

10 July 2017

Fire Commission update paper

Purpose

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

Fire Commission members are asked to note the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Fire Commission update paper

LGA

Inclusion and diversity masterclass

1. As part of its improvement support to fire and rescue authorities, the LGA will be running an inclusion and diversity masterclass event for fire and rescue authority members. The masterclass will be held on **26 September at Layden House**. If you would like to attend please email lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk.
2. The masterclass event is being organised as part of the LGA's ongoing support to the sector to help it deliver on the commitments set out in the LGA's Equalities Memorandum of Understanding for fire and rescue. The MoU can be found on the LGA's website: www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/memorandum-understanding-f0f.pdf.

LGA Annual Fire Conference and exhibition

3. Following on from discussions at the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) in March, members agreed to open up a number of sessions at the LGA's Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition for bidding. The sessions will showcase innovative practice on the theme of collaboration and partnership and we want the sessions to encourage audience participation and discussion as much as possible.
4. The bidding form can be found on the Fire Conference website: <http://survey.euro.confirmat.com/wix/3/p1858165443.aspx>. Bidding closes in September and then the bids will be assessed by Lead Members.

Fire Reform Board and Fire Vision

5. The LGA, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Home Office have formed a joint Fire Reform Board. This has met a number of times to discuss the fire reform agenda, most recently the Board met during the LGA's Annual Fire Conference in March. The main items for discussion were the fire and rescue sector's future vision for the service, and the continuation of the co-responding trials.
6. A draft Fire Vision has subsequently been shared with the FSMC for their input and members will continue to discuss the draft.

FSMC Priorities discussion

7. At its June meeting the FSMC discussed potential priorities for the next political year. The priorities under discussion were:
 - 7.1. Governance – continuing work associated with the greater involvement of Police and Crime Commissioners in fire and rescue service governance structures, and to provide advice and assistance to fire and rescue authorities around this agenda.
 - 7.2. Transparency and standards – with the general election and the delays in announcing who will provide the new fire inspectorate much of 2017/18 is likely to be

taken up with preparations for, and the commencement of, the first inspections. Alongside this the LGA and the National Fire Chiefs Council will be refreshing and updating the Fire Peer Challenge and Operational Assessment in light of the new inspection regime. The creation of a new standards body for the fire and rescue service will also have implications for the work of the Committee.

- 7.3. Workforce – the government has said it wants to see a more flexible, innovative and diverse workforce, and it expects the sector to take the lead on delivering the relevant recommendations in the Thomas Review, including those directed at the LGA on increasing diversity. The sector has also been looking at how more use could be made of on-call roles within the service, and this will continue to be an important strand of work for the Committee.
- 7.4. Collaboration – the Committee has consistently supported increased collaboration between the fire service and the other emergency services. It has also highlighted to government the increasing role taken by the service in supporting broader health objectives, and the value of this role has been increasingly recognised.
- 7.5. Procurement and value for money – the National Fire Chiefs Council will be pressing ahead with improving procurement practices and obtaining better value for money from its purchases. So far the Committee's role in progressing this agenda has been purely supportive, but it may be that a more active role is needed to help make progress in this area in the year ahead.
- 7.6. Funding – having the capability to respond to unexpected events will remain important if the service is to meet its national resilience obligations and deal with local risks. Ensuring the service continues to be funded on the basis of risk will remain vital.
8. Members also agreed that following on from the Grenfell Tower fire that there should be a priority looking at fire safety in high rise buildings.
9. The September meeting of the FSMC will make the final decision on the priorities for the next year.

Policing and Crime Act

10. Following the Policing and Crime Act receiving Royal Assent the LGA has published a short guide to the Act and the work the LGA did around it. The Policing and Crime Act (Get in on the Act) can be found on the LGA's website: www.local.gov.uk/policing-and-crime-act-2017-get-act.

Fire Leadership Essentials

11. The LGA will be running two Fire Leadership Essentials courses for fire and rescue authority members this year. They will take place on 18-19 October 2017 and 20-21 February 2018 at Scarman House, Warwick University Conference Centre. Details on how to book for the October course are on the LGA's website: www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/leadership-essentials.

Home Office

Inspection

12. The inspectorate for the fire and rescue service has not yet been announced. Once the announcement has been made the LGA will seek an early meeting with the inspectorate to discuss the process and will invite the inspectorate to an LGA meeting as soon as possible.

Fire and Rescue National Framework

13. With police and crime commissioners now able to take on fire governance, the Home Office has started to look at what changes need to be made to the Fire and Rescue National Framework. An initial meeting was held on 21 April between the Home Office, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the LGA. The aim of the review of the Framework is to ensure that the next version is relevant, focused and concise.
14. Issues to be considered for inclusion in the National Framework include:
- 14.1. Identification and Assessment of Risk
 - 14.2. Prevention and Protection (including Health agenda)
 - 14.3. Response
 - 14.4. PCC Governance
 - 14.5. Inspection
 - 14.6. Transparency/Scrutiny/Accountability to communities
 - 14.7. Assurance
 - 14.8. Commercial transformation
 - 14.9. The changing role of firefighters
 - 14.10. Workforce and culture
 - 14.11. Equality and diversity
 - 14.12. Standards
 - 14.13. Fitness Principles
 - 14.14. Re-engagement of senior officers
 - 14.15. Requirements for publication of strategic or operational plans.
15. Further work on the National Framework has been delayed by the general election, but as work progresses updates will be brought back to the Committee.

Independent Assessment of Police and Crime Commissioner's business cases

16. The FSMC have agreed that, where a Police and Crime Commissioner submits a business case to the Government for taking on the governance of the fire and rescue service, a panel of experts should provide the independent assessment of their business case. The FSMC's preferred model for independent scrutiny was based on a panel of four members bringing together expertise in local government, policing, fire and finance, which could be drawn together from a pool, with the flexibility to bring in expertise on particular issues where that was needed.
17. There was then a delay in making progress on the independent assessment due to the reorganisation within the Home Office. A further meeting to discuss the proposals with the LGA, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Executives was held on 20 April. Subsequently a different proposal has been circulated by Home Office officials.
18. This would typically see one expert appointed to review the business case and report to the Home Secretary, rather than there being a panel assessing the case. The expert would be selected from one of four sectors (fire, police, local government, finance), though additional experts might be asked to assess the business case if the objections were relevant to more than one sector.

Fire Statistics

19. The Home Office published a more detailed analysis of the headline fire statistics for the period April 2015 to May 2016 in May (see www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611182/fire-statistics-england-1516-hosb0517.pdf). These showed that there was an increase in the number of incidents attended by fire and rescue services compared with the previous year, with some of this increase resulting from a rise in the number of non-fire incidents attended. This increase was to a large extent due to increases in the number of medical incidents attended.
20. There was also an increase in the number of fires. The analysis suggested this might be the result of an increase in the number of deliberate fires, within increases in deliberate fires in road vehicles and other buildings increasing by 15 and 16 per cent respectively since 2014/15.

National Coordination Advisory Framework

21. The National Coordination Advisory Framework (NCAF) was updated in March 2017. NCAF is part of the mechanism to provide the coordination of Fire & Rescue assets. NCAF enables decision makers, both locally and nationally, to receive clear and unambiguous advice on how best to co-ordinate the fire and rescue service response to relevant emergencies.
22. NCAF sets out that the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council will provide the Home Secretary, and other ministers within the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), with expert timely advice in accordance with central Government's requirements.

23. The revised NCAF document can be found on the Government's website:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-coordination-and-advisory-framework-for-england.

LGA Outside bodies

LGA & CFOA Fire Peer Challenge Working Group

24. Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Cllr Kay Hammond and Cllr David Acton represent fire and rescue authority members on the LGA and NFCC's working group looking at the peer challenge offer to the sector in the future. The group has looked at a range of issues and models for the future of peer challenge. The future of peer challenge and sector support will be impacted by the appointment of the inspectorate, and further discussions will take place after inspectorate is announced.

Strategic Resilience Board

25. Cllr Les Byrom and Cllr Jeremy Hilton have attended the Home Office's Strategic Resilience Board throughout the last year to represent fire and rescue authorities. The items for discussion in the past have included Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks, updates on the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) and the National Resilience Board.

Fire Health Summit

26. The FSMC has had ongoing engagement with the Fire Health Summit to discuss the role of the fire and rescue service in health. At the last Summit meeting in March Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Cllr David Acton and Cllr Rebecca Knox attended to represent the FSMC and Cllr Richard Kemp attended from the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board.
27. This included a discussion amongst the participating bodies which include NHS England, Public Health England, Age UK, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office as well as the LGA on next steps in improving collaboration between the health service and fire and rescue services. The summit also received updates on progress in evaluating the contribution that fire and rescue services can make to the health agenda, engagement with Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (previously Plans) and workforce training.

JESIP Interoperability Board

28. Cllr Mark Healey represents the LGA at the JESIP Interoperability Board. The Board has discussed the continued implementation of JESIP principles and learning across the emergency services and looks at the future of the programme.

NFCC On-call Strategic Group

29. Cllr Simon Spencer represents the LGA on the NFCC's On-call Strategic Group which looks at a range of issues including workforce, branding and medical response. The group also has a significant workstream looking at how any reforms to the services can have longevity and come under the new inspection regime.

Fire Service College Engagement Forum

30. Cllr John Edwards and Cllr Mark Healey represents the LGA at the Fire Service College's Engagement Forum. The Forum has heard that the Fire Service College is undergoing some radical changes in staffing arrangements and embarking on plans for significant land-sales which will lead to reconfiguration of the fireground. Work continues on the Research and Development Hub, single point product testing, firefighter training offer, off-site training closer to home for FRSs and development of the overseas market.