

Fire Commission update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

Members to note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Fire Commission update paper

Chairman's engagements

1. The Chairman has attended a number of recent meetings and engagements on behalf of the LGA, including:
 - 1.1 the Fire Services College Management Board;
 - 1.2 the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme Board;
 - 1.3 a visit to Humberside FRA; and
 - 1.4 the opening of the Firefighters Charities' newly refurbished Marine Court facility in Littlehampton.

Fire Leadership Academy

2. The LGA will be holding a leadership academy specifically aimed at fire and rescue authority members on the 11 and 12 September at Warwick University. The programme for the academy is currently being finalised and will be made available to members shortly. The Leadership Academy forms part of the LGA's 'offer' to fire and rescue authorities and is available free of charge.

LGA respond to Sir Ken Knight's *Facing the Future* report

3. The Fire Services Commission and FSMC Chairman responded to the publication of Sir Ken Knight's report with the following statement:

"Sir Ken's review rightly recognises the sharp decline in call-outs and fire incidents which continue to reduce vastly because of the excellent preventative work, such as community safety schemes, which fire and rescue services have in place.

"Fire authorities are always looking to increase efficiencies with many already operating differently in order to manage an unprecedented decline in funding and will continue to find savings through measures such as shared service arrangements, reducing the number of fire stations and new flexible employment practices.

"But it is clear that without major reforms to the service this will not be enough to sustain it in the future. Therefore we will study Sir Ken's findings with great interest and are pleased that the Government intends to consult fully with the sector before it makes its own response."

4. The full press release can be found here: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10171/3998255/NEWS-TEMPLATE

5. The Chairman also participated in a teleconference with to Bandon Lewis MP and Sir Ken on his report, noting that on the OpA peer challenge consideration of assurance statements would negate any need to return to an inspectorate for the fire sector.

National Operational Guidance Programme

6. The National Operational Guidance Programme is currently in transition between a 10-month definition phase and into the guidance development projects. The 10-month phase has produced positive outputs for the fire and rescue service, including:
 - 6.1 The creation of two programme boards with cross-sector representation, including the LGA, CFOA, the FBU and CLG.
 - 6.2 A definitive library of national operational guidance is emerging from the legacy guidance project, with the final catalogue being made available as a free, online resource.
 - 6.3 A structure and national framework for operational doctrine (policy, procedure and risk assessments) is emerging from consultations with the service. The framework provides the foundations for the development of doctrine at national, regional and local levels by reducing duplication.
 - 6.4 The establishment of four guidance development projects, managing the transition between the old and new National Operational Guidance Programmes.
7. Many of these outputs are assets that will provide benefits for the Service by themselves; nevertheless, it is important that the next phases of the Programme—Guidance development projects—are swiftly developed and effectively communicated.

CLG Transformation Challenge Award

8. The Transformation Challenge Award is available to local authorities, including fire and rescue authorities, that demonstrate that they are at the cutting edge of service transformation and delivering efficiency savings. Bids are invited in three categories:
 - 8.1 Major multi-authority awards: to support radical innovations involving two or more authorities who have combined their operations across all or a major part of their service delivery and back office, whilst maintaining their separate identity and political representation.
 - 8.2 Authority awards: to support authorities, either individually or jointly, which are pursuing particularly innovative measures for delivering increased efficiencies, resilience and better value for money, whilst not involving a major combination of services.

- 8.3 Efficiency support awards: to support authorities who are already in receipt of the Efficiency Support Grant.
9. Bids are invited from fire and rescue authorities for the major multi-authority awards and authority awards which should be submitted to the Department by **14 July 2013**. The overall Transformation Challenge Award pot is £9.2 million, including £2.3 million for the efficiency support award. Further information is available from:
julie.stephenson@communities.gsi.gov.uk

LGA Annual Conference 2013

10. A fringe session looking at the findings of Sir Ken Knight's efficiencies review will be held at the LGA's annual conference, which is taking place at 8am on Thursday 4 July in Manchester. The session will provide the first opportunity for delegates to come together to consider the findings of the efficiency review and the implications for individual fire authorities.
11. The session, which will be chaired by Cllr Kay Hammond, will look at some key areas, such as the issue of commercialisation, drawing on the experiences in the sector. Further details will be circulated to members in due course.

LGA Annual Fire Conference 2014

12. The LGA's annual fire conference will be held in Cardiff next year, on 11 and 12 March. The FSMC agreed to set up a Member Task and Finish Group to design the agenda and other aspects of the event which will meet in September. Please let your political group at the LGA know if you are interested in taking part.

CFOA Services Ltd Blue Watch initiative

13. CFOA Services Ltd has been working on a new prevention product under a Concession Agreement with Capita Business Services Ltd. The offering which had a working title of FireSafe Register is now known as Blue Watch and the new website is due to go live very shortly at www.bluewatch.co.uk. In essence the Blue Watch product will raise awareness of fire and carbon monoxide safety by providing information to landlords and tenants in the first instance. Discussions with landlords have already been taking place and CFOA are very pleased with the initial reception that the new product has been getting.

Public Money Management – Performance management in fire and rescue services

14. The Journal for Public Money Management has published a short report that examines the previous performance management regimes (best value to CAA) and makes a number of proposals for a new, more effective and efficient, regime. The report can be found here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2013.785711>

Publication on guidance for Statements of Assurance and revised Intervention Protocol

15. On 14 May 2013 the Minister for Fire and Rescue, Brandon Lewis MP wrote to all Chairs of fire and rescue authorities and Chief Fire Officers to highlight the publication of the following documents:
 - 15.1 The guidance on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England sets out the processes that fire and rescue authorities should have in place across a range of key areas: financial, governance and operational. The format of these statements is a matter for fire and rescue authorities to decide on. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statements-of-assurance-for-fire-and-rescue-authorities-in-england>
 - 15.2 The revision of protocol on government intervention action on fire and rescue authorities in England sets out the arrangements should formal intervention be considered necessary, for example if a fire and rescue authority is considered to be failing. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protocol-on-government-intervention-action-on-fire-and-rescue-authorities-in-england>
16. The summary of responses for both consultations set out a brief overview of the comments received during the consultations on the documents above, and the government's response. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protocol-on-government-intervention-action-on-fire-and-rescue-authorities-in-england>