

9 March 2009

Role of the Lead Advisor to the Fire Services Management Committee

Summary

1. This paper informs members of the appointment of Steve McGuirk, CFO Cheshire as the LGA's Principal Fire Adviser, until 31 December 2009. The paper sets out the role of the Principal Fire Adviser. Members are asked to consider and agree a proposed work programme for the Principal Adviser based on that of the FSMC.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. To note the appointment and role of the Principal Fire Adviser
2. To agree the proposed work programme for the Principal Adviser

Action

LGA officers and Principal Fire Adviser to action as necessary

Contact Officer: Emma Varley
Phone No: 020 7664 3237
Email: emma.varley@lga.gov.uk

Background

1. Following the departure of Sir Ken Knight as the LGA's Principal Fire Adviser at the end of 2007, in early 2008 the FSMC discussed the process for appointing a successor. It was agreed that the lead members of the FSMC would informally seek nominations and reach a consensus on the most appropriate candidate.
2. Following extensive discussions, the lead members of the FSMC agreed to appoint Steve McGuirk, CFO Cheshire as the LGA's Principal Fire Adviser with immediate effect. The term of the appointment runs until 31 December 2009. The appointment of the Principal Adviser will be reviewed by the FSMC in November 2009.

Role

3. The purpose of Advisers is to give the LGA in general, and in this case the Fire Services Management Committee and the Fire Forum in particular, a source of specialist expertise to take into account in making policy and other key decisions. All advisers to the LGA supplement the advice and support given by LGA officers and act in an honorary capacity. Given the specialist and crucial nature of the Fire and Rescue Service, it is important that members can have their own source of dependable and unfettered advice to support the help received from professional associations and Fire and Rescue Authorities generally.
4. The specific role of the Principal Fire Adviser is to provide high level strategic and management advice to the LGA and where appropriate the employers' side of NJCs. Steve McGuirk has also been appointed as one of the LGA's advisers on the Advisory Forum.
5. The primary aspect of the role of Principal Fire Adviser is to provide advice which members and officers of the Association can take into account when making policy and other key decisions. Specifically, the Principal Adviser is expected to attend every Fire Services Management Committee meeting and will have a standing invitation to Fire Forum meetings.
6. It is important that the Principal Adviser role is clearly defined so that members and officers of the Association, and the Principal Adviser all have a clear understand of the boundaries of the respective roles. This means that the Principal Adviser must operate within existing LGA structures and frameworks, act impartially when carrying out the role and ensure that all advice given must be in the best interests of the LGA.
7. For example, the Principal Adviser may be asked to attend particular meetings on behalf of the LGA or represent the Association on an occasional basis if

requested by the LGA but should not speak on behalf of the LGA without consulting officers.

8. There are two main aspects to the role. The first is to provide advice to members and officers of the Association on a commission basis. This means responding to requests from members and officers for advice on particular matters. The second is to complete work on behalf of the Association as set out in an agreed work programme. The work programme for the Principal Adviser should flow from the FSMC's work programme for 2008/09, focusing on the 3 key priorities. Members are asked to agree to the proposed work programme below.

Proposed Principal Adviser work programme

A. Spending review submission

- Attend meetings of the officer level fire expenditure group
- Provide advice and input into the drafting process as required by the convener (Bill Wilkinson)
- Support the preparation of a compelling case in the submission by working with FRAs to gather evidence to in the form of good practice examples and case studies

B. CAA and sector led improvement

- Work with officers to develop mechanisms to support FRAs improve performance and efficiency in light of Audit Commission National Study *Rising to the Challenge Improving fire service efficiency*
- Work with FRAs to develop good practice examples of the role FRAs play in achieving a broad range of local partnership priorities in LAAs
- Work with LGA officers on the policy development of sector led improvement processes

C. Equality and Diversity

- Facilitate the network of member equality and diversity champions and develop a plan of action for that network
- Work with LGA officers on the production of the one year on report for publication at a conference in November 2009

Financial Implications

9. All proposals for LGA work are to be met from existing LGA budget and resources.

Implications for Wales

10. There are no implications for Wales.

Contact Officer: Emma Varley
Phone No: 020 7664 3237
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