

# Fire Services Management Committee

## Agenda

Monday 7 March 2011  
4.00pm

Council Chamber  
Gateshead Old Town Hall  
West Street  
Gateshead  
NE8 1HE

**To:** Members of the Fire Services Management Committee  
**cc:** Named officers for briefing purposes



**Fire Services Management Committee**

7 March 2011

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There will be a meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee **at 4.00pm on Monday 7 March 2011 at Gateshead Old Town Hall, West Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HE.**

Political Group meetings will take place within the Old Town Hall at 3.00pm.

**Attendance Sheet**

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

**Apologies**

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

**Labour:** Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: [aicha.less@local.gov.uk](mailto:aicha.less@local.gov.uk)  
**Conservative:** Angela Page: 020 7664 3264 email: [angela.page@local.gov.uk](mailto:angela.page@local.gov.uk)  
**Liberal Democrat:** Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: [evelyn.mark@local.gov.uk](mailto:evelyn.mark@local.gov.uk)  
**Independent:** Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: [independent.group@local.gov.uk](mailto:independent.group@local.gov.uk)

**Location**

***A map showing the location of Gateshead Old Town Hall is printed on the back cover.***

**LGA Contact**

Paul Johnston (Tel: 020 7664 3031, email: [paul.johnston@local.gov.uk](mailto:paul.johnston@local.gov.uk) )

**Carers' Allowance:** As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £5.73 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. Children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.



## Fire Services Management Committee - Membership 2010/11

Councillor	Authority
<b>Conservative (7)</b>	
Brian Coleman <b>[Chairman]</b>	London FEPA / Barnet LB
Richard Hobbs	Warwickshire CC/RMB
Kay Hammond	Surrey CC
Maurice Heaster OBE	London FEPA
John Bell	Greater Manchester FRA
Ann Holland	Essex FRS
David Topping	Cheshire FA
<b>Substitutes:</b>	
Tony Arbour	LFEPa
Paul Bryant	Royal Berkshire FRA
<b>Labour (4)</b>	
Fred Walker <b>[Vice Chair]</b>	Greater Manchester FRA
Brenda Forster	Cleveland FA
Sian Timoney	Bedfordshire & Luton FRA
John Joyce	Cheshire FA
<b>Substitutes:</b>	
Navin Shah	London FEPA
Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside FRA
<b>Liberal Democrat (3)</b>	
Paul Shannon <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	Greater Manchester FRA
Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire FRS
Roger Price	Hampshire FRA
<b>Independent (1)</b>	
Cllr Christopher Newbury <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	Wiltshire Fire Authority
<b>Substitute</b>	
TBA	

**15 Member Steering Committee**

## LG Group Fire Services Management Committee Attendance 2010 - 2011

Councillors	10.09.10	15.11.10	7.03.11	16.05.11	18.07.11
<b>Conservative Group</b>					
Brian Coleman <b>[Chairman]</b>	YES	YES			
Richard Hobbs	YES	YES			
Kay Hammond	YES	YES			
Maurice Heaster OBE	YES	YES			
John Bell	YES	YES			
Ann Holland	YES	YES			
David Topping	YES	YES			
<b>Labour Group</b>					
Fred Walker <b>[Vice Chair]</b>	YES	YES			
Brenda Forster	NO	YES			
Sian Timoney	YES	YES			
John Joyce	YES	YES			
<b>Lib Dem Group</b>					
Cllr Paul Shannon <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	YES	YES			
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	YES	YES			
Cllr Roger Price	YES	YES			
<b>Independent</b>					
Cllr Christopher Newbury <b>[Deputy Chair]</b>	YES	NO			
<b>Substitutes</b>					
Cllr Paul Bryant	YES (observer)				

## Agenda

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### **LG Group Fire Services Management Committee**

Monday 7 March 2011

4.00pm

Gateshead Old Town Hall, West Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HE

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#### **For discussion**

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A paper will be available for Members at the Committee meeting.

#### **For information**

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**Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 16 May 2011, 11.00, Local Government House





**Item 1**

**LG Group response to CLG on the future of fire and rescue control centre services in England**

**Summary**

This report summarises the LG Group's draft response to the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on the future of fire and rescue control centres post-FiReControl.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to agree the content of the draft consultation response.

**Action**

Officers to include member comments from both the FSMC and the Chairs' and Chiefs' meeting on 9 March in the revised draft and to circulate this to Lead Members for sign off.

Contact Officer: Clive Harris  
Phone No: 020 7664 3207  
Email: [clive.harris@local.gov.uk](mailto:clive.harris@local.gov.uk)



**Item 1**

**LG Group response to CLG the future of fire and rescue control centre services in England**

**Background**

1. Following the Government's announcement in December that the FiReControl project was being halted, the Department for Communities and Local Government launched a consultation on the future of fire and rescue control centres in England on 13 January.
2. To inform the LG Group's response to this consultation, a special meeting was convened at London Fire Brigade Headquarters on 24 January to which the Chairman and Chief of each of the 46 English Fire and Rescue Authorities were invited.

**Draft submission: general themes**

3. The LG Group welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on the future of fire and rescue control centre services in England.
4. The Group is pleased with the Government's commitment to not impose a solution on Fire and Rescue Authorities and with the proposed discussions with all FRAs on the future use of the control centre buildings. We see the Government's decision as being a positive opportunity for the fire and rescue sector to take responsibility for its own resilience options going forward.
5. Whilst accepting that the Government is seeking to achieve a balance between operational need, fairness and value for the tax payer, the LG Group urges the Government to clarify the amount of central funding that will be made available for upgrading control services as soon as possible to help FRAs make an informed decision about which model they may wish to adopt.
6. Regarding the prioritisation of funding, the LG Group agrees with the Government that completing the installation of Firelink must be the top priority ahead of funding restructuring costs to support shared control services, funding technical enhancements to improve resilience or funding accommodation or control room infrastructure costs arising out of delays in the project.
7. A diverse range of options are being considered by Fire and Rescue Authorities across the country, ranging from continuation or cooperation of all authorities within a region, collaboration of groups of authorities within regions, to partnerships with other emergency services. The Government must allow FRAs to decide on the solution that best serves their communities.

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8. The LG Group urges Government to recognise that Fire and Rescue Authorities are at different stages of considering their options. Some have already confirmed a preferred option and entered provisional agreements, whilst others are still considering a number of options. On this basis a centrally driven timetable must not be imposed; FRAs need to have sufficient time to ensure they make correct, well-informed decisions that benefit the communities that they serve.
9. Similarly, we urge Government to note that change will proceed at different paces in different areas determined by the current resilience of control arrangements (in some areas control systems have been recently updated and will not need reviewing for a number of years, whilst in others, systems require more immediate upgrading).
10. Some Fire and Rescue Authorities have a strong interest in taking over use of the Regional Control Centre (RCC) buildings, but this interest is not replicated across the country. Some areas had expressed a clear interest in taking on the RCC, subject to CLG agreeing suitable terms as has already happened in London. In other areas, the RCCs would not meet local needs and even if let on beneficial financial terms would not be the most efficient means for providing control services. The LG Group urges the Government to engage in discussion with FRAs on the future of Regional Control Centres as a matter of urgency to ensure that the most cost-effective solutions can be found for all parties.
11. Where continuation of regional working and use of the RCCs is being considered, Fire and Rescue Authorities are already putting arrangements in place that replace Regional Management Boards. Operational and governance arrangements for these should be determined at local level, without Government direction.

**Possible models**

12. The LG group would like to bring to the Government's attention examples of the different options that are currently being considered:
13. In one area, a provisional agreement had been reached to continue working with the regional control, subject to safeguards. Five control centres would be amalgamated into one, which, in a period of funding cuts, would realise savings. The Regional Management Board (RMB) is to be discontinued, but a replacement body with a more strictly defined membership will continue to meet.
14. Authorities within another region said there is also interest in collaboration among all four authorities in the region. Priorities for services include stabilising the systems, and addressing considerable deficits through closer partnership

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working with other services such as the Police. The Regional Management Board is to be replaced with a more informal meeting between Chiefs and Chairs

15. Other FRAs are considering a range of options, including partnership and collaboration with individual neighbouring services or in larger clusters and potential cooperation with non-fire services, including independent tri-service control buildings.

**Consultation questions**

**Section 3 – Lessons from FiReControl**

**Q1 Do you agree with the assessment of FiReControl set out in Section 3? What lessons do you think we can learn from FiReControl – both positive and negative?**

16. The LG Group broadly agrees with the assessment of FiReControl set out in section 3 of the consultation. While all FRAs agree that there is a need to increase resilience in the control system, we have consistently argued that a centrally-dictated, one size fits all model was not the appropriate way of achieving this.
17. Unrealistic timeframes and deadlines were set on the project which were consistently moved or not met, undermining confidence in the project as a whole and Fire and Rescue Services as a whole were not engaged in any meaningful way at the start of the project to develop specifications and engage suppliers. The CLG Select Committee report published in April 2010 set out an accurate and detailed summary of problems the project suffered.
18. As is stated in the consultation, many Fire and Rescue Authorities were fundamentally opposed to the regional lines along which the project had been determined. A number of FRAs found the regional barriers to be counter-productive in that they could no longer work with FRAs with which they had previously enjoyed positive working arrangements. The Group is therefore pleased that the Government has removed this artificial regional approach which created additional bureaucracy and undermined existing relationships on the ground.
19. The LG Group notes that the Government will no longer pursue IT projects of this scale in the public sector. In any project of this size the Government must consult closely with local government to ensure the intended outcomes are realistic and to ensure that there is sufficient buy-in into the project.

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20. On the plus side, Fire and Rescue Authorities are both passionate and knowledgeable about fire and rescue and the communities that they serve. The LG Group urges the Government to utilise this expertise in developing projects of a similar scale in future.

**Section 4 – Defining the policy objectives**

**Q2. Are resilience, enhanced technology and efficiency still as important today as they were when the FiReControl project was initiated? If not what has changed?**

21. The LG Group believes that resilience, enhanced technology and efficiency are even more important now than when FiReControl was initiated. Fire and Rescue Authorities are facing reductions in their budgets, meaning efficient systems and ways of working are essential to making savings. However resilience can be achieved through other methods and as the document notes, enhanced technology, and more secure buildings can play an important role in both efficient ways of working and ensuring systems are as flexible and robust as possible.

**Q3. Which aspects of resilience described in Section 4 are most important for control services? Are there other aspects which are not mentioned here?**

22. Fire controls must be prepared for every eventuality, whilst accepting that some incidents, serious flooding for example, are more likely to occur in some areas. However, a national network of control centres is not the only way to achieve better resilience to a high level of calls. Individual fire controls are already brokering mutual arrangements to ensure they can respond both to national threats and to threats that relate to specific features and sites within their areas.

**Q4. Do you think that there is a role for central government in supporting technical enhancements in fire and rescue control rooms – and, if so, what should this be?**

23. There is a role for Government in ensuring that Fire and Rescue Authorities have resources and support to deal with issues related to national resilience. This is purely a strategic and enabling role, and not a day to day managerial role.

**Q5. Do you think that there is a role for central government in helping fire and rescue authorities to achieve greater efficiencies in the delivery of control services – and, if so, what should this be?**

24. Fire and Rescue Authorities must be given the freedom to identify where efficiencies can be made with regards to the delivery of control services. As we

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have seen with the FiReControl project, a centrally dictated, one size fits all approach will not work. Instead the sector must be self-supporting in terms of identifying and circulating good practice as well providing practical support to individual FRAs should they need it.

**Section 5 – Central government support**

**Q6. Which of the approaches (or combination of approaches) for the delivery of control services set out in Section 5 would provide the best outcome for the fire and rescue community and the public? Please give reasons for your choice.**

25. The LG Group believes that a common set of principles, agreed at the national level by Fire and Rescue Authorities and other stakeholders, would provide the best outcome for the fire and rescue community and the public.

**Section 6 – Funding choices**

**Q7. Do you agree that the right funding priorities are set out in Section 6 and do you have any comments on the order in which these are presented?**

27. The LG Group agrees with the funding priorities as set out in Section 6 of the consultation document.

**Q8 Which of the technical options for Firelink (see Annex C) would best meet fire and rescue service needs? Please give reasons for your choice.**

28. To use the responses of FRAs to answer this question.

**Conclusions and next steps**

29. Officers will amend the consultation response to further reflect the comments made by Members both at this meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee and the Chairs' and Chiefs' breakfast meeting on the morning of 9 March at the LG Group Fire Conference.

**Financial Implications**

30. Discussed in the main body of this report.

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**Item 2**

## **Emerging Terrorist Threats**

### **For discussion**

### **Summary**

This item will discuss activity taken to address new terrorist threats, particularly a terrorist attack involving the use of firearms, explosions and fires in a way designed to inflict large numbers of casualties. Along with the other emergency services, the fire and rescue service needs to be prepared to play a key role in dealing with such attacks.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are invited to note work undertaken in the London Fire Brigade and plans for national rollout.

### **Action**

The Commissioner and LGA officers to take action as agreed via the CLG New Threats Programme Board.

**Contact officer:**

Helen Murray

**Position:**

Programme Director, LGA

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020 7664 3266

**E-mail:**

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**Item 3**

**The future of national functions**

**Summary**

This report updates Members on developments since their last meeting and provides a summary of the next steps.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to

1. Receive an update;
2. Agree the LG Group and CFOA continue to work together to discuss individual functions at paragraph 6.

**Action**

As determined by Members.

Contact Officer: Helen Murray  
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**Item 3**

## **The future of national functions**

### **Background**

1. In September, Members agreed that the LG Group and CFOA should work together to make a joint offer to the Department for Communities and Local Government to take over the following specific group of national functions:
  - 1.1 National procurement
  - 1.2 Tackling underperformance
  - 1.3 Operational guidance
  - 1.4 National resilience assurance
  - 1.5 IRMP guidance
  - 1.6 Workforce development
  - 1.7 National fire safety campaign
  - 1.8 Fire research
  - 1.9 Equality and Diversity
  - 1.10 European Union and standards
  
- 2.. Following the Chairman's positive meeting with the Minister where he signalled his agreement to this approach, officers have been pursuing the detail of these arrangements, and seeking to understand more clearly the role of CLG in these policy areas. A further update was provided at the Fire Commission meeting in February. CLG have already scaled back activity in many of these areas and propose no further activity or funding for most of these, and therefore there is no difficulty in formalising these. In matters of national resilience and interoperability, as well as assurance to the Minister on significant operational events, CLG do see a continuing involvement for themselves and are keen to discuss a commissioning relationship with the LG Group/CFOA.

### **Current context**

3. For the two areas of Operational Guidance and Workforce Development, greater clarity around the Department's expectations and requirements is still required. The conclusions of the LG Group project group commissioned by the Fire Commission to look at the Fire Service College will feed in to this.
  
4. Although we have not yet received confirmation, we believe we have reached agreement with the Department in the following areas:
  - 4.1 National Procurement – beyond the transition of the ongoing framework contracts, central government will not seek to sponsor or fund any sector-led activity;

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- 4.2 Tackling underperformance (and improvement support) – no Whitehall funding or resources for specific FRS assessment or support activity. FRAs will have access to the LG Group’s framework for self regulation and improvement involving peer reviews, tools for self assessment and benchmarking, dissemination of good practice, and brokering support where it is required. We do need to develop an early warning system and understand when and how Ministerial intervention might be deployed as a last resort;
- 4.3 National Resilience Assurance – CLG will continue to fund the current arrangements to support assurance of the delivery of capabilities under New Dimensions for the time being. In time, it will want to consider longer term funding models, but agree that current arrangements are a good model of a sector led approach;
- 4.4 IRMP Guidance – This is a matter for FRAs both individually and collectively and there is no role for CLG. In light of this, we need clarification that the annual IRMP returns will now cease;
- 4.5 National Fire Safety campaign – CLG intends to continue running these campaigns until the end of the existing contract, after which they will cease for the foreseeable future. The sector will be unable to run national campaigns, but we anticipate that the “fire kills” brand and material will be made available to FRAs for locally co-ordinated campaigns;
- 4.6 Fire research – CLG activity in this area is significantly reduced but closer sector involvement in the framing of this research will be vital;
- 4.7 Equality and Diversity – CLG will no longer undertake practical activity or provide funding in this area. Ownership should remain with individual FRAs and the sector as a whole and the LG Group/CFOA's work in this area is already well established;
- 4.8 European Union and Standards – Government will continue to represent the Country’s best interests at the European level. The LG Group / CFOA intend to have a role in monitoring and advocating on behalf of the sector in Europe, so there will be an ongoing need for discussion. Work on the implications of the Working Time Directive is already well advanced.

**Conclusions and next steps**

5. Discussions so far between the LG Group, CFOA and CLG have focused on the need for a clearer, more open and equitable relationship between the sector and the government. Although this principle is well accepted, translating this to practical action is proving more challenging. We believe the best way to demonstrate our commitment and ability to lead this work is to swiftly develop an impressive programme of work which will bring about changes the sector wants to see.

**Financial Implications**

6. Most of these activities are currently unfunded by Government so activity within the LG Group/CFOA will depend entirely on LG Group/CFOA resources.

**Item 3**

Within the LG Group, proposed Programme Board budgets are to be discussed at the LG Group Executive in March. Members have expressed concern over the scale of these activities given the current organisational changes within the LG Group. However, managerially, officers judge that much of this is 'light touch' activity and can therefore be accommodated within our existing work programme.

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**Item 5**

**Industrial relations update**

**Purpose of report**

For noting.

**Summary**

This report outlines developing industrial relations issues affecting the Fire and Rescue Service.

**Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the report.

**Action**

Officers to progress as appropriate.

**Contact officer:** Gill Gittins  
**Position:** Principal Negotiating Officer, LG Employers  
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**E-mail:** [gill.gittins@local.gov.uk](mailto:gill.gittins@local.gov.uk)



**Item 5**

**Industrial relations update**

**Flexibility to apply enhanced redundancy terms to NJC for LAFRS employees**

1. Members will be aware of the survey conducted by the National Employers to ascertain whether or not authorities would like us to explore the possibility of putting in place an express statutory right, which would allow fire authorities the flexibility to apply enhanced redundancy terms (over and above the statutory requirements) should an authority wish to do so as is the case with local authority staff and fire control staff (who are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme). At present authorities do not have this flexibility for e.g. firefighters. Further detail on the background was contained in the survey. The overwhelming majority of authorities who responded indicated that this is something they would be interested in and the National Employers has asked the Secretariat to explore this further as part of the National Employers' short term priorities.

**Future priorities**

2. The National Employers constantly review priorities in the context of what meets the needs of fire authorities and the best strategy for achievement of those priorities. Across the public sector employers are looking at the whole employment package and the fire service is no exception. The exceptionally difficult current circumstances for authorities will be of paramount importance in those considerations and how to take matters forward. A working group of HR and finance advisers from across the spectrum of FRAs, supported by an LG Group researcher, has been set up to progress this work and a report will be presented to members of the Employers' Side of the NJC for LAFRS when it next meets.

**Royal Wedding**

3. Members will be aware that the Employees' Side of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services has entered a claim for 29 April to be treated as a public holiday in the same manner as Christmas Day, for example, in terms of enhanced pay and time off in lieu as appropriate. Unlike Green Book employees there is no automatic entitlement for this to happen for Grey Book employees, hence the claim.
4. Members of the Employers' Side considered the claim and responded that, whilst on this occasion the Employers' Side would be prepared to maintain enhanced payments for those required to work on that day, as is the case for other nationally recognised public holidays, time off in lieu would not be

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appropriate in any circumstances. The provision of time off in lieu would be costly in terms of overtime payments to staff brought in to cover and the administration involved. Authorities are aware of both the claim and the Employers' response. To date, there has been no further contact from the Employees' Side on this matter. If agreement is not reached shortly then FRAs will need to make their own decisions on this matter.

### **Part-Time Workers**

5. There are approximately 15,000 cases in the Employment Tribunal system brought across all FRAs with retained duty system employees, supported by the FBU (12,500 approx) and RFU (2,500 approx). Test cases have been progressed through the legal system up to the House of Lords, which asked the original Tribunal to reconsider its judgement. At that point the original Tribunal decided in favour of the FBU (which supports the test cases) and asked the parties to negotiate an outcome if at all possible given the complexity of the matters under consideration. LG Employers has represented FRAs in those negotiations as far as the terms and conditions aspect is concerned. Formal agreement is imminent. The pensions' aspect (access to the FPS) is a matter for CLG and the respective unions.

### **Reducing Workforce Costs**

6. Separate to the NJC, LG Employers has already produced a publication for local authorities covering the principles of reducing workforce costs and providing a number of case studies. Work is currently underway to create a version specific to the fire service which recognises matters such as reducing crewing levels, the introduction of new shift systems, the differing trade union approach to industrial relations and how to handle it, overcoming obstacles (which can sometimes just be perceived rather than real) etc. Again, we are working with fire service HR and finance specialists from across the spectrum of FRAs. We are conscious that this piece of work will now need to be mindful of any potential for repetition and to ensure that we build upon his work delving further in to the 'how'.

### **Industrial relations**

7. Relations are generally good across FRAs at present, although given the often volatile nature of industrial relations in the fire service, this can change rapidly. The Employers' Secretariat is assisting a number of FRAs in an informal capacity with progressing change at local level. In recent weeks we have also handled one formal Joint Secretaries conciliation. We have been involved in Technical Advisory Panel and Resolution Advisory Panel meetings with the

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outcome from each finding favour with both the management and union representatives in each respective FRS.

8. Members will however be aware that there is a general feeling of unrest developing within the public sector as a whole and trade unions in that sector may decide upon coordinated action of some sort. Whilst this does not appear to be an immediate threat to industrial relations in the fire service, we do nonetheless need to be aware of this as the year progresses and the potential increases. June is likely to be a flashpoint given the usual pay settlement date is in June and announcements relating to any increase in pension contributions are likely to be made at that time. This will follow on from any other pensions change announcements that may be contained in the final Hutton Report due to be released before then in time for the Budget 2011. Pensions change has historically been a difficult issue in the fire service. It does not fall within the remit of the NJC for LAFRS. Whilst technically a national strike on the matter is not possible, in reality 57 (if UK-wide) local disputes with individual FRA employers can easily be coordinated in the post-Summer period.



## Note of decisions taken and actions required

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<b>Title:</b>	LG Group Fire Services Management Committee
<b>Date and time:</b>	Monday 15 November 2010, 11.00
<b>Venue:</b>	Rathbone Rooms 1 & 2, Local Government House

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### Attendance

Position	Councillor	Organisation
Chairman	Cllr Brian Coleman	Barnet LB / LFEPA
Vice chair	Cllr Fred Walker	Greater Manchester FRA
Deputy chair	Cllr Paul Shannon	Greater Manchester FRA
Members	Cllr Richard Hobbs	Warwickshire CC
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey CC
	Cllr Maurice Heaster	Wandsworth LB / LFEPA
	Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester FRA
	Cllr Ann Holland	Essex FRS
	Cllr David Topping	Cheshire FA
	Cllr Brenda Forster	Cleveland FA
	Cllr Sian Timoney	Bedfordshire & Luton FRA
	Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire FA
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire CC
	Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire FRA
In attendance	Cllr Paul Bryant (as observer)	Royal Berkshire FRS
Apologies	Cllr Christopher Newbury (Deputy Chair)	Wiltshire FRA

Officers: Commissioner Ron Dobson (LFEPA); Dave Webb (Leicestershire FRS); Helen Murray, Caroline Green, Clive Harris, Gill Gittins, Sarah Messenger, Caroline Bosdet, Paul Johnston (LG Group).

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p><b>Spending Review – Impact on Fire and Rescue Service</b></p> <p>Members said that the outcome of the Spending Review was tough for the Fire and Rescue Service, but that the back-loading of funding reductions, and the additional scope for local flexibility, would allow individual fire and rescue services more time to shape the future of service provision.</p> <p>Members said that there was a role for the Local Government Group in promulgating best practice among Fire and Rescue Services in identifying and realising savings. This best practice should be prepared in time for the LG Group Annual Fire Conference in March 2011.</p> <p>Members said that there were a number of areas that could assist FRAs achieve reductions in spending, including increased use of charging and trading, increased flexibility for staffing and improved sickness management.</p> <p>The Chairman suggested that Conference workshops should focus on the possible areas of savings identified within the report.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p><i>Members noted the report, agreed that the LG Group should work on producing best practice in how Fire and Rescue Services achieving reductions in spending and agreed that the Annual Fire Conference in 2011 host workshops on reducing spending.</i></p>	
	<p>Officers to work on collating best practice amongst Fire and Rescue Authorities in realising savings.</p>	<p><b>LG Group officers</b></p>
	<p>Officers to identify Member and officer leads for each of the savings workstrands.</p>	<p><b>LG Group officers</b></p>
	<p>Officers to arrange workshops for the Fire and Rescue Conference to look at identifiable savings.</p>	<p><b>Clive Harris / Jane Marcroft</b></p>



## **2 Fire Futures**

Members expressed concern with how Fire Futures had progressed to date, but emphasised the need for the LG Group to continue to engage with the project.

Members suggested that the seven issues set out in the Minister's letter about the Comprehensive Spending Review should guide further work. However, there were a number of issues which had emerged from the project, which would be of interest to the sector and warranted further work. Members agreed that the key points to make to the Minister should be: the importance of the General Power of Competence for all FRAs; an exploration of differential precepting and the role this could play in facilitating merger of FRAs; and a restatement of the LG Group / CFOA position on national functions.

The Chairman said that there were a number of positive points to have emerged to date from the Fire Futures project, but that it was for FRAs to determine their own future strategic direction.

### ***Decision***

*Members noted the report and agreed that the LG Group respond to CLG stating that the seven points outlined in item 1 of the agenda (paragraph 5) should guide future work areas.*

### **Action**

Officers to draft the Fire Services Management Committee's response to Government on Fire Futures, and to clear the submission with the Committee's Lead Members.

**Helen Murray**

## **3 FiReControl**

The Committee received an update from Roger Hargreaves, Department for Communities and Local Government.

Roger informed Members that there were ongoing contractual problems with the FiReControl project. Roger said that it was of the utmost importance to Government that both Fire and Rescue Services and the taxpayer had clarity over the future of the project, and that a ministerial decision on the future of the project was expected very shortly.

Members said that some Fire and Rescue Authorities had already begun to plan for contingency arrangements in the event of FiReControl not being pursued, and advised FRAs who had not already started contingency planning to do so. Members said that Authorities should have the greatest possible local flexibility to pursue other resilience options that were appropriate for their areas.

***Decision***

Members agreed that the Committee should not currently revise its position on FiReControl and that FiReControl be raised as an item for the January Committee agenda.

Members agreed that the Chairman write to CLG to emphasise the need for clarity on future resilience options.

**Action**

Officers to draft correspondence to CLG on behalf of the Chairman concerning the future of FiReControl.

**Clive Harris**

**4 Pensions – input to Independent Public Services Pensions Commission**

Cllr Walker outlined the most recent proposals for Firefighters' Pensions on both the old and new scheme.

The Chairman said that a FSMC position would need to be shortly established to contribute to the LG Group submission to the Independent Public Services Pensions Commission.

***Decision***

*Members agreed that a cross-party group, consisting of Cllr Heaster, Cllr Walker and Cllr Shannon and LG Group officers be formed to formulate a FSMC position to contribute to the wider LG Group submission to the Independent Public Services Pensions Commission.*

**Action**

Officers to arrange a meeting date for the cross-party group.

**Paul Johnston**

Officers to draft the FSMC contribution to the LG Group

**LG Group**

submission to the Independent Public Services Pensions Commission, based on the discussions of the cross-party group. **officers**

**5 Retained Duty System update**

Cllr Hammond said that there was a seminar on the Retained Duty System on 23 November, and encouraged Committee Members to attend.

**6 Industrial relations update**

None.

**7 Notes of the last meeting**

Members agreed the note of the last meeting as a correct record.

**Date of next meeting:** Monday 24 January 2011, 11.00, Local Government House



Destination: Newcastle International Airport

- Amsterdam: 1hr 15 mins
- Athens: 4hrs 30 mins
- Belfast: 1hr 10 mins
- Bergen: 1hr 10 mins
- Brussels: 1hr 40 mins
- Dublin: 1hr 25 mins
- Gerona: 2hrs 30 mins
- Jersey: 1hr 25 mins
- Naples: 3hrs
- Oslo: 1hr 45 mins
- Paris: 2hrs 10 mins
- Salzburg: 1hr 40 mins



Gateshead

## Directions

to Gateshead Civic Centre and Town Centre

### By road - from the south

- Take A1 north, exit at A184 Gateshead Town Centre
- Continue on A184 until junction with Redheugh Bridge
- Go straight on at the roundabout, following A184 (Askew Road)
- Turn right at next roundabout (West Central Route)
- Straight on at next roundabout (Prince Consort Road)
- Turn left at next roundabout and left again into Gateshead Civic Centre car park

### By road - from the north

- Take A1 south past the MetroCentre, leaving at A184 signposted Gateshead town centre
- Then, follow directions as for road from the South (above)

### From Newcastle Airport

- Leave airport and join A696 heading towards Newcastle
- Join A1 south signed for Gateshead
- Then, follow directions as for road from the north (above)

### From central station and the Metro

- Trains arrive at Newcastle Central Station
- Take the Metro (inside station) to Gateshead (one stop)
- From the Metro station walk up West Street, then turn right into Regent Street and cross over to the Civic Centre

Rail enquiries: 08457 48 49 50 • Metro enquiries: 0870 608 2 608

### By bus

- Regular buses from Newcastle and around the region into Gateshead Interchange bus station in the town centre

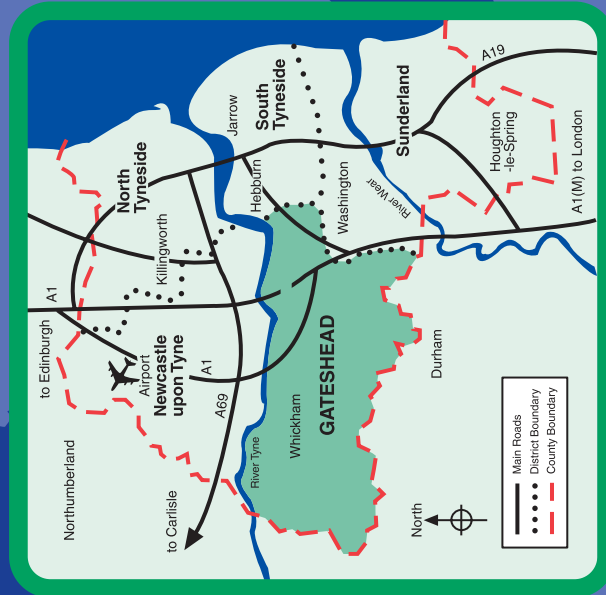
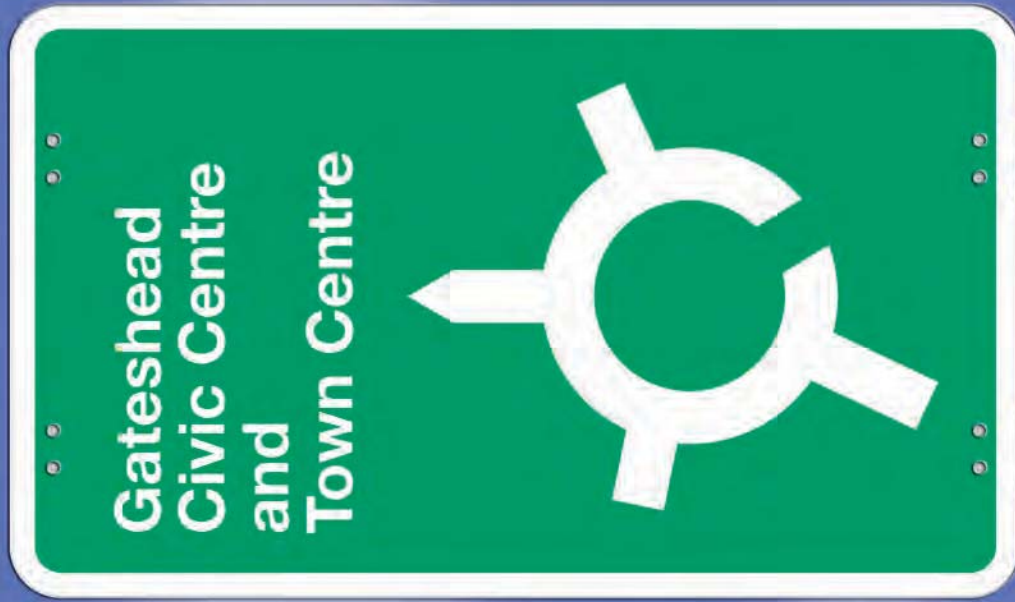
Bus enquiries: 0870 608 2 608

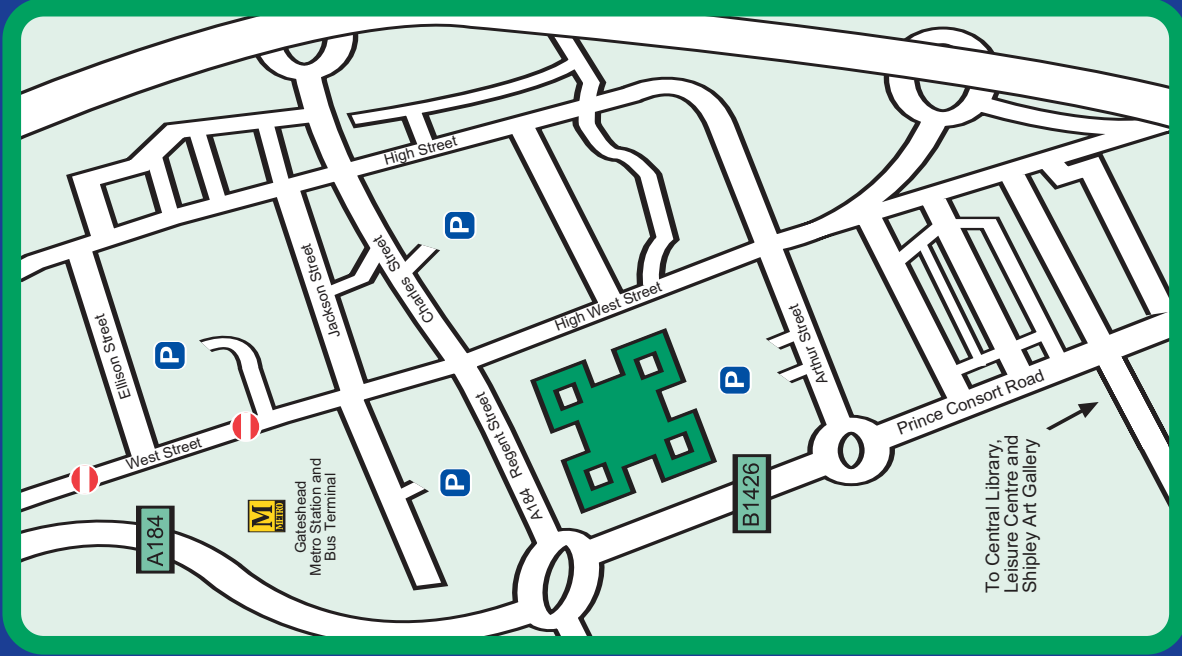
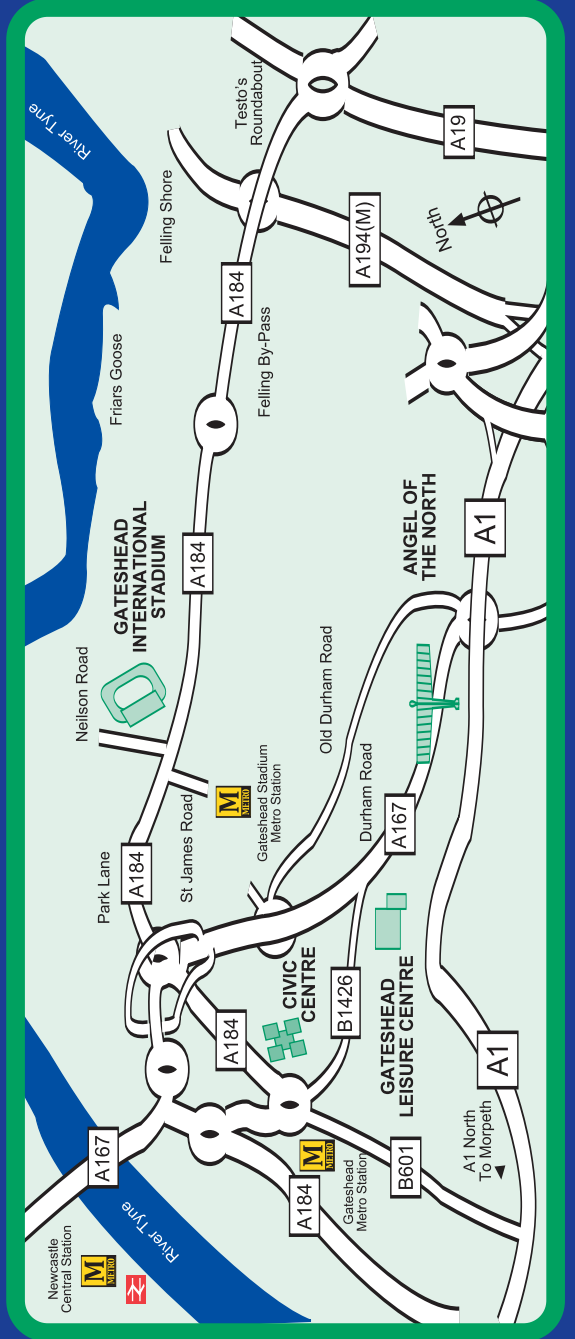
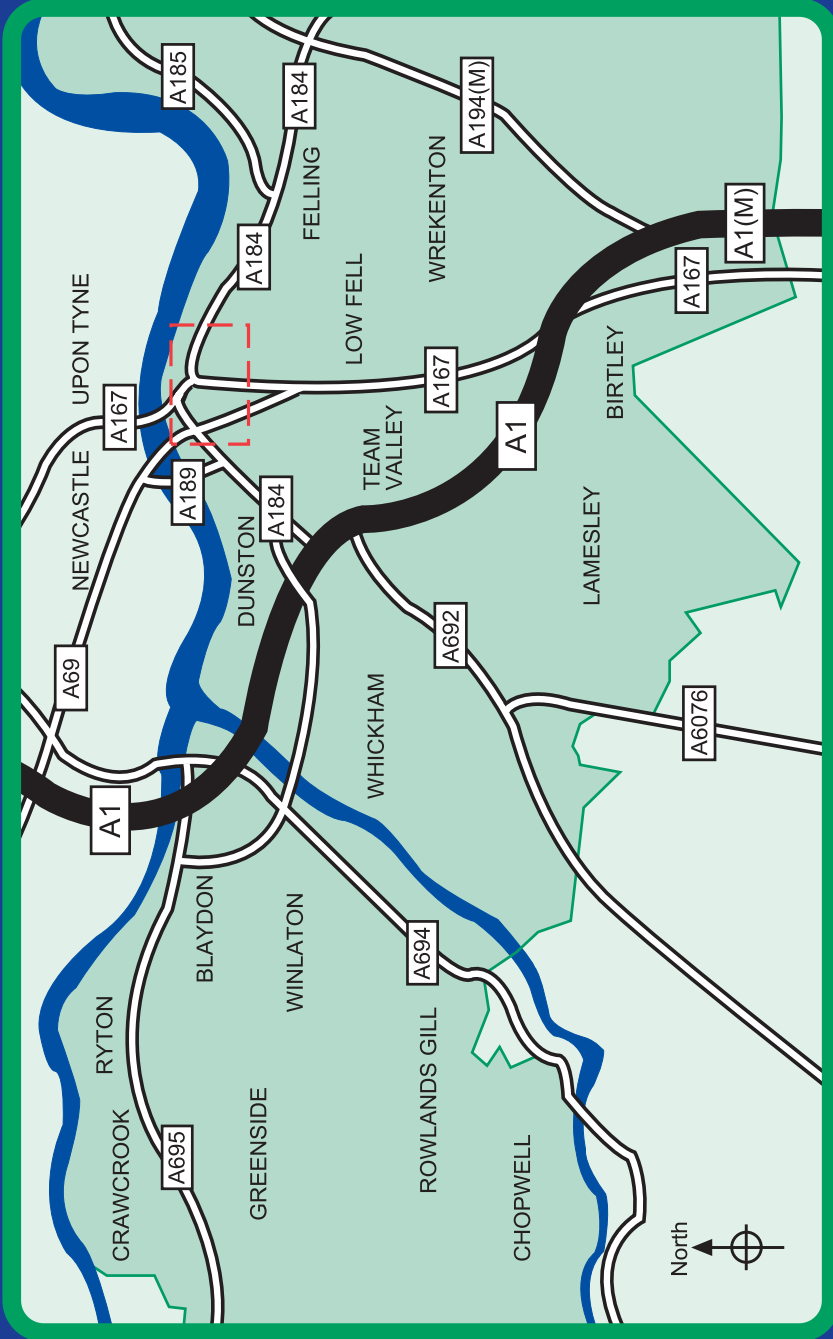
**For more information please contact:**

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Gateshead NE8 1HH  
Tel: 0191 433 3444.

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## How to find....





# Gateshead Civic Centre

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