

11 March 2019

Fire Services Management Committee update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

That members of the Committee note the report.

Action

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

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Fire Statistics

1. The Government released their latest set of incidents statistics in mid-February. The statistics show that in the year from September 2017 to September 2018 fire and rescue services attended 582,511 incidents, a two per cent increase from the same period the year before. The increase appears to be due to more fires, in particular a 13 per cent increase in secondary fires. Despite an increase of 2 per cent this year, on top of a 3 per cent increase last year, the figures are still 24 per cent less than ten years ago (791,746 2007/08).
2. There were 248 fire-related fatalities in the year ending September 2018 compared with 362 (including 71 from the Grenfell Tower fire) in the previous year, a decrease of 31 per cent.
3. The full set of statistics can be found on the [Government's website](#).

Water safety

4. Historically water rescue and flooding incidents attended by fire and rescue services were recorded through the national Incident Recording System (IRS) as 'special services' making it difficult to distinguish from other miscellaneous services and impossible to analyse.
5. For the first time this January flooding and rescue from water information has been included in the Home Office statistical data under its own section for the period April 2017 to March 2018 in England.
6. The data shows that unlike fire incidents which have been declining over the last decade, water related incidents appear to fluctuate, peaking in 2012/13 with 19,607 incidents. Last year there were 16,688 incidents in England, and the peak periods within the year appearing to correlate with wet weather and flooding and hot weather and swimming activity.

Her Majesties Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

7. HMICFRS have confirmed that they will be repeating the public perception survey in summer 2019 on the same timeline as the 2018 survey. The survey will be conducted over the summer, with collation and analysis of the results during the autumn and publication alongside the Tranche 3 inspection results and State of Fire report in December 2019.
8. HMICFRS are in the process of designing a Corporate Governance Inspection Model, which has been to the External Reference Group (ERG) on several occasions. Following

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the last ERG meeting, HMICFRS confirmed that they will be putting the model out for consultation shortly.

Peer support

9. Following the publishing of the first tranche of inspections results in December, the LGA continues to work on refreshing the peer support offer for fire authorities. Subject to the outcome of negotiations over improvement funding with the Ministry of House, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) the LGA hopes to:
 - 9.1. Offer the equalities framework peer challenge free of charge to priority authorities;
 - 9.2. Adapt the LGA Leadership Programme, which focuses on the relationship between chief executives and leaders, to consider the relationship between fire authority chairs, members and chief fire officers;
 - 9.3. Run another series of culture, diversity and inclusion masterclasses, either as repeated sessions or as an e-learning tool;
 - 9.4. Producing 15-minute mini-masterclass videos highlighting best practice for open-access on the LGA website; and
 - 9.5. Provide scrutiny training, building on the training previously commissioned for police and crime panels in 2012, alongside a Scrutiny toolkit.

Public affairs – parliamentary briefing on fire funding

10. On Wednesday 20 February Grahame Morris, Labour MP for Easington, brought a debate to the House of Commons on funding reductions for Police and Fire and Rescue Services. During the debate Grahame Morris highlighted the wider context of funding reductions and the effect this is having on his local fire and rescue service, County Durham and Darlington, and nationally, commenting that further cuts to budgets 'will increase the risk to the public', particularly in areas of deprivation.
11. Ahead of this debate, we briefed a range of parliamentarians on the key funding priorities for Fire Authorities including the impact and prevalence of major incidents; post-Grenfell building safety work; and the implementation of the Hackitt review.

LGA events

Diversity and Inclusion Masterclasses

12. All five Masterclasses have now taken place and resources from all sessions are available on the LGA events website under 'past presentations'.
13. Feedback from the earlier events has been received and analysed. Suggestions included bringing in more case studies around what has worked in different areas; generally including more concrete tools which members can take away and try in their own areas;

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more opportunity and stimuli for discussion; and also relating the issue to the current financial climate. Officers will consider this for future diversity events.

Leadership Essentials for Fire and Rescue

14. The second Leadership Essentials was held at Warwick Conferences on the 26-27 February. The programme was attended by members from a range of authorities, two officers from Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) offices and a London Fire Brigade officer.
15. Speakers were provided by a range of organisations to cover a range of topics including leadership, scrutiny, the Home Office fire reform agenda, Grenfell and building safety, media, inspections and National Fire Chief Council structures and relationships.
16. Feedback will be collated by the Leadership and Localism team in due course and will inform the programme for the 2019/20 cycle.
17. Dates for the next programme have been set as per the request of the FSMC in June and September, dates below:
 - 17.1. Programme 12: Wednesday 26 June – Thursday 27 June 2019
 - 17.2. Programme 13: Thursday 26 September – Friday 27 September 2019
18. Members are asked to consider sending new appointees to their authorities or members who have not attended before on these programmes as an integral part of their induction to the fire authority.

Outside bodies update

19. National Standards Board: The first meeting of the new Board took place on the 1 February and was attended by Cllr Nick Chard and representatives from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, a PFCC and the new Independent Chair and Vice-Chair; Suzanne McCarthy and Alison Samson. The meeting agreed the use of a concise standards template and key principles around use of plain English language and readability and the transparency of documentation relating to the activity of the group. Members discussed the need for the Board to progress quickly and to work closely with HMICFRS to ensure the new standards support continuous improvement across the sector.
20. HMICFRS External Reference Group: The Group met on the 25 February where HMICFRS updated members on the emerging themes from Tranche 2; considered key themes for discussion at future meetings; discussed development of the new governance inspection model; and finally discussed themes for the Tranche 2 national report.
21. Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group (ESCWG): The ESCWG met for a workshop on the scope of the group, the future priorities and key deliverables in 2019/20 on the 15 February 2019. The Group agreed to establish three task and finish groups,

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around scoping the duty to collaborate; barriers to collaboration; and cultural principles for collaboration. The Group agreed to follow a principle based approach focusing on specific operational areas. The Group also agreed to write a joint letter to Minister for Fire and Policing setting out key outcomes from the workshop and recommitting to progress work via the task and finish groups.

22. Strategic Resilience Board: Cllr Les Byrom attended this meeting on the 29 January 2019. The Board covers a range of national resilience matters from specific threats to technology and international co-operation. This meeting focused on implications of Exiting the EU, cross-border capabilities, tri-service assurance and developments in urban search and rescue.
23. Fire Lawyers Network: The Network met on the 8 February 2019 and received the usual update from LGA officers on the work of the FSMC. The Network also heard from the Senior LGA Employment Law Adviser, Philip Bundy, about the Matzak case – a 2018 European case concerning the question of whether on-call time of a Belgian on-call firefighter was working time for the purposes of the Working Time Directive. The European Court of Justice found that on-call time was working time in this context and further information on the case is included in the Workforce report.