

## Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

---

<b>Title:</b>	Fire Services Management Committee
<b>Date:</b>	Friday 25 November 2016
<b>Venue:</b>	Rooms A&B, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

---

### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Fire Inspectorate</b>	
	<p>The Chair introduced Zoë Billingham, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC), who had been invited to the Committee to update Members on HMIC's work on scoping options on how fire inspection could be delivered. It was explained that the Home Office was currently working up proposals and costings for what the inspectorate would look like. HMIC had submitted proposals to the Home Office, and another bidder was also believed to be preparing proposals.</p> <p>As part of her presentation, the Inspector of Constabulary raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should HMIC be successful in taking forward the inspection of the fire service they would work with the service to develop an approach which was complimentary with what was already in place. It was not the intention to add burdens to the service, but to increase transparency and help people to understand the organisation.</li><li>• For fire inspections HMIC would significantly adapt the inspection process already in place for the police. They had consulted on their proposals with a wide range of organisations including the LGA, the Home Office, CFOA, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the RBU, and the Chief Inspector of the Fire Service in Scotland. It was anticipated that the inspection</li></ul>	

methodology would be simple, with clear guiding principles. Inspections would not be unannounced, and would be undertaken in a low impact way.

- The inspection model would be piloted extensively prior to full implementation to ensure it was working well. A programme of inspections for all fire authorities would then be set. It was envisaged that there would still be a role for the peer challenge process, which focussed on promoting improvement in the service.
- A number of headline questions for the inspection, along with diagnostic sub-questions, would be developed, alongside criteria for judgement. In some areas there were no written standards, so the Inspectorate would work with the service to set criteria and benchmarks. The geography of the various locations would be taken into account, and the expertise of particular FRAs would be taken into account as part of the inspection.
- Particular areas which would be considered as part of inspections would be efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Inspectors would consider the FRA's effectiveness of protection, prevention, emergency response, and ability to respond to national risks and emergencies. They would also look at ability to meet future demands, resource management, and operational leadership. The leadership of the service would be inspected on values and culture, capability, training, fairness and diversity, and development of leadership for the future.

In the discussion which followed Members raised the following points:

- Members generally welcomed the Inspector's comments and agreed that the sector would benefit from an independent inspectorate. They also welcomed comments that the inspections would be undertaken in as low impact a manner as possible, with FRAs having prior knowledge of when an inspection would take place. However they questioned whether the inspections would in fact be as low-impact as suggested.
- It was suggested that a week inspection of a FRA not be undertaken in 5 consecutive days, as this could present issues for service delivery.
- In response to a question the Inspector explained that HMIC planned to undertake 15 inspections every 6 months. Timetables were still being considered, but it was anticipated that baseline inspections would be undertaken twice over a four year period, and following that inspections would be risk-based and proportionate. An annual report, or various thematic reports, would be written following the first 15 inspections.
- It was confirmed that the Home Office would be funding the

inspectorate, and had commissioned HMIC to provide costed options. A decision on the chosen inspectorate would be made early in the new year, and they would then be asked to engage with the sector and pilot models.

- In response to a question the Inspector conformed that HMIC were proposing some thematic inspections to run in parallel with the programme of individual service inspections.
- The make-up of the inspection teams had not been decided, but it was hoped that they would draw heavily on experience from the sector, and potentially police inspection officers could be used for fire inspections.
- It was suggested that diversity was an issue in the service, and inspections should have particular focus on that issue.

### **Decision**

The Committee:

1. **Noted** the LGA's ongoing engagement with the Home Office around the design and creation of the fire inspectorate; and
2. **Noted** the work within the LGA led by the Fire Peer Challenge Working Group to consider the future role and shape of Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge.

### **Action**

Officers to notify Members when a decision on the delivery of the fire inspectorate had been made by the Home Office.

## **3 Fire Reform - Professional Standards Update**

Dave Curry, Chief Fire Officer of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Fire Service, introduced the report and explained that CFOA had commissioned him to lead work on the development of a coherent and comprehensive set of professional standards for the Fire sector.

As part of his presentation, the Chief Fire Officer raised the following points:

- An important part of the work was to re-write the National Framework document. There should be a requirement to have due regard to a national standards framework, whereas currently some Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) had bespoke local arrangements. The work on the National Framework was being undertaken jointly with Daniel Greaves, Director of Fire and Resilience at the Home Office.

- A National Framework of professional standards would link with the work of the Fire Inspectorate when it was established, in order for the Inspectorate to judge what was good and what required improvement.
- CFOA were working jointly with a range of partners, including those with experience of other professional bodies, to strengthen the core of the profession and ensure that standards were consistently applied. There should be reasonable expectation of consistency guaranteed across the country through the use of professional frameworks and occupational standards.
- There was an ongoing dialogue through an Independent Standards Body working group on how Independent Standards should be governed, and the LGA, the Home Office and devolved administrations would have key roles in establishing individual and occupational standards.
- The working group was looking to create a set of benchmarking standards which could be adapted and added to over time. Certain standards, such as response times, would not be amended and others, such as the number of pumps which were dispatched to a call, would remain as local decisions. The group were currently exploring different models.
- Regarding timescales, it was anticipated that the standards body would be in place to pilot arrangements by April 2017, with full implementation by April 2018.

In the discussion which followed Members raised the following points:

- In response to a question on leadership programmes, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that all prospective Chief Fire Officers would have to complete a leadership course prior to taking command. The Police and Fire leadership programmes would connect for the first time in 2017.
- Members supported the view that training should be consistent across all FRAs in the country. Training was delivered in different ways across the service, but the National Framework should ensure that there was a set standard of training.
- Members agreed that the implementation of an Independent Standards body was vital for the service. It was suggested that the LGA, through the FSMC, be represented on the standards governance group.
- In response to a question the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there should be entrance assessment standards for full time and retained firefighters. This would then link into improvement standards and career progression to make sure the service had

the best personnel at every level.

- It was suggested that the governance group could start to look at standards for Fire Authority Members as part of their work.

### **Decision**

The Committee:

1. **Noted** the commitment to develop 'Professional Standards' from the Home Secretary in the Fire Reform Programme;
2. **Noted** the developments made by the working group to inform the future direction on the establishment of a professional standards body; and
3. **Requested** that the FSMC be represented on the standards governance group.

## **4 The Thomas Report - Conditions of Service for Fire and Rescue Staff in England**

The Chair introduced Adrian Thomas, whose report into the conditions of service for Fire and Rescue staff in England had been published in early November 2016. Mr Thomas invited Members to ask questions on the recommendations he had made in the report.

In the discussion which followed, Members raised the following points:

- In response to a question on recommendation 19, that the National Joint Council (NJC) should consider operating regionally to reflect the requirements of the different fire authorities whilst retaining a national umbrella with respect to basic pay, Mr Thomas explained that he had not commented on how this should be implemented. He also commented on the range of local variations on the national provisions in the Grey Book, and that he had recommended that the Grey Book be slimmed down to allow even more local flexibility.
- In respect of recommendation 20 which suggested greater involvement of ACAS in local dispute resolution, a number of members highlighted the success of the NJC's joint conciliation process, which was greater than their experiences of ACAS.
- In response to a question on recommendation 27, that legislation should be brought forward to provide employment protection to firefighters employed on the Retained Duty System, Mr Thomas highlighted that he had received a lot of feedback that local employers were negative about staff becoming retained firefighters. It would be preferable for the fire service to work closer with local employers to come to a positive outcome in a non-legislative way. It was suggested that the fire service could liaise

with the Ministry of Defence to ask how they worked with local employers regarding reservists.

- Regarding recommendation 30, that fire authorities should keep the number and level of commitment of fire authority elected Members under review, Mr Thomas clarified that this was not directed at any one authority, but some had a larger number of Members which created an additional burden on the authority senior management. Authorities should have the ability to review their own oversight arrangements.
- Adrian Thomas highlighted that his most important point was recommendation 45, that where change is common sense it should become common practice. Often neighbouring services operated differently and services should be standardised to improve practice across the sector. The role of FRAs was important to make it easier for change to happen.
- In response to a question on the role on the 21<sup>st</sup> century firefighter, Adrian Thomas explained that non-firefighting roles in the service were in the majority, and a large amount of non-firefighting work was taking place in the community. The sector should examine if shift systems were appropriate, and if geographical location such as living within close proximity to the station were still required for retained firefighters.
- Members agreed that the FSMC should have a lead role in delivering the recommendations related to the LGA in the report, and would be a major influencing factor in work undertaken through the NJC. Adrian Thomas explained that some groups he had spoken to had commented that certain groups felt disenfranchised, so the structure of the NJC should be reviewed by the Independent Chair. Members requested that a report on reform of the NJC be considered at the next meeting.

## Decisions

The Committee:

1. **Noted** the publication of the review;
2. **Agreed** that where possible the LGA should coordinate its response to the Review with other bodies and organisations in the sector as well as other partners; and
3. **Agreed** that a report on reform of the NJC should be considered at the next meeting of FSMC in January 2017.

## Action

Report on reform of the NJC to be brought to the next meeting as requested.

## **5 Fire Services Management Committee Update Paper**

The Chair introduced the report which provided updates on issues of interest which were not included elsewhere on the agenda.

The following points were raised as part of the discussion:

- Daniel Greaves, Director of Fire and Resilience at the Home Office, informed Members that the Police and Crime Bill was likely to receive Royal Assent in mid-January 2017. Amendments to the Bill had today been laid before the House, and he urged Members to look at those which related to discussions which had taken place at the meeting.
- Members suggested it would be useful for members to submit stories for inclusion in the Update Paper prior to publication of the agenda so that additional work which Members had undertaken could be added. Some Members also suggested that the Lead Members of the Committee should have more input into the agenda planning process.

### **Decision**

The Committee **noted** the updates provided in the report.

### **Action**

Members to be asked for contributions to the Update Paper in advance of agenda publication to add in additional updates and information.

## **6 Outside Bodies - Oral Update from Members (a maximum of 2 minutes each)**

Members who represented the Committee on outside bodies updated the Committee on meetings that they had attended.

Cllr Simon Spencer informed the Committee that the CFOA RDS and Operational Training Working Group were looking at issues which had been identified in Adrian Thomas' review of conditions of service. Programmes were in place and services across the country were contributing to a campaign on RDS.

The Chair highlighted that he had attended a presentation by London Fire Brigade on a large exercise they had recently undertaken on response to a large building collapse.

### **Decision**

The Committee **noted** the updates provided by Members.

**7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Decision**

The Committee **agreed** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 September 2016.



**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Philip Howson	East Sussex Fire Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Members	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
	Ms Fiona Twycross	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
	Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Michele Hodgson	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
Apologies	Cllr Peter Jackson	Northumberland Council
	Cllr David Acton	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Thomas Wright	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority