

# Notes of Decisions Taken and Actions Required

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## Fire Services Management Committee

24 November 2008

at Local Government House, Smith Square, London

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### Present

- Chair:** Cllr Anthony Duggan (Bedfordshire & Luton CFA)  
**Vice Chair:** Cllr Fred Walker (Greater Manchester FCDA)  
**Deputy Chair:** Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Gloucestershire CC) (Liberal Democrat); Cllr Watts Stelling (Durham CC) (Independent).  
**Conservative:** Cllr Peter Roffey (Leicestershire CC); Cllr Jerry Willmott (Wiltshire & Swindon CFA) (Conservative); Cllr Joanna Spicer (Suffolk CC) (Conservative);  
**Labour:** Cllr Mehboob Khan (West Yorkshire FCDA); Cllr Navin Shah AM (LFEPA); Cllr Sharon Sullivan (Merseyside FCDA);  
**Liberal Democrat:** Cllr Eddie Clein (Liverpool)  
**Substitutes:** Cllr Phil Box (Shropshire) (Labour)  
**Apologies:** Cllr Richard Hobbs (Warwickshire CC); Cllr Tony Hooton (Cheshire); Cllr Dave Goddard (Stockport)

### 1. Update on current issues (Cllr Duggan oral report)

The Chairman welcomed all members to the meeting and introduced new members Cllr Sharon Sullivan and Cllr Navin Shah AM.

The Chairman then updated members on current issues within the FSMC's remit:

The Chairman had been contacted by the **Fire Services Memorial Charitable Trust**, asking for the LGA to support their application for a Charter of Incorporation.

The **Audit Commission** had given a presentation at the Fire Forum on the draft findings of the new **national study on the fire and rescue service**. FSMC lead members and officers had met separately to discuss the implications of the findings and to comment on the draft conclusions. He also outlined some of the main findings of the report:

- The fire and rescue service had been going through modernisation and whilst the results were generally good there was some variation
- Progress on equality and diversity has been slow and the proportion of female operational staff varies from 3 to 9 per cent – The 'canteen culture' is still prevalent
- There needs to be more progress made on efficiency through the flexible use of people, properties and pumps

- There is no business case for regionalisation but instead a range of options from mergers to sharing best practice

The study was due to be published on 4 December 2008, but was now expected towards the middle of December. The LGA would be issuing a press release to respond to the report.

The Chair reported that he would be launching the **LGA's Equality and Diversity Charter** for FRA members at a conference on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

The LGA had submitted its response to CLG's **National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2008-11** which highlighted the need for more in depth consideration of the issues and a need to allay members concerns on Firebuy. The response can be found on the fire pages of the LGA website.

The **LGA Annual Fire Conference** is taking place on 10 and 11 March 2009 at the Bristol Marriott hotel. The Fire Services Management Committee would be meeting in Bristol on the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup> March and more details would be provided in due course.

The LGA has also submitted its response to the **Audit Commission consultation on proposals for CAA**. As agreed at the last meeting, the fire specific comments were incorporated into the LGA's overall response, which can be found on the LGA website.

Cllr Mehboob Khan informed the FSMC that after discussions with the Audit Commission on **CAA** it is likely that in 2009 due to the time constraints, there will be a risk-based approach to the peer assessment aspect of CAA. This means that only some FRAs would have a peer assessment during this time. However all FRAs will have to provide evidence of operational performance to feed into the overall CAA assessment and it is recommended that the self-assessment tool kit which is currently being developed is used for this.

Cllr Walker commended the Chairman on the success of the recent Leadership Development weekend at the Fire Service College. The future of the Fire College was of continued importance to the Committee.

The Chairman informed the FSMC that the next Leadership Development weekend would be in February 2009 and encouraged members to attend.

### **Decision**

- The committee noted its approval to support the Fire Services memorial charitable trust.

### **Actions**

- The Audit Commission National Study report will be discussed at the January FSMC meeting
- CAA and sector-led improvement will be discussed at the January

## FSMC meeting

### **2. FiReControl update**

Richard How (CLG) informed the FSMC that he was retiring and introduced his successor Roger Hargreaves.

The new Minister, Sadiq Khan MP, was closely engaged with the FiReControl project and there was a desire to provide a clear steer on the development of the project. Richard How explained that the minister would shortly be making an announcement on the schedule for implementation of the project. Part two of the business case (the national case) would be published shortly. CLG had decided to publish part 2 as a stand alone document rather than as a revision to part 1. He acknowledged concerns about delays to the project and explained that any revised timetable would have to manage the risks. He also told the FSMC that CLG would meet the cost of any late supply due to the IT systems not being in place.

Roger Hargreaves (CLG) informed members that FRA Chairs, Chairs of the Regional Management Boards and CFOA would be written to following a written parliamentary statement.

The Chairman thanked Richard How for his work and welcomed Roger Hargreaves.

### **3. Equality and Diversity in the Fire and Rescue Service**

Emma Varley (LGA) introduced the paper on Equality and Diversity in the Fire and Rescue Service. The FSMC agreed a high level action plan for the LGA in March 2008 and the LGA has reiterated its commitment to providing strategic leadership on equality and diversity on many occasions. To make this a practical development, all members on FRAs were asked to demonstrate their personal commitment to equality and diversity in the fire and rescue service by signing up to the Equality and Diversity Charter as proposed in the paper.

Clive Harris (LGA) provided an update on the graduate recruitment scheme. Initial meetings had taken place and research carried out by the University of Manchester. The next meeting of the Programme Board scheduled for 24 November had been cancelled and a further meeting would be arranged in due course. Cllr Richard Hobbs had agreed to lead on this on behalf of the FSMC.

Members endorsed the Equality and Diversity Charter and noted that it would supplement well work already being undertaken in this area.

Emma Varley informed the FSMC that the Equality and Diversity Charter would be available towards the end of the meeting for members to sign.

### **Actions**

- All members to sign up to the Equality and Diversity Charter and encourage others to
- Clive Harris to provide an update on progress with graduate programme at a future meeting

### **Decisions**

- Cllr Joanne Spicer and Cllr Sharon Sullivan to act as Diversity Champions for the FSMC, with Cllr Tony Duggan leading overall for the committee.

#### **4. Role Maps (oral report)**

Des Prichard (CFOA) explained to the FSMC that he wanted to raise two issues with rolemaps - who owns the rolemaps and secondly how changes can be made. He said that updating the job descriptions of all firefighters is dependent on updating the relevant role maps and this has proven to be difficult as there is a lack of clarity as to where ownership of these documents lies. Des Prichard went on to suggest that one way of taking this forward would be to replace national role maps with local job descriptions that can be locally updated.

Cllr Anthony Duggan reported that a technical sub committee of the NJC has been established to make recommendations to the full NJC on whether/how NJC rolemaps should change.

It was noted that Local Government Employers (LGE) has advised Des Prichard that if he wants to talk to the national employers directly, he should first write with that request explaining why and LGE officers will pursue with members

Cllr Duggan agreed to raise the issues on role maps with LGE and members would be updated in due course.

#### **5. NJC update (oral report)**

Cllr Anthony Duggan reported on discussions at the most recent National Joint Council meeting that took place on 30 September. He reported that meetings of the joint working-party on Pay 2009 -2010 have commenced.

To inform the employer position in respect of the review of middle manager terms and conditions, it was noted that the Secretariat is working with both the Employers' Advisory Forum and with a wider group of fire service HR professionals.

#### **6. Note of previous meeting**

The note was agreed as a true record.

#### **7. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee will take place on **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at 11am at Local Government House.**