

LGA's agreed position on Flood Rescue

The Pitt Report made the following recommendation on flood rescue:

Pitt Recommendation 39: 'The Government should urgently put in place a fully funded national capability for flood rescue, with Fire and Rescue Authorities playing a leading role, underpinned, as necessary, by a statutory duty.'

The LGA's detailed position on Flood Rescue can be summarised as follows:

The issue of the fire and rescue service response to a major flooding incident is much broader than whether it would be best achieved by the imposition of a statutory duty. The key outcome that the LGA wants to achieve is the provision of a centrally and fully-funded, safe, national, inter-operable response to widespread flooding.

We believe that local government should be empowered to respond, but should not have the duty to respond imposed by central government. There needs to be a local determination of flooding priorities; a one-size fits all approach will not work.

Existing legislation and frameworks are sufficient to allow Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) to meet the challenge of any future major flooding event. However there needs to be a sufficient level of national funding to ensure FRSs can respond to a major flooding event in an effective and timely manner - ensuring this happens is the focus for the LGA.

It is unclear whether every FRA would have to meet a broad set of responsibilities under a statutory duty. If this is the case it will provide an unnecessary burden on some and will also result in the need for a massive training and development programme which could take years to achieve. The avoidance of duplication is necessary to ensure a co-ordinated strategic response. And of course, there is no guarantee that a statutory duty will result in sufficient additional funding being made available to FRAs.

It is also worth noting that the Pitt Report did not actually explicitly recommend a statutory duty - rather it says 'as necessary' - we don't believe it is necessary because the same outcomes can be achieved through other means i.e. the fully funded national capability.

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