

Fire Vision

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The paper sets out the proposal for a review of the Fire Vision 2024.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree to review the ambitions within the Fire Vision 2024.

Action

Officers to undertake the review as outlined in paragraphs 11-14

Contact officer: Lucy Ellender
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3321
Email: lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk

Fire Vision

Background

1. In 2018 the LGA produced the Fire Vision 2024 (**Appendix A**). This outlined our ambitions for the future of the sector over the next six years. In light of the expected developments for the sector coming out Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) State of the Nation Report and the Phase 1 report of the Grenfell, Members suggested at the June meeting that the Vision needed to be refreshed.
2. Lead Members discussed the Fire Vision 2024 at their meeting in September. At the meeting there was a discussion on whether the Fire Vision should be extended and/or updated or whether a review of the ambitions within the Vision should be conducted first. Lead Members felt that there needed to be a benchmarking exercise first to provide a baseline for refreshing the Vision in the future.
3. In particular members were keen to understand what progress the sector had made on the diversity of its new firefighter recruits. The Fire Vision 2024 had set out an ambition that 30 per cent of new firefighter recruits nationally would be female by 2024/25 and that the service should reflect the ethnic diversity of the community they serve. Members felt it was important to capture what action areas had taken that had increased the diversity of their firefighter recruits.

The current Fire Vision

4. The Fire Vision outlined the LGA's view of what the fire service should look like by 2024. It was underpinned by the Government's fire reform programme, but the reform process would be locally led by fire and rescue authorities. The Vision was owned by the FSMC but with input from the Home Office and the National Fire Chiefs Council.
5. The Vision contained a mission statement and values. The mission statement outlined that the service will "serve our communities by preventing harm, protecting life and property and keeping the public safe, both locally and by ensuring national resilience through a full understanding of risk. We want to be a service that reflects the communities it serves." The values of the service were "efficiency, effectiveness, inclusivity, local accountability, national resilience, professionalism, safety, transparency, evidence-based practice and a collaborative approach. We are a team in which every member is valued."

6. The document also included a number of ambitions for the sector on different aspects of the service including around risk, collaboration, protection, recruitment, inspection, peer challenge and evaluation.
7. The full list of ambitions included within the document are as follows:
 - 7.1. ensure that our services identify risk appropriately and consistently
 - 7.2. embed collaboration into the everyday experience of all frontline staff
 - 7.3. work in partnership with a wide range other agencies with a community or individual risk reduction focus to explore our involvement into every aspect of community safety – where this offers improved value to the public
 - 7.4. continue to reduce incidents of fire and to work with local businesses to improve fire safety
 - 7.5. seek to reduce the continuing high level of false alarms
 - 7.6. by 2024/5, 30 per cent of new firefighter recruits nationally should be female; this represents a step change for the fire and rescue service and will require a cultural transformation which we are determined to achieve
 - 7.7. in each fire and rescue service both frontline staff and staff as a whole should reflect the ethnic diversity of the community they serve
 - 7.8. the diversity of senior managers mirror these developments
 - 7.9. the gender and ethnic balance in the workforce should not be eroded by poor retention (ie those staff five years in will not be less diverse than the cohort was when recruited)
 - 7.10. staff at all levels and local communities have confidence in the political and operational leadership of their service
 - 7.11. proactively and flexibly seek to deliver high-impact procurements – nationally, regionally and across sectors to deliver better value for taxpayers' money
 - 7.12. maximise the added value and increase efficiency of digital solutions

- 7.13. the LGA and NFCC peer challenge offer will continue to support fire and rescue authorities with their improvement journey, providing a critical friend approach to drive and support change
 - 7.14. the HMICFRS inspection regime is embraced and issues raised through inspection are appropriately responded to
 - 7.15. the public must be able to find out what is being spent, what it is being spent on and what that spending is achieving.
8. Some of these ambitions are long term, with no end date specified, however the ambition on diversity of new recruits had a target date of 2024/25 included.

Other issues

9. The Fire Vision 2024 also included a reference to the Grenfell Tower fire and the potential impact of the Inquiry. Since the document was produced we have had the Hackitt Review and are awaiting the Grenfell Inquiry's Phase 1 report which is likely to talk about the role of the fire and rescue service in regulation and protection issues as well as operational firefighting and potentially how staff are trained. The LGA has previously stated that the FRS should still be the enforcement body for fire safety. The role of the sector in fire safety and protection work is likely to feature in the Phase 1 report. It is therefore clear that we will need to revisit how this issue is dealt with within the Vision in the future.
10. The Vision was written before the introduction of inspection. HMICFRS's State of Fire report will give the FSMC an opportunity to review the Vision in light of any further findings or recommendations from the inspectorate.

Next Steps

11. It is proposed that before a further iteration of the Fire Vision is produced we should undertake a review of the work that has been undertaken since the original Vision was published in 2018 to provide a starting point for further work.
12. This review will need to take a number of different forms to try and capture some of the work that has been undertaken. The inspectorate have identified a number of areas within our ambitions where they feel further progress needs to be made, therefore the State of Fire report will provide a useful basis for the review. In terms of the recruitment figures it is expected that we will need to undertake a survey of members.

13. Officers will work internally within the LGA and with NFCC to undertake the review. It is proposed that this will come back to the FSMC in March to allow time for the Grenfell Inquiry and the State of Nation report to be published and analysed.
14. This will allow us to understand what the current picture is in the service and how the sector have responded as well as identify any gaps that would need to be addressed within a future vision. It will also help with identifying what new ambitions any updated Fire Vision should include.

Implications for Wales

15. The last Fire Vision 2024 was an England only document, as it was seeking to work in the parameters of the Home Office's Fire Reform programme.
16. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee's work will focus on changes for FRAs in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in Cardiff.

Financial Implications

17. Any work arising from this report will be met from existing budgets.

Next steps

18. Following member's discussions we will take a paper for the Fire Services Management Committee for discussion in October.