

## **Update from Fire Services Management Committee - 18 January 2010**

1. The Fire Services Management Committee met on 18 January 2010 at Local Government House where the following issues were discussed:

### **FiReControl update**

2. The Committee received a short presentation from Roger Hargreaves, FiReControl Project Director at the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), outlining the scheme's progress. The project sub-contractor has recently changed from Ericsson to Intergraph and Roger stated his confidence in both EADS and Intergraph to now deliver the project to key milestones.
3. Members outlined concerns over the lack of an up-to-date, visible work plan for the project, and detailed how many Fire and Rescue Authorities had lost confidence in the contractors to deliver the project successfully.
4. It was also noted at the meeting that there will shortly be a CLG Select Committee inquiry into the FiReControl project, and that the LGA had submitted evidence to this inquiry.

### **LGA Membership**

5. The Committee noted that, following the agreement of the LGA Executive at its meeting on 10 December 2009, there would be a reduction in subscriptions for member Authorities for 2010 – 11.
6. Members felt that more notification was needed over future agenda items for both the Committee and the Fire Services Forum. Officers have tried to address this for this meeting of the Forum through circulating a draft agenda in greater time prior to the meeting. Members were reminded that they should submit any proposed agenda items for both the FSMC and Fire Services Forum to officers as appropriate.

### **The future of national functions**

7. The Committee considered this item in light of the news that CLG have initiated a debate on whether and how Fire and Rescue Authorities in England might want to take ownership of key activities that directly impact upon the quality and

12 February 2010

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efficiency of the service that they deliver. Members were not in favour of any proposals that advocated the creation of a further quango or quango-type body, and noted that the LGA has a strong role to play in future discussions in this area.

### **Equality and diversity strategy**

8. The Committee received a report on LGA activity to date on equality and diversity, noting that Fire and Rescue Services need to be exemplar employees in this area. Members were in agreement that FRSs need to both reflect the communities they serve, and meet the diverse range of needs that those communities might hold, though Members held differing views over the best means of achieving these aims.

### **Other business**

9. Members noted that CLG has recently requested Fire and Rescue Authorities to accept a transfer of function that would see ownership of all vehicles and equipment transferring to those authorities hosting them. It was noted that several Authorities had not yet signed up to this transfer, pending resolution of contractual issues or further legal advice on this matter.
10. Following a short update from Cllr Walker on the recent actuarial assessment of the pension scheme, Members agreed that the scheme should be affordable for FRAs, and that FRAs should be encouraged to make sure that any enhancements to pay be non-pensionable.

### **Date of next meeting**

11. The next meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee will take place on **Monday 8 March 2010 at 4pm** in **Manchester Town Hall**.