

24 May 2019

Notes of last Fire Commission meeting

Title: Fire Commission
Date: Friday 12 October 2018
Venue: Bevin Hall, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Item Decisions and actions

1 **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of interest from members

2 **Paul Conroy from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

Paul Conroy gave a presentation on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the work they do for the Fire Services. Paul Conroy commented on the important work the body does, with limited resources in the face of ongoing cuts.

Paul Conroy highlighted the following points about the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- The Body has twin aims, *remedy injustice* and *improve services*.
- The services councils are offering is becoming more limited due to 10 years of austerity and the body takes this into account when doing their work.
- The body employs 75 investigators, who act under delegated authority. The body deals with over 31,600 new complaints per year.
- The main area of growth complaints is from adult social care, which is due to the broken funding model.
- 79 per cent of complaints are decided within 13 weeks with 99% decided within in 52 weeks.

All decisions are published online: LGO.org.uk. The body is the only one of its kind to publish decisions online. Also, on website is training and briefings and the aim is to share best practice. The body works on improving public services and the scrutiny of them.

Cllr Stephens thanked Paul Conroy for attending the Fire Commission.

3 **Sue Warren and Laura Gibb, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services**

Laura Gibb and Sue Warren gave a presentation of the work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the findings of the latest tranche of inspections.

Laura Gibb and Sue Warren highlighted the following points from the presentation

- HMICFRS inspections are not supposed to be come as a surprise or come

24 May 2019

unannounced

- The Inspectorate aims to engage 15-25% of the workforce.
- The first batch of reports from the inspections will be published 20 December 2018, with the final tranche published in the Autumn of 2019
- Evidence will be gathered from a range of sources including public perceptions surveys
- An average of 940 pieces of evidence will be gathered per service inspected
- Inspection teams will speak to between 15% and 25% of workforce in each service
- Any service where a cause for concern is found will receive a follow up visit within 3-4 months. This will be to see progress being made, not expecting a full resolution.

Members made the following comments

- It's important to hear the positive elements of the first tranche of inspections.
- Members asked that reporting around this could bear in mind timing of elections
- The inspection process would benefit from adding member peers for feedback.

Laura Gibb and Sue Warren responded

- The moderation process is very rigorous and work is done to make sure everything is worked against the agreed criteria.
- The inspection framework needs to be developed and member peers could be included

Members noted the update.

4 **Peer challenges update**

Charles Loft, spoke in place of Gary Hughes Principal Advisor who was unable to make the Fire Commission meeting.

Charles Loft reported on the timeline for developing the LGA peer support offer and highlighted the three core elements that were agreed in March 2017.

1. Inspection Peer Support
2. Leadership and Governance Support
3. Targeted Support

Charles Loft detailed that the peer support framework will be flexible and complement any inspection activity, and highlighted a framework that:

- Takes place before or after an inspection
- Focuses on broad areas or more narrowly defined ones
- Size and make-up of the team tailored to the objectives
- Onsite duration in a place will also vary

Charles Loft mentioned that this was in the early stages in development and the HMICFRS inspection results will see where the peer support framework needs to be developed.

Members made the following comments

- After the 3 tranches of HMICFRS inspections, the peer support framework can be developed fully for members by members. There is a need to avoid making fire

services feel they are constantly under inspection.

Members approved the proposals.

5 Fire Service Management Committee Priorities 2018-19

Members noted the FSMC priorities for 2018-19.

6 Workforce update paper

Clair Alcock updated the Fire Commission on industrial relations and pensions matters.

Clair Alcock highlighted that based on Her Majesty's Treasury published their draft Directions for the 2016 valuation there will be a significant increase in employer contribution rates from their current levels. This is mainly due to the proposed further reduction in the SCAPE discount rate, from 2.8 per cent to 2.4 per cent. This further reduction, if confirmed, is expected to apply from 1 April 2019.

Members made the following comments

- The employer pension concerns are troubling, and the Fire Commission should expect the government to deal with this for 2020.
- Members asked what the position will be for the Welsh Government with pension contributions

Clair Alcock responded

- The position will be similar between both governments

7 Fire Commission update report

Members noted the report

8 Draft Fire Conference Agenda

Members noted the report

9 Report of the FSMC Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Working Group

Charles Loft invited members to ask questions on the report.

Members made the following comments about the report

- The report mentions that The Welsh regulations have run into practical difficulties on fitting fire safety measures in new domestic residences, with many developers bypassing the legislation can this be explained.
- Developers appeared to have got planning permission well in advance on a large number of plots

Members noted the report

10 Building Safety Programme update

Mark Norris invited members to ask questions on the report.

Members made the following comments

- What is the definition of High-rise in the scope of this report and how does it relate to domestic buildings for vulnerable people?

Mark Norris Responded

- The LGA has been working to ensure buildings in which vulnerable people sleep are included in the definition of those covered by the cladding ban and the JCA

Members noted the report

11 **Operational Learning**

Members noted the report

12 **Any other business**

Action: The Labour group asked the Fire Commission to write to Commissioner of Fire for London to express our concerns and ask for support for the Fire Fighters taking part in the enquiry and relieving the events. All groups agreed.

13 **Notes from the previous meeting**

Members agreed the notes from the previous meeting.