriate level of regulation. There should also be a review on the fitness for purpose of BRAC. This should consider, in particular, the quality and frequency of BRAC’s advice to Government, the degree to which its conclusions are followed up by the Government and the balance of interests on the committee.

Local Government Association guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats

The LGA led work commissioned by Government to develop sector-led guidance¹² on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats, which was written by experts in the field of fire safety and was published in July 2011. It was developed after landlords voiced a number of concerns about how best they can deliver an appropriate level of fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats. The LGA is keen to work with the Government and other partners to consider the implications of any recommendations resulting from the Hackitt review, the Grenfell Tower public inquiry and inquest to make any revisions to the guidance as appropriate.

2 Roles & Responsibilities

Q2 Are the roles, responsibilities & accountabilities of different individuals (in relation to adhering to fire safety requirements or assessing compliance) at each key stage of the building process clear, effective and timely? In particular:

- *Where are responsibilities clear, effective and timely and well understood by those who need to adhere to them/assess them? and, if appropriate*
- *Where specifically do you think the regime is not effective?*
- *What changes would be necessary to address these and what are the benefits of doing so?*

The body of legislation is only one aspect in considering the safety of buildings. The practice of the construction sector and professionals within it are equally important. There is evidence to suggest that the chain of different suppliers and contractors involved in the construction or refurbishment of a building allows too great a risk that value engineering and product substitution can happen after building control plans have been approved and even during the construction phase.

It is necessary to reduce this risk and in our view, the construction of safe buildings will require that:

- Responsibility for ensuring that a building is constructed in accordance with the building regulations and that unsuitable products are not introduced at a late stage in the construction process needs to lie with a specific individual who can work across

¹¹ [DCLG press release](#)

¹² [LGA guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats – July 2011](#)

the supply chain, probably supported by a more rigorous inspection system

- This could include creating a formal stage when plans and specific product details have to be verified by building control. They then must be delivered according to the verified details with inspections scheduled to monitor key phases and tasks
- Workers engaged in front line tasks understand what they can and cannot do to comply with the regulations. It is impractical to imagine that it will ever be possible to ensure cladding is properly attached to a building and cavity barriers fully functional, through inspection alone. This could be addressed through an accredited installer scheme for cladding industry employees
- Anyone undertaking work in a block that could breach the principle of compartmentation understands the need to avoid doing so. While this can be addressed through training of utility installers etc, all such work needs to be notifiable to building control (and also to the single body referred to in answer to Question1 above, if this approach were to be adopted) as well as to the responsible person under the Fire Safety Order.

We are not confident that the current regulatory framework ensures any of the above outcomes.

Building control under market conditions

Building Control Bodies (BCBs) are responsible for checking building works to provide verification that it complies with national building regulations. Building Control Bodies may be either the building control department within a local authority or an Approved Inspector. The person carrying out building work can decide whether to use the local authority or an Approved Inspector.

The current competitive system of building control, operating within indeterminate building regulations' guidance, hinders an effective inspection regime. A competitive market for building control sign-off creates pressure to lower costs and particularly when guidance is unclear, can lead to lower standards, including fewer less rigorous inspections.

The ability of Approved Inspectors and council building control services to win business decreases the more expensive their service is. This deters inspectors from conducting more than the minimum number of inspections or from making those inspections more rigorous than is absolutely necessary. There should be absolute clarity on the required inspections and the standard of those inspections for both local authority building control inspectors and Approved Inspectors to ensure a level playing field – this could drive up the effectiveness and quality of inspection regimes across this competitive market. This should apply to all new building work, including new builds, as well as conversions and refurbishments of existing buildings for the avoidance of doubt.

It appears that no power exists to compel Approved Inspectors to provide anyone other than their client with copies of approvals or the reasoning behind them. This lack of transparency should be rectified.

Q3 Does the current system place a clear over-arching responsibility on named parties for maintaining/ ensuring fire safety requirements are met in a high-rise multi occupancy building? Where could this be made clearer? What would be the benefits of doing so?

As our answer to Q2 above indicates, we do not feel the current system adequately places a clear over-arching responsibility on named parties for ensuring fire safety requirements are met in a high-rise multi occupancy building in respect of construction.

Post construction we think it is clear that currently responsibilities for ensuring fire safety requirements are met lie with the building owner for common parts and the occupier for individual dwellings. We think this distinction needs review, because fire does not recognise these administrative boundaries.

In particular, while tenancy agreements and leases can require occupiers not to breach the principle of compartmentation, there is evidence to suggest that this is not well understood by occupiers (for example front fire doors and fire glass are often replaced with uncertified products), nor is internal work in a dwelling likely to be inspected or to come to light.

The FSO's requirement for a responsible person to produce a fire risk assessment (FRA) only applies to common parts and does not require sufficient expertise to be brought to bear on producing the FRA.

Building owners should have responsibility for ensuring that the FRA is carried out by a suitably qualified person and covers all parts of the building to ensure that tenants and leaseholders do not breach compartmentation. Clear guidance on such inspections would be required, as recommended by the Coroner in the Lakanal House inquest.

As suggested above, one solution would be for a single enforcement body to be responsible for inspecting all areas of high rise blocks against this FRA.

In terms of implementing any necessary fire safety measures as a result of an FRA, it is worth considering what powers are, or should be, available to landowners, councils and fire and rescue services to ensure action is taken swiftly and that costs can be recouped. This is of particular concern in mixed tenure buildings where leaseholders and tenants occupy properties but may fail to agree on fire safety measures.

3 Competencies of key players

Q4 What evidence is there that those with responsibility for:

- Demonstrating compliance (with building regulations, housing & fire safety requirements) at various stages in the life cycle of a building;*

- *Assessing compliance with those requirements*

are appropriately trained and accredited and are adequately resourced to perform their role effectively (including whether there are enough qualified professionals in each key area)? If gaps exist how can they be addressed and what would be the benefits of doing so?

Building Control

There is evidence to suggest that there are significant recruitment and retention issues in local authority building control. There is particular concern about the loss of qualified and experienced building control surveyors to the private sector, as well as through retirement. The local government sector would like to work with Government to consider opportunities to increase capacity and address recruitment and retention issues to ensure that local authorities can continue to deliver effective building control services.

In terms of specific competencies, these should be closely matched to the type and complexity of work being undertaken. This is equally relevant to building control, fire risk assessors, designers or contractors. In the case of local authority building control there are many opportunities for further training. This includes courses run by other local government membership organisations such as Local Authority Building Control (LABC), which includes a portfolio of Continued Professional Development (CPD) courses. The Government should work with the building control sector to assess whether there is merit in having a specific competency set or minimum qualification level required to deal with building control issues relating to high-rise and/or high complexity buildings. It is important that any competency expectations are the same for both local authority building control inspectors and Approved Inspectors to ensure transparency and a level playing field within the competitive market in which they operate.

Local authority building control services have quality management systems including certification under ISO 90001, which means that they are continuously undergoing the scrutiny of this third party certification body. The vast majority of these services supply information to a performance sub-committee of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (the building control performance standards advisory group (BCPSAG)). Through this mechanism services are able to monitor compliance with relevant competencies. The information in these audits provide the basis for benchmarking and a sector led approach to improvement.

The LGA champions sector-led improvement across local government. In our view it is the most effective way to secure sustained improvement. Sector-led improvement is based on the underlying principles that local authorities are:

- Responsible for their own performance
- Accountable locally, not nationally
- Operating with a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole, and
- Drawing on the LGA to provide tools and support.

There are opportunities to extend the existing sector-led offer to local authority building control, but this is not costless and would need to be fully funded.

Fire Risk Assessment

There is currently no prescribed threshold of expertise required for the conduct of a fire risk assessment. This may be acceptable in low rise blocks, but in high rise blocks, or buildings housing vulnerable people, fire risk assessments should be carried out by accredited experts (for example through UKAS) holding a nationally agreed minimum level of qualification. This should cover the entire structure including individual dwellings, irrespective of ownership. This may require regulatory change to ensure that fire risk assessors can access individual dwellings.

There should be a requirement for fire risk assessments on high rise blocks or other high risk/high complexity buildings to be logged in the same way as 'Competent Persons' Scheme notifications are held by local authorities and subject to fixed interval regular review.

4 Enforcement & Sanctions

Q5 Is the current checking and inspection regime adequately backed up through enforcement and sanctions? In particular

- *Where does the regime already adequately drive compliance or ensure remedial action is always taken in a timely manner where needed?*
- *Where does the system fail to do so? Are changes required to address this and what would be the benefits of doing so?*

It is too early to be certain, but we hope that the consequences for a building owner of discovering dangerous cladding on their building and having to undergo interim and long-term remediation work are likely to be expensive enough to provide a deterrent to non-compliance in themselves. Therefore, while the system of construction regulation has obviously failed on a large scale, the issue here is not one of enforcement and sanctions, but of oversight, including inspection (and the issues raised previously including the effectiveness of guidance).

That said, there are elements of the enforcement regime that should be reformed. The time limit on enforcement action in respect of breaches of building regulation should be removed, particularly where those breaches pose a serious risk to public safety, as is the case in the current cladding crisis (we are not arguing here for retrospective prosecution where a building complied with regulations in force at the time). Currently local authorities have two formal enforcement powers where building work undertaken is not in compliance with the building regulations:

- First, the local authority may prosecute a person who has carried out building work which contravenes the Building Regulations in the Magistrates' County, resulting in an unlimited fine (sections 35 and 35A of the Building Act 1984). Prosecution is only possible up to two

years after completion of the work. Action will usually be taken against the person carrying out the work, for example the builder, main contractor or installer

- Secondly, the local authority can alternatively, or in addition, serve an enforcement notice on the building owner requiring alteration or removal of work where it contravenes the Building Regulations (section 36 of the 1984 Act). The local authority has the power to undertake the work itself and recover costs from the owner, in cases where the owner does not comply with the notice. A section 36 enforcement notice cannot be served on a building owner following the expiration of 12 months from the date the offending building work is completed. Where building work has been carried out in accordance with a full plans building control application which a local authority approved or failed to reject, the local authority cannot take enforcement action under section 36.

Post construction fire safety in high rise blocks should be subjected to regular inspections. One solution would be for this to be undertaken by a single body responsible for the entire block, both dwellings and common parts (including the external envelope), to whom any work relevant to compartmentation or other fire safety issues should be notifiable.

Building owners or managers should be required to ensure that not only do they have a fire risk assessment conducted by someone with the necessary expertise but that this assessment is publicly available, that it is supplied to residents and that residents are made aware of how to contact the enforcement body directly should they have concerns. There should be a statutory time period in which the assessment should be made public, but should allow sufficient time for landlords to plan how to rectify any issues of concern identified through a fire risk assessment.

There is currently some uncertainty over whether councils (using the Housing Act) or fire and rescue services (using the FSO) have the power to demand that building owners test cladding to check that it poses no fire safety risk, or to insist upon the replacement of dangerous cladding.

The Government should provide a clear overview of the legal powers under which councils and/or fire and rescue services are able to act should enforcement action be required. For example through the Housing Act 2004, and the regulations and Housing Health and Safety Rating System made under it and/or the FSO.

If the above powers do exist, the ultimate sanction under them is to carry out work and then charge the building owner for doing so. It may be that where cladding needs replacing building owners will not only refuse to do so, but write-off assets rather than pay the cost of re-cladding, leaving councils with the bill.

Therefore, in cases where owners cannot or will not carry out work to address a significant safety issue in a block (which might be defined as one requiring evacuation until it can be addressed), councils (who would

otherwise be required to meet the housing needs of those evacuated) should be given control of the block and the power to act as freehold owners in order at least to meet the housing needs of residents and to recoup any costs incurred. Arguably this arrangement should continue beyond that point in order to provide a punitive sanction against building owners who have not borne the responsibility. If such arrangements were made, the property rights of leaseholders should of course be protected. Indeed, it is our view that these arrangements are necessary in part in order to protect those rights.

5 Tenants' & Residents' Voice in the current system

Q6 Is there an effective means for tenants and other residents to raise concerns about the fire safety of their buildings and to receive feedback? Where might changes be required to ensure tenants'/residents' voices on fire safety can be heard in the future?

Residents and tenant engagement should be at the heart of everything that public organisations do. This should include involving residents and tenants in formulating policy, developing services and providing views and feedback once implemented.

Insight and understanding local communities is key to developing strong engagement. The LGA's New Conversations¹³ guide sets out the principles of good engagement and could act as a starting point for further developing this work.

Best practice around what good community engagement should be can be developed further and the LGA would be pleased to play a leading role in this, following work we have already done in this area.

As set out in answer to the previous question, it is essential that owners are proactively required to share fire risk assessment with residents and that residents are empowered to raise any concerns about fire safety directly to the enforcing authority.

6 Quality Assurance and Testing of Materials

Q7 Does the way building components are safety checked, certified and marketed in relation to building regulations requirements need to change? In particular:

- *Where is the system sufficiently robust and reliable in maximising fire safety and, if appropriate*
- *Where specifically do you think there are weaknesses/gaps? What changes would be necessary to address these and what would be the benefits of doing so?*

There is evidence to suggest that product naming for building components can sometimes be ambiguous, and there is no convention for product naming and marking for many products. All building components that have to be assessed in fire safety decision-making should carry visible product

¹³ <https://www.local.gov.uk/new-conversations-lga-guide-engagement>

marking that relates to test certificates which is clear when goods are delivered to construction sites. Alongside the requirement outlined earlier for a new process whereby plans and specific product details have to be verified by building control, this would ensure that product substitutions did not take place on site, which might compromise fire safety.

Test certification documents for building components can be lengthy and complex to understand, therefore requiring careful use. Test certification should be presented in a standard template containing the essential facts and figures. For example, products which can never be safely used above 18m, such as polyethylene (PE) grade Aluminium Cladding Material, need to be clearly marked to that effect. These should be publicly available on a trusted website, for example, .gov.uk. This will enable users, including building control departments to make an informed decision about the appropriateness of using that component in a construction product, and to easily and effectively determine its compliance with building regulations.

Building product manufacturers should also be required to clearly state whether products may present other hazard risks to building occupants and/or the area surrounding the building in the event of fire, for example release of toxic gases.

7 Differentiation within the current Regulatory System

Q8 What would be the advantages/disadvantages of creating a greater degree of differentiation in the regulatory system between high-rise multi occupancy residential buildings and other less complex types of residential/non-residential buildings?

As outlined previously, all those involved at the various stages in the life cycle of a building, should be appropriately trained and accredited to reflect the complexity of the work that they are involved in. The increased complexities arising from high-rise multi occupancy residential buildings – not least in the design, construction as well as fire safety implications for residents – suggests that there is a strong case for a higher level of training and accreditation for those involved in activities relating to these types of buildings. It is vital that where any differentiation is introduced in the regulatory system, that the Government provides absolute clarity on how the new system works and the competency levels required, to avoid any ambiguity.

While there may be a good case for exempting low-rise residential accommodation from some of the requirements imposed on high rise, there is also a case for more rigorous conditions imposed on buildings with vulnerable occupants (e.g. student accommodation, sheltered accommodation, care homes, health buildings etc.)

8 International Comparisons and Other Sectors

Q9 What examples exist from outside England of good practice in regulatory systems that aim to ensure fire safety in similar buildings? What aspects should be specifically considered and why?

Q10 What examples of good practice from regulatory regimes in other

industries/sectors that are dependent on high quality safety environments are there that we could learn from? What key lessons are there for enhancing fire safety?

No response.

9 Summary of proposals/suggestions

Construction Stage

- The time limit on enforcing building regulations should be removed
- Approved Document B needs revising as detailed in our response to Q1
- Desk-top studies and fire engineering approaches are not acceptable routes to compliance with building regulation for cladding
- One individual needs to be legally responsible for ensuring that building regulations are complied with during the construction, refurbishment or cladding of a building from design to completion
- As a minimum the competitive market in building control needs to be reformed to ensure that fire safety is not a basis for competition and there needs to be a more rigorous prescription of the number of inspections, the stages at which they take place and their content
- The shortage and age profile of the building control profession needs to be addressed and the sector wants to work with Government on how to address these issues
- All tests carried out under BS 8414 should be available to building control and any enforcing authority responsible for fire safety. Both enforcement agencies should have the power to compel independent building control assessors to reveal relevant information
- The test method for BS 8414 should be published
- Any work on a high rise building which could compromise compartmentation (including cladding) should be notifiable to building control and the enforcing authority for fire safety in the building
- Cladding on high rise buildings should be subject to an accredited installers scheme

Post construction fire safety

- Uncertainty over the relative roles of councils and fire and rescue services and the relationship between the FSO and the Housing Act must be addressed. This could be done either by establishing that fire services or councils are the sole enforcement body or by clarifying powers and responsibilities of each (references to the enforcing authority below refer to either of the above outcomes). However, councils should not be put in a position where they are

both the proprietor/landlord and regulator. Partnership with the fire and rescue service will be crucial in these instances

- The enforcing authority needs to be able to treat fire safety in high rise buildings as a whole with the powers to inspect dwellings as well as common parts (including the external envelope)
- The enforcing authority needs greater powers to act when a serious issue is identified. These should include taking control of a building as de facto freeholder where the freeholder fails to address a serious safety issue
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating system needs revising to remove questions over the power of enforcing authority to act in respect of cladding issues
- A responsible person must be made legally responsible for fire safety in high rise buildings as a whole, including dwellings whether leased or rented
- The responsible person must commission a fire risk assessment from a suitably qualified and accredited person holding a nationally agreed minimum level of qualification
- The fire risk assessment must be provided to residents on an individual basis (i.e. not simply displayed in a stairwell) and to the enforcing authority. Residents must be informed of their right to draw matters of concern to the enforcing authority and how to do so
- Consideration should be given as to whether some or all of the above measures might be appropriate for accommodation used by vulnerable groups in addition to high rise blocks.

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Workforce report

Purpose

To update the Fire Services Management Committee on matters in relation to fire service industrial relations and pension matters.

Summary

This paper is for information and briefly describes the main industrial relations and pension issues at present.

Recommendation

Fire Services Management Committee members are asked to note the issues set out in the paper.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed by members.

Contact officer:	Gill Gittins (industrial relations)	Clair Alcock (pensions)
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Workforce report

Pensions

Scheme Advisory Board

1. Malcolm Eastwood attended the Fire Commission on 13 October, to give an update on the work of the board. Members were also told about free-to-attend tax seminars, that had been commissioned by the Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) in partnership with the Police Pension Scheme. Details of these events can be found [here](#). Members were encouraged to champion fire pensions to scheme members, and ensure that they were managing their delegation of scheme managers where appropriate. Members should be aware of the risks involved but should also proactively support their local pensions boards.
2. New members, Fiona Twycross AM (Labour) and Cllr Rogers Phillips (Conservative) have been welcomed to the board, and the Independent Group nomination for Cllr Ian Stephens has been passed to the Minister.
3. The Home Office consulted the SAB on their views on industry specific assumptions used in the 2016 valuation, which will form the GAD recommendations to government. The SAB engaged an actuarial firm to provide an independent review in order to form their response.
4. The 2016 valuation will:
 - 4.1. Calculate the employer contribution rate from 2019 to 2013.
 - 4.2. Determine whether the cost cap set at 16.8% of pensionable pay has been breached.
5. GAD expect to be able to provide details of any change to employer contributions from April 2019 around April 2018. It has been highlighted to GAD that this timescale is unhelpful to Fire & Rescue Authorities mid to long term financial forecasting.

Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board website

6. The SAB website recently launched at the Firefighters' Pensions conference. The site can be found at www.fpsboard.org and contains a wealth of information on the role and work of the Board.

LGA will regularly update the site with new content, including training materials and governance resources. Feedback welcome to Claire.hey@local.gov.uk.

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Key wider workforce issues

Pay claim and broadening the role negotiation

7. Both sides of the NJC remain fully committed to identifying a mutually acceptable resolution and negotiations are therefore continuing with meetings taking place to scope potential changes to roles and to explore how that could be reflected in terms of pay.
8. As members are aware the latter will be directly affected by available funding on a sustainable basis. Both sides of the NJC therefore remain committed to joint political lobbying in that regard.
9. To inform such lobbying, and building upon the independent evaluation of the medical-related trials undertaken by the [University of Hertfordshire](#), the NJC commissioned *New Economy* to undertake a detailed cost benefit analysis in respect of responding to category 1 cardiac arrests.
10. Arrangements have been made to meet with members of the All Party Fire Safety and Rescue Parliamentary Group on 15 November. On this occasion NJC attendees will include Cllr Nick Chard the Employers' Side Chair, Alan McLean the Employees' Side Chair, Employers' and Employees' Secretariats. Furthermore that group has agreed to sponsor a Westminster event early in January to which a wider group including all MPs will be invited. *New Economy* will be presenting their findings at both events.
11. Members will recall that the Employers' Side has suggested a 1.0 per cent uplift in basic pay and continual professional development payments be applied (with effect from 1 July 2017) while negotiations continue. At the time of writing discussion continues on that matter.

Inclusive Fire Service Group

12. Members will recall that the Inclusive Fire Service Group was set up by the NJC to assess the current position on equality, diversity, cultural and behavioural issues within the service and to identify guidance in relation to any further strategies that could be used at local level to further encourage improvement. Interested parties such as the National Fire Chiefs Council, Fire Officers Association and Retained Firefighters Union were invited to be involved. The group is chaired by the Independent Chair of the NJC, Linda Dickens.
13. One of the [improvement strategies](#) suggested by the group and supported at all levels in both the evidence gathering stage and since issue of the strategies to FRAs is that of a national awareness campaign about the role of a firefighter. The general view was that an



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information campaign to dispel perceptions was felt to be important in attracting people to the service who at present have no interest at all believing incorrectly that it couldn't be the job for them. Discussion with the Home Office in terms of supporting such an approach has been constructive and they have volunteered to attend the next meeting of the IFSG to explain about the work they currently have in hand and to hear more from the group on this matter.

Fire Services Management Committee update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Committee not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Fire Service Management Committee members are asked to note the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Fire Services Management Committee update paper

Independent Assessment of the Business case

1. The LGA has continued to raise concerns about the independent assessment of the business case where a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is seeking to take on the governance of the fire service where there is local opposition. We have consistently opposed the transfer of governance to a PCC without local agreement and have used a number of opportunities to make the Minister aware of our concerns, including in a meeting between the Policing and Fire Minister and Lead Members.
2. Lead Members have also written to the Minister to reiterate our support for a robust assessment process. We outlined that there should be an expectation that the organisation appointed as the assessor for a business case should always draw on a number of organisations to make that assessment.
3. We feel that at minimum expertise should be drawn from fire, police, local government and finance to provide a credible and sufficiently independent assessment of the business case. This is not a requirement of the process currently however we feel it would provide a decision on a business case that was not open to challenge.
4. We will continue to update members.

Fire and Rescue National Framework

5. The LGA has been a part of a working group, alongside the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office, to look at a redrafted Fire and Rescue National Framework.
6. Issues to be considered for inclusion in the National Framework include:
 - 6.1. Identification and Assessment of Risk
 - 6.2. Prevention and Protection (including Health agenda)
 - 6.3. Response
 - 6.4. PCC Governance
 - 6.5. Inspection
 - 6.6. Transparency/Scrutiny/Accountability to communities
 - 6.7. Assurance
 - 6.8. Commercial transformation
 - 6.9. The changing role of firefighters
 - 6.10. Workforce and culture
 - 6.11. Equality and diversity
 - 6.12. Standards
 - 6.13. Fitness Principles
 - 6.14. Re-engagement of senior officers
 - 6.15. Requirements for publication of strategic or operational plans

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7. We expect a new Fire and Rescue Framework will be consulted on with the fire and rescue sector in the coming months. The FSMC will wish to respond to the updated Fire Framework.

LGA Leadership Essentials Programme

8. The LGA ran its fire leadership essentials programme for leading members of FRAs in October. The programme was well received, and achieved a 100 per cent satisfaction rate. Members heard from a range of speakers on issues such as collaboration, inclusion and diversity, Grenfell and case studies from FRAs.
9. We will be running the programme again on the 20-21 February 2018. Members can book places by emailing grace.collins@local.gov.uk.

HMICFRS External Reference Group

10. The HMICFRS external reference group on fire inspection met at the beginning of November. HMICFRS provided feedback from the conference on 10 October and how useful it had been in shaping their thinking. Attendees discussed the importance of the IRMP as a starting point for the inspection as well as the inspection methodology.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

11. Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) will deliver a new communications system for the emergency services, and in part is a replacement to the existing FiRelink communications system, provided by Airwave. The Programme is centrally funded by the sponsoring Government Departments and is run by the Home Office as the lead department and Home Secretary as its sponsoring Minister.
12. The eventual product of ESMCP, the Emergency Services Network (ESN), is intended to be more cost effective than the current provision by Airwave. A full business case (FBC) for the programme was approved in the Autumn of 2015 and demonstrated a sound economic case for the ESN, showing savings of approximately £3 billion over a 15 year period.
13. The programme is now facing delays for implementation and additional assurances have been provided by Ministers that the Airwave service will be available until ESN is ready. The extension of the current Airwave service will have a financial impact which could be felt in FRA's. The costs associated with the delay will be factored into a revised FCB, alongside a number of other areas that have been identified as having an impact financially on the ESMCP. In some areas the cost estimates have been needed to be revised upwards, and in others additional work has been identified to enable or deliver ESN.
14. With the delays to the Programme and higher than anticipated costs of transition the NFCC is working with Government Department to identify the position with regard to funding for ESMCP transition. As it stands it is inevitable that it will be considerably more than currently provided for through the current treasury allocation and concerns are being raised that a lack of clarity exists at this juncture.

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15. The LGA currently has representation on Fire Customer Group (FCG) which was established in 2013 under the chair of the CFOA Operational Communications Board and consists of senior FRS representatives from each English transition region along with representation from the Devolved Administrations, Home Office and specialist areas e.g. finance, ICT. However, we are keen to seek representation on the Programme Board to provide equivalency with other elected stakeholders such as Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) and the London Mayor's Officer for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).
16. The Programme will be subject to a further hearing at the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Monday 13 November and as part of a review of the FBC the Major Programmes Review Group, a mixture of Cabinet Office and HM Treasury, will scrutinise the Programme in mid-December. Of late there has been an rise in the number of Parliamentary Questions received about the Programme which allied to the aforementioned hearing and review indicates that ESMCP may take greater prominence and play out increasingly in the Public Domain over the coming months.

Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Title:	Fire Services Management Committee
Date:	Friday 22 September 2017
Venue:	Rooms D&E, Ground Floor, Layden House, Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest
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The new Chair, Cllr Ian Stephens, welcomed members to the meeting, noting the change in membership, and giving thanks to FSMC's previous Chair, Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Cllr Peter Jackson, and Cllr David Acton who was a Deputy Chair in the previous meeting cycles and now returns to the Committee as a member. The Chair noted that the lead members would now be holding regular meetings in between full Committee meetings.

Apologies were received from Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr Simon Spencer, Cllr David Acton and Cllr Judith Hughes.

There were no declarations of interest.

Members were advised that this was the last meeting of the Committee to be held at Layden House, and that the LGA would be moving back to Smith Square at the end of October.

2	Terms of reference, membership and outside bodies
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The Chair introduced this item and drew members' attention to the list of outside bodies. A brief conversation was had about outside body appointments and it was agreed that each political group would make their nominations and the appointments would be discussed by lead members and officers after the meeting.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

Action:

Officers and lead members to agree appointments to outside bodies.

3 FSMC Policy Priorities for 2017-18

The Chair outlined the policy priorities for the coming year.

Members made comments on the following issues:

- Concerns were voiced that the implications of the Grenfell Tower fire were not listed as a corporate priority by the LGA Leadership Board.
- Members felt that the funding priority needed to be fleshed out in light of discussions between the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office.

Decision:

Members **noted** the Committee's priorities for 2017-18.

4 Fire and Rescue Service Inspections

The Chair introduced HMI Zoe Billingham, who gave members an update on the future inspection of fire and rescue services following the appointment of HMICFRS as the inspectorate. Zoe wanted to reinforce the idea that the new inspectorate would be working closely with FRAs and that an inspection would not work in isolation. Members were told that the inspection system would be developed with the service to promote improvement and identify existing excellence across the fire and rescue service. FRAs would be given advance notice of inspections and the inspectorate will use experts from across the service in the delivery of inspections and to issue guidance to FRAs on how to do well.

Members were told that inspections would focus on three key areas: operational service delivery, organisational effectiveness and efficiency. The inspections would entail one week of fieldwork, during which time staff would be asked for data as well as a self-assessment of strengths. As the inspection methodology develops, HMICFRS will carry out two or possibly three pilot inspections. 45 FRAs had so far volunteered to take part in these pilots. The actual inspections would be conducted in three tranches over 18 months starting in April 2018. The inspection plan HMICFRS would be working to would be published in March 2018. Once the first round had been completed inspections would then be carried out on a risk based approach.

Zoe concluded her presentation by assuring members that the inspectorate would continue to work closely with the service and that there would be a wide ranging consultation of the inspection programme as it progresses.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments:

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- It is important to talk with stakeholders as well as those directly involved in the service. Members were advised that the inspectorate was seeking public opinion through surveys, opinion polls and focus groups, and that they were considering which other public service bodies ought to be involved in the process.
- Concerns were raised about funding pressures but members were assured that the inspectorate was being funded to carry out this work and that there would be no additional charge to services taking part in the initial pilots or inspections going forward.
- Members questioned whether the goalposts for inspections were likely to change as the inspectorate goes through different batches of the pilot. Members were keen to ensure there would be no advantage to services that were inspected at a later stage. Zoe agreed that while lessons would be learnt as the process goes on, the goalposts would not be moved.
- The use of language during these inspections was discussed, with members concerned that some of the language used in inspections in other sectors had the potential to humiliate authorities – ‘excellent, good, poor’ etc. Members suggested that the language used needs to be careful while provided a useful description of the quality of the service. Zoe said that reports of inspections would be given in the clearest terms and that there would be a single graded judgement of each FRA, as well as scores of each of the three strands of inspection.
- Members were keen to see peer involvement included in the inspection system and they suggested that both officer and member peer involvement would make the inspections more credible. Members questioned whether the inspections would look at the governance of the service. Members were told that while there is value in including peer inspectors, there are complications relating to legislation and that as judgements will be of operational service delivery, the HMICFRS does not necessarily see a role for member peers. That said, Zoe suggested that there was room for conversation about this and that over time, a corporate governance type of inspection, only to be used rarely, would be developed and that there could be a role for member peers there.
- Members were keen to see clarity in the terms of inspections and made the point that the terms need to be clear and in language that the public can understand. Zoe agreed that judgement grades need to be clear and that there needs to be a balance between being frank about the quality of a service being provided and not alarming the public unduly in cases where the service is not performing as it should.

Decision:

Members **noted** the recommendations set out in the paper.

Action:

Officers to proceed as necessary.

5 Professional Standards Body

Dan Tasker, Area Manager at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority, attended the meeting to give members an update on the work he is doing on the Professional Standards Body Project.

Dan explained that part of the fire reform agenda was the need to create a suite of standards for the fire and rescue service. The Professional Standards Body (PSB) Project team has been commissioned to create a consistent, accountable and transparent set of standards which the service can strive to achieve and also be measure against. This is an ongoing process and the project team are working closely with HMICFRS, as well as looking at how existing standards bodies work for other public services. Research undertaken as part of the project had been narrowed down to two primary means of delivering standards – physical standard setting and a standardised approach to delivery. The PSB would provide a clear, standardised approach on how to achieve a benchmark level of standards but the model by which this is delivered was still up for discussion. Dan outlined four possible delivery models – the fully absorbed model within the College of Policing, the mirror model where the PSB was part of the College of Policing but produced separate fire standards, an affiliated or collaborative model with the College of Policing, and a FRS-led model. It was suggested that the second and third options look most useful and that the affiliated model seemed to be a popular choice with stakeholders.

The affiliation model of delivering standards would allow for two separate colleges – one for fire standing alongside the College of Policing – with collaboration at its heart. This would involve joint standards, codes of ethics and scene investigation, with the fire and rescue service already works with the police on. The PSB was looking at how best to bring joint strategic leadership programmes, as well as joint research and development hubs together to benefit both services.

In terms of funding, members were told that there had to be an idea of the scope and nature of the standards agreed, as well as the size of the organisation needed to deliver such standards before an accurate suggestion of costs could be made. The project team had started to look at where potential funding could come from and it was noted that a lot of what is needed already exists so it could be a matter of utilising existing capacity to deliver a standards body. Consideration was also being given to a transition grant fund and whether fire authorities would need funding support to achieve new standards.

Dan concluded by saying that developing standards involves a six-stage process which can take up to 18 months but as a number of standards already exist, it may not take this long.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments:

- Members wanted clarity about the number of bodies looking at standards for the fire service and where responsibility for setting standards would ultimately sit. Dan said that there was still a lot of debate to be had on this point and that the governance structure was still being considered.
- A question was asked about how the Professional Standards Body fits in with the National Occupational Committee which is also setting standards. Dan agreed that this was confusing as there were a number of organisations claiming to be setting national standards, including: the Institute of Fire Engineers, the National Occupational Committee, the National Occupational Standards, the National Operation Guidance Programme. It was noted that pulling all of these strands together to ensure a single set of clear standards was the purpose of the Professional Standards Body.
- Concerns were raised about how this project and the delivery of standards would be paid for. It was noted that the College of Policing receives funding from the Home Office but it wasn't clear whether additional money would be available for the fire service. Chloe Dunnett from the Home Office noted that this project was not seeking to replicate the College of Policing but that efforts to work jointly with the sector were being made to create something different which was fit for purpose. The Home Office position is that consideration needs to be given to creating something which is value for money and identifying the funding streams was critical in deciding what would be the best way forward. Members felt that the Home Office should assign as much money to the fire service as it does to the police service and that cut backs or efficiency savings already being made in the fire service could only go so far.
- Members suggested that research and development across the sector ought to be brought together to avoid carrying out the same work many times over. There is a need to be more efficient in deciding who does what and where the money comes from for research.
- A point was made that establishing one set of standards was a good way to be efficient in terms of working with other regions so that national policy can be agreed to and delivered at a local level. Members said that it was one thing to talk about a national strategy but another to deliver it on the ground. Concerns were raised about underestimating the cost of individual and collaborative standards departments to ensure checks and balances are maintained through this process.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report and suggested that the report's

recommendations should feature concerns about funding.

6 Grenfell Tower and fire safety in high rise buildings

The Chair introduced Sir Ken Knight, who is leading the independent expert advisory panel advising the Government on fire safety measures in the wake of Grenfell. Sir Ken outlined the remit of the panel and explained that the panel's work means it sits to some extent alongside the inquest and the police investigations, but is separate from the public inquiries. Sir Ken updated the members on work being done to test cladding samples and to communicate with local authorities so they could assess residents' immediate safety. As well as liaising with social housing landlords, the panel was also hoping to obtain more information about the cladding on private sector buildings. Sir Ken was keen to emphasise that the panel's key priority was to assess risk to occupants in buildings and that this was the main focus over compliance with building regulations more specifically.

Sir Ken told members that the panel was working closely with Home Office officials, giving advice to the Minister, but also with the London Fire Brigade (LFB), specifically Nick Coombe, who provides fire safety management support at the LFB. Nick spoke briefly to members about fire safety guidance and the need to update guidance for buildings which have unsafe cladding. The LFB maintains support for the 'stay put' guidance and suggests that this guidance would be retained once unsafe cladding had been removed from the affected buildings. Dany Cotton, Commissioner of the LFB, also gave members an update on the ongoing work around fire safety as well as ensuring the ongoing safety and welfare of fire officers. Dany was clear that there was a good reason for the 'stay-put' guidance and that it continued to be the correct guidance for residents in high rise buildings. The message was that the guidance was not just about building regulations and compliance but the vulnerable people living in these buildings.

Following these updates, members made the following comments:

- Members all praised the work of the LFB and echoed concerns about any attempts to water down the stay-put policy. The LGA should stand by its guidance while also recognising that some buildings will require a different approach while unsafe cladding is removed. Members felt it was important that the sector had one, united voice to ensure that messages on public safety were clear.
- A concern was raised about how fire safety measures, once established, would be monitored and enforced. Nick Coombe explained that the legislation is very clear in saying that the responsibility for fire safety rests with the landlord, or the managing agents in leaseholder blocks, while it is the Fire and Rescue Service's role to enforce and monitor compliance with legislation through its inspection programme. It was explained that in London, a risk based approach is taken as there is nowhere near enough capacity to inspect every single building.

- On fire suppression measures, members felt that stronger support needed to be given to the installation of sprinklers in new buildings but also retrofitting them wherever possible. Some members felt that retrofitting could be done cost-effectively without negatively impacting residents too much, but that some landlords and leaseholders make this difficult. It was noted that the report referenced local decision making ability but the reality was that very few authorities would be able to retrofit sprinklers because they could not afford it. Members felt that the LGA needed to be stronger in saying that sprinklers are essential and in lobbying the Government to ensure that they properly funded the necessary work. Sir Ken agreed that fire suppression systems are vital but also noted that there had been a lot of innovation in the field and that while sprinklers form a valuable part of a holistic package of fire safety measures, they were not a panacea.
- A discussion was had about funding and what level of support would be available from the Government. LGA Principal Policy Adviser, Mark Norris, noted that work was ongoing to survey local authorities, asking what the cost of recladding their affected buildings would be. He said that they had received some estimates but would have a better idea of what level of support would be needed in time. It was noted that London Councils was carrying out similar work and that an initial idea of the quantities involved would be available soon.
- Members were keen that when lobbying the Government, the LGA should emphasise the point that the conversation is not just about planning or cladding, but about people being and feeling safe in their homes.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update.

Action:

Officers to continue liaising with local authorities about the cost of recladding and making buildings safe.

7 Workforce report

LGA Fire Pensions Adviser, Clair Alcock, provided members with an update on the work to make people aware of the risks within the Firefighters Pension Scheme. Clair mentioned the Pension Scheme Governance and LGA Firefighters Pension AGM events being held on 9-10 October 2017 and encouraged members to attend if they could.

On the Scheme Advisory Board, Clair told members that details of the three members nominated to sit on the board had been referred to the Minister and she was hoping for confirmation shortly. Members were told

that the board had been consulted by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) with regards to two elements of the 2016 valuation, past service costs and industry specific assumptions, in order to respond to the consultation, external actuarial advice has been sought. It is estimated by GAD that the details of the change to employer contributions for 2019 will be finalised by about April 2018. Clair told members that changes to tax rules in 2016 will lead to significant numbers of the workforce becoming liable for tax payments on their pension savings. Tax awareness seminars had been commissioned to provide clarity on this issue. Details on events from the board can be found [here](#).

Gill Gittins, LGA Principal Negotiating Officer, then updated members on the pay offer. Gill noted that the National Employers had written to the employees' side suggesting that a 1 per cent uplift in pay was agreed while discussions about the wider offer were ongoing. A response on that matter was awaited. She advised members that the National Employers would be meeting on 5 October and that there were clear indications that the employees side wished to remain positively engaged in negotiations to secure an overall agreement on broadening the role and related pay increases. It also remained engaged in joint political lobbying work and issues being explored in the joint Technical Working Group in respect of learning points from the trials.

Gill also advised members that the team would be in contact with FRAs shortly before the meeting on 5 October to assess the impact of the FBU direction to its members that they should no longer engage with the trials with effect from 18 September as a consequence of rejecting the over-arching longer term offer. It was noted that there could be an issue at local level around MTFA for those services with specialist teams. It appeared that some local union officials may be interpreting the FBU instruction as also applying in that area despite it not being part of the trials. The FBU had issued a circular on MTFA following reports of some services advising staff that such work is contractual and already part of the role. The circular had expressed a contrary view but also advised members that its Executive Council had not made any decision yet, therefore it was not covered by the trials decision.

Members made the following comments:

- Members thanked the workforce team for their ongoing work, recognising the union change from initial rejection to a recommendation to accept, and felt it was a shame that the pay offer had then been rejected by FBU members. There were concerns that the workforce felt acceptance of the 2 per cent offer included an agreement to continue co-responding work indefinitely. Gill advised members that FAQs had been issued to FRAs at the start of the process, and that the FBU had also issued clear FAQs and a letter from the President so efforts had been made to make it clear what acceptance would entail.
- Members were keen that the pace of the discussions remained unchanged and that an agreement on broadening the role was

secured.

- Members said that they understood why employees were concerned about the level of proposed increases in the context of increasing media coverage of public sector pay and lifting pay restraint but the Government position remained unclear.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update from the workforce team.

8 Update paper

The Chair referred to the update paper included in the agenda and highlighted that members were still able to bid for sessions at Fire Conference.

Decision:

Members **noted** the update paper.

9 Minutes of the previous meeting

Members **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate record of the discussion.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Ian Stephens	Isle of Wight Council
Vice-Chairman	Ms Fiona Twycross AM	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Keith Aspden	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Members	Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Nick Chard	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Mark Healey MBE	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Thomas Wright	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Tony Hunter (sub)	North Hertfordshire District Council
	Cllr John Robinson (sub)	Durham County Council
Apologies	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Cllr Simon Spencer	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr David Acton	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Judith Hughes	Kirklees Metropolitan Council

LGA location map

Local Government Association

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London SW1P 3HZ

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Fax: 020 7664 3030

Email: info@local.gov.uk

Website: www.local.gov.uk

Public transport

18 Smith Square is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

St James's Park (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

Buses 3 and 87 travel along Millbank, and the 507 between Victoria and Waterloo stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria

C10 Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria

88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Bus routes – Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych

3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

For further information, visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk

Cycling facilities

The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at 18 Smith Square. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

18 Smith Square is located within the congestion charging zone.

For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car parks

Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

Horseferry Road Car Park
Horseferry Road/Arneway Street. Visit the website at www.westminster.gov.uk/parking

