

28 June 2019

Fire Services Management Committee and outside bodies update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Action

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

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Spending review

1. Since the last FSMC meeting the Senior Sector Group (SSG) has held further meetings and will meet again after this FSMC meeting. Work continues on a submission, although the extent of the Spending Review remains unknown. The Home Office has suggested that the SSG provides a useful forum to exchange ideas with the sector and that it should continue to function beyond its current task.

Governance

2. Last year governance of North Yorkshire and Northamptonshire fire and rescue was transferred to the local Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners (PFCC), Julia Mulligan and Stephen Mold respectively. Two further transfers in West Mercia and Cambridgeshire were also agreed by HM Government and have been contested by the relevant fire and rescue authorities. The judicial review for West Mercia was heard on the 5 and 6 June. We await the result of the review.
3. The Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Ellis, has now become a member of the LGA following the transfer of the responsibility for fire from the FRA to the PFCC's office.

New Fire Authority Members guide

4. The LGA has published a new member's guide, which is now downloadable through the LGA website and can be shared via email using the following link:
<https://www.local.gov.uk/fire-authority-members-guide>. We would encourage members of Fire Commission to promote the guide to new or other members who may find it useful. We will also be distributing it through our fire bulletin, which you can sign up to [here](#).

National Audit Office Report

5. On the 11 May the National Audit Office published a report into the Emergency Services Network (ESN) / Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP); the replacement to the Airwave system which is currently used by 107 blue light services in England, Scotland and Wales for communications between control rooms and the field.
6. The aim is that the ESN will have the full functionality of the Airwave system with better high-speed mobile data at a lower cost than the current system. New technology allowing ESN to take priority over other users at critical points will allow the ESN to be hosted on already existing commercial networks at less cost than a bespoke private network.
7. The report raises concerns about the management of the programme, in particularly the management of suppliers and contracts; time and costs overruns; and risk management.

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8. Implementation of ESN is now due to cost £9.3 billion to 2037, an increase of £3.1 billion above the 2015 business case. Some of this is directly related to slippage of timescales, for example £1.4 billion of this cost is due to extending Airwaves to cover the interim time until ESN becomes functional and £0.5 billion is due to an increase in contingency. The remaining £1.2 billion is due to increased costs of the actual programme.
9. The report is available to read online [here](#).

Fire Statistics

10. The Government released their latest set of incidents statistics at the start of May. The fire service attended 576,586 incidents in the year ending December 2018 of which 31 per cent were fires. There was a two per cent increase in incidents attended and a five per cent increase in fire incidents compared with the previous year. Primary, dwelling and accidental fires all continue to decrease year-on-year; the increase in fire incidents is due to an 11 per cent increase in secondary fires, its highest level since 2011/12 Q1. The increase of secondary fires is attributed to hotter and drier weather last year between April and September. Overall the number of incidents and fire incidents has decreased 27 per cent and 39 per cent respectively from 10 years ago.
11. The full set of statistics can be found on the [Government website](#).

LGA Support Offer

12. The one-day Leadership Essentials: Fire and Rescue programme took place on the 26 June. Bookings are still being taken for the usual two-day programme, which will take place on the on the 26-27 September. For more information on the programme and how to book please see [here](#) or email Grace.collins@local.gov.uk.
13. The LGA is currently in the process of a developing a Scrutiny toolkit to help members in their everyday role and in responding to specific feedback like inspection. We expect to publish the toolkit by the end of summer 2019.
14. At the last Fire Commission officers requested members assistance with venues for this years programme of Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Masterclasses. Several members offered venues and so a series of at least three Masterclasses have been confirmed and are likely to take place between November 2019 and February 2020. For more details please sign up for our fire bulletin, where we will advertise all the Masterclasses [here](#).

LGA Fire Conference

15. The 2020 conference will be held on 10-11 March at the Grand Hotel Blackpool, which was the preferred option as discussed by members and has the appropriate fire suppression system.
16. For the 2019 Fire Conference we opened the workshop sessions out for bidding to the sector to encourage a wide variety of FRAs to showcase their innovative work as a part of the conference. This produced a set of high quality workshops which were well

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attended at conference. If members are happy with this approach, we will do the same for the 2020 Fire Conference and launch the bidding process over the summer.

Outside bodies

Fire Standards Board

17. The FSB met in April 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 and Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Julia Mulligan. The Board agreed to pilot two standards with the sector ahead of the ongoing programme.

Strategic Resilience Board

18. The Strategic Resilience Board met in April where the LGA was represented by Cllr Les Byrom and Cllr Ian Stephens. The meeting considered key aspects of nation resilience like the progress of interoperability work, business continuity and future proofing.

Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group – Task and Finish Group A: Duty to collaborate and inspections

19. The Group met in April where the objectives of the ESC working group were set out; to support the sector in assessing what 'good' collaboration looks like and how best to evaluation collaboration activity. The Task and Finish Group agreed their purpose was to consider inspection approaches for collaboration and duty to collaborate; to identify with HMICFRS and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) existing learning; to make recommendations to Ministers to improve awareness and activity on duty to collaborate; and to consider what a potential framework for effective assessing and gathering the outcomes of collaboration may look like.

20. Following this meeting HMICFRS and CQC met to consider the current picture and next steps. They identified a lack of data, evidence and evaluation as a key issue for the landscape of collaboration. They considered potential resources that might help services understand what good looks like and to evaluate their collaboration arrangements.

HMICFRS External Reference Group

21. The ERG continues to meet regularly and last met on the 15 April where FSMC was represented by Fiona Twycross. The ERG considered the ongoing inspection regime, monitoring following inspection, future inspection cycles, and corporate inspection.