

28 June 2019

Fire Services Management Committee annual report and policy priorities for 2019-20

Purpose of report

For discussion and decision.

Summary

This report provides an overview of the priorities, work and key achievements the Committee has overseen during the last year and sets out the proposals for the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) priorities and work programme for 2019-20 for comment.

The proposals are based on both corporate LGA priorities and options for broader work based on a combination of areas of interest previously indicated by the Board, ongoing work and recent policy announcements. Subject to members' views, officers will develop a set of proposals for agreement at the October meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations

That members:

- 1) Note the achievements of the Committee against the 2018-19 priorities; and
- 2) Comment on the proposed priorities and a work programme for 2019-20.

Action

Officers to use members' comments to draw up a detailed set of priorities for consideration and approval at the October FSMC meeting.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3241
Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

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Background

1. The [LGA Business Plan for 2018-19](#) set out clear priorities for FSMC, which were in line with the priorities agreed by the Committee at its September meeting. The priorities agreed in September included:
 - 1.1. Engage with HMICFRS around the inspection and process and support Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) respond to the findings
 - 1.2. Engage with the Comprehensive Spending Review and Fair Funding review to make the case for FRAs to be primarily funded on risk.
 - 1.3. Support FRAs around governance, transparency and standards including contributing to the Fire Standards Board, in-putting to the development of HMICFRS's governance reviews and supporting police, fire and crime panels.
 - 1.4. Pressing for powers and resources to match any new duties around building regulations coming forward from the Hackitt inquiry and shape the new regulatory framework developed in response to its recommendations.
 - 1.5. Provide leadership training on inclusion and diversity and continue to promote the Memorandum of Understanding.
 - 1.6. Supporting the debate around future blue light collaboration, and collaboration between FRAs and other local partners including councils.
 - 1.7. Supporting sector initiatives to improve procurement and value for money.

Achievements

2. The Committee set a comprehensive work programme seeking to engage with fire and rescue authorities and relevant partners over the full range of issues associated with the fire sector.

Transparency and standards

3. We have continued to work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) around the publication of the first and second tranche of inspection results. Members continue to attend the HMICFRS External Reference Group on a monthly basis. We have repeated our concerns that monitoring arrangements and future inspection cycles should not create extra burdens for fire and rescue services.

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4. We have advised on the design of the new governance inspection programme and recommended that HMICFRS should use LGA peers to support this work. We continue to call for the model to be publicly consulted on at the earliest opportunity.
5. At LGA Fire Conference in March we had a main plenary dedicated to HMICFRS and the themes emerging from the first and second tranche of this inspection cycle.
6. In 2018/19 we delivered 3 Fire Peer Challenges, this included a bespoke pre-inspection peer challenge to Essex County FRS, a themed peer challenge to West Yorkshire FRS and an interim improvement peer challenge to Avon FRS. In 2019/20 the LGA already has 4 Fire Peer Challenges confirmed.
7. We are a member of the Fire Standards Board which had its inaugural meeting on the 1 September and is centralised within the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Central Programme Office. We continue to support the Board to ensure that any standards produced are in line with National Operational Guidance and National Operational Learning and that the production of standards is prioritised in line with relevant national learning i.e. through the publication of inspection reports.
8. We have continued to run the Leadership Essentials fire and rescue programme in November and February of this year. The programme covers a range of issues of relevance to elected members and focuses on the specific challenges which are particularly prevalent in the fire sector.
9. Recently we produced a short guide for fire authority members, which can be found [here](#). The guide introduces members to the basics of the fire sector including legislation, relevant organisations, the LGA committee structure and support offer, and other resources.

Funding

10. In the context of the current spending review the LGA has continued to argue for funding based on risk, rather than demand. The LGA has worked intensively with the NFCC and the Home Office to develop a robust submission to HM Treasury ahead of the spending review. This work is likely to continue into the next cycle and beyond as we develop an ongoing dialogue around future funding.
11. We have highlighted the impact on the fire and rescue service of the cost of the significant increase in employer pension contributions and the cost of a pay increase for firefighters.
12. We have continued to highlight the new burdens coming out of the Hackitt Review and argued for funding to adequately cover this cost in its entirety.
13. At LGA Fire Conference, we held a main plenary on finance, risk and capacity. The plenary considered key themes around current and future funding of the fire sector and particularly focused on the context of funding in the context of major incidents.

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Governance and scrutiny

14. We have provided support to areas where there are locally contested plans for transfer of governance from fire and rescue authorities to police and crime commissioners and will continue to do so as necessary.
15. We have provided training for police, fire and crime panels, and commissioned a scrutiny toolkit for FRAs for the purposes of improving local scrutiny and to inform the development of appropriate processes, expectations and relationships between senior fire officers and the fire and rescue authority.

Grenfell Tower and building safety

16. The LGA Fire Conference publication focused on the outcomes of the Hackitt Review in protecting vulnerable people. The first half of the publication looked at the working coming out of the Hackitt Review and the ongoing process of reform which is likely to cause significant new burdens on the fire sector through the proposed Joint Competent Authority. The remaining articles considered the wider workings of the fire sector, including major incidents like wildfires, the NFCC response to the Kerslake report, water safety, use of behavioural insights techniques and protection from scams. The publication *Beyond Hackitt: protecting the vulnerable in the years ahead* can be accessed [here](#).
17. LGA has continued to influence the shape of post-Grenfell building safety reform, in particular through, its response to the Hackitt Review, which encouraged the Government's adoption of all Hackitt's recommendations, its successful call for a ban on combustible materials in cladding systems on buildings over 18m and through membership of the Joint Regulators Group which is advising the government on the shape of the future system.
18. The LGA has successfully lobbied the government to fund the removal of dangerous cladding from privately owned blocks, this should accelerate the process of remediation while protecting residents from costs.

Workforce, with explicit reference to diversity

19. Inclusion and diversity remains a key component of the LGA Leadership Essentials for fire and rescue programme. We ran two leadership essentials this year in November and February and the diversity session was well-received in both cases; a further one-day leadership essentials is planned for June 2019. Alongside this offer we ran five Diversity and Inclusion Masterclasses in London, West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Birmingham, and Exeter.
20. At the LGA Fire Conference in March we held a main plenary on Culture, diversity and inclusion in the fire and rescue sector which had speakers from Women in Fire, HMICFRS, Lancashire FRS and Cheshire FRS. We also hosted workshops on

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Recruiting for a diverse workforce from Greater Manchester FRS and Achieving cultural change from County Durham and Darlington FRS.

Collaboration

21. At the LGA Fire Conference we hosted a workshop on Collaboration, which was run by Derbyshire FRS, Cornwall FRS and Babcock International Group. The workshop focused on how building relationships leads to better results.
22. The LGA are represented at the Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group and in particular have been working on duty to collaborate and inspections.

Procurement and value for money

23. The NFCC have been leading on this area of work and the LGA have continued to play a supportive role. NFCC Lead Ann Millington is confirmed to speak at the next Fire Commission in September, to disseminate information on the procurement work. We will continue to promote this work through LGA communications.

Priorities 2019-20

24. For the 2019-20 period the priorities have been redefined to take into account the breadth of areas with which FSMC is involved.
25. Key priorities for 2019-20 will centre around responding to key pivotal publications:
 - 25.1. The Phase 1 Report of the Grenfell Inquiry
 - 25.2. The National State of Fire and Rescue report
26. These two publications are likely to inform the priorities for the fire and rescue sector for some time to come. It is therefore important that the LGA respond robustly to any recommendations which they make. FSMC will prioritise responding to the outcomes of these two key reports in the appropriate manner across the already existing core areas as defined in the 2018-19 priorities.

Work programme

27. Alongside the key priorities as described above activity will continue as described below within the themes which FSMC has previously prioritised.
 - 27.1. Transparency and standards – continuing to attend the Fire Standards Board to ensure that standards are prioritised to reflect the needs of the sector and continuing to attend HMICFRS External Reference Group to provide our view on the inspectorates future monitoring and inspection activity, including the corporate inspection regime.
 - 27.2. Funding – continuing to work with relevant partners to make the case for proper funding for the fire sector in the context of a spending review, specifically to remain

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part of the Senior Sector Group which includes NFCC, LGA and the Home Office in key sector discussions.

- 27.3. Governance and scrutiny – to continue to support authorities where there is local opposition to a change of governance and to publish the commissioned scrutiny guide and associated resources and events as necessary.
- 27.4. Grenfell Tower and building safety – to continue to influence the development of the new building safety regime; to support councils and fire and rescue authorities in remediating existing building issues; to ensure both ongoing remediation and the future system are adequately funded by government.
- 27.5. Workforce, including culture, diversity and inclusion – to continue to provide leadership training around culture, diversity and inclusion including Leadership Essentials and regional masterclasses, to capture learning on video to share with a wider fire audience, and to hold another Diversity Summit in Autumn 2019/
- 27.6. Collaboration – to continue to support increased collaboration between blue light services and highlight to government the value of the increasing role taken by the fire services in supporting health and support objectives.
- 27.7. Procurement and value for money – Ann Millington from Kent and Medway FRS has been confirmed to speak to the Fire Commission on the NFCC’s work on procurement in September. We will continue to support and promote this work through our networks.

Implications for Wales

28. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee’s work has focused on changes for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in Cardiff.

Financial implications

29. The policy and improvement budget is still being set for the forthcoming year.

Next steps

30. Members comments on these priorities for the Committee over the coming year will be used to inform the priorities paper brought to the Committee in October.