

Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Title: Fire Services Management Committee
Date: Friday 23 November 2018
Venue: Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
------	-----------------------

1 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

None were declared

2 Response to Kerslake Report

NFCC Chair, Roy Wilsher introduced the Kerslake Report and highlighted the main points in the report.

- There is no lead government department for these recommendations, with the expectation that relevant emergency service personnel will respond.
- There will be new multi-agency Joint Operating Principles for mass casualty terrorism.
- The report includes member guidance and talking points for discussions for local fire chief officers.

Members made the following comments

- Fire and Rescue Authorities where there is a MTFA capacity, will find it difficult to meaningfully scrutinise their services capacity given the rewrite of the MTFA guidance.
- Audit and Scrutiny Committees are best placed to scrutinise independent audit reports, but will need appropriate training to do so.
- Best Practice can be shared on how to better audit this process, on authority to authority level.
- Clarity on how audit is carried out needs to confirm what the role of Fire Authorities will be.
- FSMC to further consider the issue once the rewrite of the guidance has been completed.

Roy Wilsher Responded

- Services will be highlighted for support with auditing on a national scale to help members.

Decision:

The report was **noted** with comments

3 Finance and the Spending Review

Emma Lawrence, from the Home Office, reported on the work of the Fire Finance team in relation to the forthcoming Spending Review. Emma explained that the Home Office was looking to make a joint proposition to the Treasury and had been working with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) on the questions that needed to be answered. Now that the questions had been identified the Home Office was looking for Fire and Rescue Authorities to assist in answering them, with work commencing in January to draft the answers.

Phil Hales, from the NFCC gave a presentation on the NFCC view of the Spending Review 2019, and also summarised the financial challenges facing the fire service and the impact on public safety.

Members made the following comments

- The submission to the Home Office should be seen as a joint piece of work between the LGA and NFCC, as we are all fighting for the same priorities.
- There are major concerns about the assumptions that the starting point for the Spending Review funding arrangements would be a flat cash settlement, and that the NFCC position did not entirely reflect members' views.
- The position of the fire and rescue service was similar to that of the police previously and a whole system approach was needed to inform the Spending Review submission.
- The structure used by the Home Office and police for developing their Spending Review submission of a senior group on which the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the National Police Chiefs Council sat alongside the Home Office should be adopted by the fire and rescue sector.
- We should be supporting the point of additional flexibility on council tax and for the Treasury to fund the increase in employers' contributions for the pension's deficit.
- Members should have been involved in this work at an earlier stage, and they now need to be involved going forward including in the proposed workshops in 2019 around the Spending Review.
- The services at greatest risk needed to be identified as part of the work given some were in a better financial position than others, and the Treasury needed to be shown the impact which would result from services not being funded.

Roy Wilsher and Phil Hales responded

- The NFCC had not produced their own report and had not yet produced answers to the questions from the Home Office.
- There would be further time for members to feedback views on the answers to the questions, with workshops in spring with stakeholders including members of FSMC.
- Chief Fire Officers have been engaged in this process and will continue to be a part of the spending review.

Emma Lawrence responded

- The answers to the questions will inform a submission to the Minister on what should be included in the proposition to the Treasury. These had been sent out to Chief Fire Officers and some responses had been received, but more information was needed. An update would be provided to the Minister ahead of Christmas on progress with the work and this would state that further work was required in 2019, so there would not be a need for detailed responses to the questions until 2019.
- Providing any feedback will be helpful, but it did not have to be a detailed response at this stage.

Decision:

The presentation was **noted**. Members **agreed** that FSMC should appoint representatives to a senior sector group to work with the Home Office and the NFCC in supervising work to inform the joint proposition to the Treasury as part of the Spending Review, with ideally all the Lead Members being on the senior sector group.

Action:

Members are asked to respond to the questions identified by the Home Office and NFCC, which had been circulated the day previously. Dates and details of the Spending Review workshops in early 2019 to be provide to FSMC Lead Members. Officers to liaise with the Home Office on the establishment of the senior sector group and FSMC membership.

4 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

Mark Norris presented updates on the LGA's building safety related work.

Mark Norris stated that questions have been raised about partial cladding on buildings and whether it needed to be removed, and there was now guidance from the government's expert panel that stated that any cladding should be removed. Local authorities were likely to need support to encourage the owners of private high-rise residential buildings to remove partial cladding. Mark Norris also made the following points

- The LGA have been asked to set up the JIT to assist councils with enforcement against the owners of private buildings, but there are issues with insurance to cover this work. The MHCLG are in talks with the Treasury on this.
- What form the JCA will take is still to be discussed and MHCLG would be looking to consult on proposals in 2019. The LGA and NFCC would be working with MHCLG to help shape the proposals.

Members made the following comments

- It was important to get the details of how the JCA would work right to ensure the new regulatory regime delivered improved building safety.
- How many private high-rise residential buildings were there where it was still not known what the cladding was?

Mark Norris Responded

- The number of unknown buildings with cladding materials is decreasing.

Decision:

Members **noted** the LGA's building safety related work.

5 Workforce Paper

Gill Gittins reported on the main industrial relations and pension issues across the sector, highlighting the firefighter pension scheme and the LGA work on the gender pay gap.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report

6 Fire Conference 2019 update

Jessica Norman asked members for feedback on the preparation for the LGA Fire Conference.

Members made the following comments

- Diversity should be moved to day 1 of the conference.
- The opposition Fire Ministers should be given more than 10 minutes at conference.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report

7 Fire Services Management Committee Update paper

Jessica Norman presented the Fire Services Management Committee Update paper for feedback from members.

Members made the following comments

- With the publication soon of the results from the first tranche of HMICFRS inspections consideration should be given to how the LGA's peer review offer was revised.
- Best practice can be shared with other fire authorities from the first tranche of HMICFRS inspections.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report

Action: Officers to send members details on the Diversity and Inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Service masterclasses.

8 Minutes of the previous meeting

The shadow Fire Minister was incorrect in the Thursday 20 September 2018 Fire Service Management Committee notes.

Members **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Nick Chard Cllr Keith Aspden	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority City of York Council
Members	Cllr Jason Ablewhite Cllr Eric Carter Cllr Mark Healey MBE Roger Hirst Cllr Rebecca Knox Cllr Chris Pillai Cllr Les Byrom CBE Cllr John Edwards Cllr Nikki Hennessy Cllr John Robinson JP Cllr Kevin Dodds	Huntingdonshire District Council Shropshire and Telford Fire and Rescue Authority Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
Apologies	Ms Fiona Twycross AM Cllr Judith Hughes Cllr Ian Stephens	Greater London Authority West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Isle of Wight Council