

Update from Fire Services Management Committee - 11 May 2009

1. The Fire Services Management Committee met on 11 May 2009 at Local Government House where the following issues were discussed:

Update on current issues

2. The Chair updated Members on the **Equality and Diversity Charter**. It was noted that approximately 350 Members had signed up to the Charter, but that the level of sign up was varied amongst FRAs.
3. The first **Equality and Diversity Network** meeting for FRA members, chaired by Cllr Joanna Spicer, was held on 21 April 2009. Members noted that discussions arising from the meeting had been positive, and that a follow-up meeting was planned for September 2009. Cllr Spicer thanked LGA officers for their efforts in preparing the meeting.
4. The Chair stated that, with talks on the **European working-time directive** having broken down, the European Parliament was at this stage no longer looking to progress this matter. Members did note however that this was an issue that may re-emerge in due course.
5. Cllr Fred Walker provided an update on **pensions** and levels of ill-health retirement. Following on from those discussions, it was agreed that further information on levels of ill-health retirement be prepared for the September 2009 meeting.

The role of Local Government Employers

6. Sarah Messenger, Service Director at the LGE outlined the activities of the LGE.
7. The work and remit of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) was detailed. It was noted that one of the significant recent achievements for the NJC had been to negotiate an agreement at the national level to allow more flexibility for employment terms and conditions to be made at the local level. The NJC was a national body covering more than just the scope of England, and as such, was not accountable only to the LGA, but had to take into account the perspectives of other Local Authority organisations in its negotiations.

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8. Sarah informed Board Members that the role of the NJC was to try and construct deals acceptable to both parties. In doing so, there was a need for acceptable parameters on such deals to be established. There was no specific mechanism on which the NJC could draw in the event of a dispute or pre-dispute to avoid negative media output, but noted that Fire Authorities and the trade unions were expected to abide by the principles contained within the Joint protocol on Good Industrial Relations'

FiReControl – LGA position

9. Discussions were held over the position held by the LGA on the FiReControl project. Though various opinions were held on the current established position, Board Members broadly spoke in favour of maintaining the existing position with some amendments. It was agreed that a draft resolution, incorporating the comments made at the meeting, be circulated to Board Members for their comments.

New Dimension Long-term Capability Management

10. Ownership of New Dimension equipment and vehicles was now being transferred from the CLG to FRAs, with various long-term arrangements in place. 38 FRAs had signed up to the project, with four further Authorities awaiting details prior to signing up.

LGA Annual Fire Conference 2009

10. Members provided feedback on what had been a well-received conference and provided some examples of where improvements could be made in 2010.

NJC Update

11. The Chairman informed Members that pay for 2009/10 was currently being negotiated by the Joint Working Party, with discussions ongoing at the secretariat level. With regard to part-time workers, the Tribunal was keen to reach a settlement, which would hopefully arrive in the near future. The NJC was looking to provide a system to resolve local disputes at the local level. Steve McGuirk (the LGA's principle advisor on fire) had recently been appointed to chair the Advisory Forum.

Date of next meeting

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12. The next meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee will take place on **Monday 20th July 2009 at 11am at Local Government House.**