

Strategic Review of the Fire and Rescue Service

Summary

This report gives members an outline of the proposed strategic review of the fire and rescue service and asks for views on the key short, medium and long term issues the LGA should put forward to the Minister and CLG.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Discuss the issues at paragraph 5 and agree the key points to be put forward to the Minister and CLG.

Action

As determined by Members.

Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn
Phone No: 020 7664 3129
Email: trish.oflynn@local.gov.uk

Strategic Review of the Fire and Rescue Service

Background

1. In his speech to the Fire Conference in Harrogate on 29 June, the Fire Minister, Bob Neill MP, proposed a strategic review to consider a number of aspects of how the Fire and Rescue Service may need to evolve over the coming years.
2. The scope and terms of reference for the review are currently under development. Once a steer has been received CLG will be seeking to engage rapidly with the sector to arrive at an agreed view of the scope and the specific workstreams which should be pursued.
3. It is anticipated that the review will look at a range of short, medium and long-term issues in a wide range of areas including, amongst others:
 - The current role and remit of the FRS and possible future delivery models;
 - The respective roles of central and local partners and how the sector can support and drive the localism agenda;
 - Costs of the Service and opportunities to further improve efficiency and value for money.
4. The Minister has been clear that he wants the review to be conducted as a collaborative effort, with the sector playing a full part in identifying key issues, developing options and agreeing possible solutions. He is planning to commence the review with a workshop with sector partners before Recess on 29 July.
5. Members' views are sought in the following areas:
 - a) key areas the review should cover, this might include:
 - identification of programmes to be discontinued and red tape to be cut;
 - potential for structural change between FRAs and with local authorities and other emergency services, and changes to political governance;
 - workforce, including sustainability of the RDS;
 - funding, income generation and the economic cost of fire;
 - decentralisation, national functions and lead authorities;
 - future proofing (new threats, demographics, wider community outcomes).
 - b) how the FSMC and the wider sector would like to be involved: the LG Group would expect to be at the heart of the review with representatives on all workstreams. We would be happy to work alongside other stakeholders.

- c) what can the LG Group offer to the review – we would be willing to lead some of the workstreams, provide opportunities for FRAs to be involved and integrate our thinking with the wider LG Group offer to Government.

Financial Implications

- 6. None identified

Implications for Wales

- 7. None identified as the review only affects English FRAs.

Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn
Phone No: 020 7664 3129
Email: trish.oflynn@lga.gov.uk