

Note of decisions taken and actions required

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

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>Spending Review – Impact on Fire and Rescue Service</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>Decision</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>Action</p> <p>Officers to work on collating best practice amongst Fire and Rescue Authorities in realising savings.</p> <p>Officers to identify Member and officer leads for each of the savings workstrands.</p> <p>Officers to arrange workshops for the Fire and Rescue Conference to look at identifiable savings.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>LG Group officers</p> <p>LG Group officers</p> <p>Clive Harris / Jane Marcroft</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