

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Fire Services Management Committee

Date and time: Monday 16 July 2012, 11.00am

Venue: Smith Square Rooms 1 and 2

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Cllr Brian Coleman	Barnet LB
Vice chair	Cllr Sian Timoney	Bedfordshire & Luton FRA
Deputy chair	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire FRS
Deputy chair	Cllr Christopher Newbury	Wiltshire FA
Members	Cllr Mark Healey	Devon & Somerset FRS
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey CC
	Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester FRA
	Cllr Ann Holland	Essex FRS
	Cllr David Topping	Cheshire FA
	Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire FA
	Cllr Julie Young	Essex FRS
	Cllr Keith Aspden	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority
Substitutes	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside FRA
	Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire CC
	Cllr Andre Gonzalez De Savage	Northamptonshire CC
Cllrs John Edwards, Paul Bryant, David Rowlands and John Livings attended the meeting as observers.		
Apologies	Cllr Nick Forbes	Tyne & Wear FA
	Cllr Maurice Heaster OBE	London FEPA / Wandsworth LB
	Cllr Navin Shah	London FEPA/ Harrow LB
Officers:	CFO Dave Webb	

Helen Murray, Eamon Lally, Gill Gittins, Cathy Boyle (LGA)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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Councillor Brian Coleman, Chairman, welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting, which would be his last as Chairman of the Fire Services Management Committee.

1. Fire Services Management Committee Peer Challenge

Councillor Kay Hammond, Chair of the FSMC Peer Challenge Working Group, introduced a report which provided the Committee with information on the evaluation from the pilot Operational Assessment (OpA) and Fire Peer Challenges, an update on the Fire Peer Challenge Programme and details of take-up of the offer.

Councillor Hammond reported that three pilot Fire Peer Challenges were carried out in Surrey - County FRA, Leicestershire - Combined FR and West Yorkshire - Metropolitan FRA. A comprehensive evaluation of the peer challenges was undertaken by officers from CFOA and the LGA. It was clear from the evaluation that the new Fire Peer Challenge was successful as a sector led improvement tool. Feedback from users was positive and 41 FRAs have now registered to take up the offer.

Councillor Hammond invited comments from Committee members.

Councillor Sian Timoney, Vice-Chair of FSMC, endorsed the work of the Peer Challenge Working Group. Councillor Timoney asked that officers provide FSMC lead members with a full list of accredited peers for review.

FSMC Members were agreed that accredited lead peers must have either current or recent, relevant experience in the fire sector in order to take on a Member Peer Role. In addition, members concurred that full training and development in the new fire regime must be provided for Member Peers.

Members were in broad agreement that the 3 day model for peer challenge was inadequate and they supported the request

for a move to 4 days.

Councillor Les Byrom expressed concern that there may be fire authorities who could benefit from peer challenge but are not putting themselves forward. Councillor Byrom asked that a report be provided for Group Leaders on this issue in the autumn.

Helen Murray

Decisions

The Fire Services Management Committee

- *expressed their satisfaction with, and **endorsed** the work of the FSMC Peer Challenge Working Group;*
- ***noted** the progress made in developing the new approach to OpA and Fire Peer Challenge;*
- ***noted**, with satisfaction, the extremely positive take-up of OpA and Fire Peer Challenge, with 41 FRAs having registered;*
- ***agreed** that, as political leadership is an integral component of the approach to OpA self assessment and Fire Peer Challenge, it was essential that the existing training programme is extended to include Member Peers;*
- ***agreed** to receive a full list of accredited peers for review at their next meeting in September;*
- ***agreed** to support the ongoing development of both officer and member peers to sustain the programme going forward;*
- ***agreed** to support the development of a Chief Fire Officer Sounding Board to be held in December to review progress and evaluate learning; and*
- ***agreed** to officers commissioning an externally conducted impact evaluation in 2013/2014 to assess the outcomes of undertaking OpA self assessment and fire Peer Challenge.*

Action

Officers to progress in line with Members' decisions set out above.

**Andy
Bates/Gary
Hughes**

2. Sprinklers' Campaign

Councillor John Edwards, West Midlands FRA, introduced a report which set out the Sprinklers' Campaign Working Group response to the FSMC's request to design a campaign plan to lobby for the mandatory installation of fire sprinkler systems.

Councillor Edwards said that the Working Group felt that a grassroots approach and public 'outrage' could be the most effective ways to influence Government. To date lobbying by the LGA and individual FRAs does not appear to have influenced them.

Officers circulated a draft of the toolkit at the meeting. Councillor Edwards explained that the toolkit would have all the relevant information and tools needed for a local campaign and it would be accessible in one space, which would be on-line and would be regularly updated. Hard copies would not be produced. Councillor Edwards said that the toolkit could be adapted according to local needs and that it would be cost-effective and accessible.

Councillor Edwards explained that there would be an incremental launch of the toolkit to secure the most media covered over a period of time. The toolkit would be made available in October 2012 to all FRAs. There would then be a period of stakeholder engagement, development and testing of the toolkit, and a formal launch at the Fire Conference in March 2013 and on National Sprinklers' Day (two months after the Conference).

Councillor Edwards, on behalf of the Campaign Working Group, requested feedback and comments on the toolkit.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, Councillor Anne Holland undertook to provide LGA officers with the names of senior

officers in the Children's Burns Trust.

The Chairman, Councillor Coleman, suggested that HRH Prince Michael of Kent, Patron of the Children's Burns Trust be invited to become Patron of the Sprinklers' Campaign.

FSMC Members undertook to provide officers with effective photographs for inclusion in the toolkit.

Members

Decision

The Fire Service Management Committee

- **agreed** with the broad campaign set out by the Working Group;
- **agreed** that the Fire Commission should be provided with regular updates on the campaign, including feedback on best practice;

Councillor Coleman, on behalf of the FSMC, thanked Councillor Edwards and the Working Group on their work to date.

Action

Officers to progress as directed by Members.

Eamon Lally

3. Retained Firefighters' Pensions

In June, a cross-party group of Members met with the Fire Minister, Bob Neil, to argue the case for Government to accept liability for retained Firefighters' pensions instead of the sector. However, the Government position, set out in a letter from the Minister, was that liability should lie with the employers, and that the retrospective access to pension rights could not be treated as a new burden and that liability should be spread across all FRAs.

Members are meeting with the Minister again on 18 July to reinforce the employers' case. This will be backed up by legal advice which points strongly to the Retained Duty System (RDS) pension costs being a government liability.

Eamon Lally, Senior Adviser, said that officers are continuing to work with FRAs to try to understand the potential liabilities for individual authorities. Officers are also seeking details from fire authorities of the provision that they have made for the potential costs.

FSMC made detailed comments which were noted by officers.

Decision

The Fire Services Management Committee

- **noted** the report;
- **agreed** to continue to press Government to accept liability for RDS pension costs
- **agreed** to write to the Chair and Chief Executive of FRAs seeking contributions to the cost of further legal advice (up to a limit of £5,000), as agreed by the Fire Commission at its 15 June meeting, should this prove necessary,

Action

Officers to action in accordance with the Committee's decisions. **Eamon Lally**

4. Fire Services Management Committee end of year report

FSMC members received a report which offered an overview of the context and main issues affecting the Committee in 2011/2012. The report also provided members with a summary of the Committee's achievements over the last year.

Decision

*The Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the report and that a report on priorities for 2012/2013 would be brought to the Committee for consideration in September 2012.*

Action

A report on priorities for 2012/2013 to be brought to the

Helen Murray

Committee in September.

5. Industrial Relations

Gill Gittins gave an oral update on the latest developments in industrial relations.

6. FSMC Update Paper

The Committee received a report outlining issues of interest not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Some members felt that more forward planning was necessary to ensure a higher profile for the fire sector at future **LGA Annual Conferences**. However, the Chairman said that he was satisfied this year with the fire sector's profile at Conference and, in particular, that the session on **the future funding of fire and rescue services** was well attended and well received by delegates.

Decisions

*Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the updates on:*

- *Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme;*
- *LGA Annual Conference;*
- *Community right to challenge;*
- *Consultation on localising support for council tax;*
- *FRA use of electromagnetic spectrum;*
- *Breathing Apparatus Telemetry;*
- *National Co-ordination and Advisory arrangements of London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.*

Action

Officers to provide an update paper to the next meeting.

Helen Murray

7. Note of the last meeting - 14 May 2012

With reference to the last meeting of the Fire Commission, the Chairman requested that a letter be prepared to the Home Secretary on the **2011 riots**.

Helen Murray

Helen Murray reported back on a meeting to assess the Fire Service College bid, which she attended *with Des Prichard representing CFOA*. The LGA had been asked to provide confidential advice on vision, and credibility of bidders but were not party to discussions on finances. The second phase of the process is now taking place. After the meeting it was established that the final bid deadline has been extended to early September to allow for full due diligence to be conducted.

Helen Murray

Members **noted** that a report on **fires and incidents at sea** has gone on the agenda for the next Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board meeting. A report would be brought back to this Committee's next meeting in October.

LGA Officers

The Chairman reported that a DCLG Select committee would that afternoon take evidence from Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire and West Midlands) and from the Minister and the Government's adviser on cuts to funding for fire and rescue services

Some members raised concerns about different sections of the sector making individual representations on finance and urged a joined-up sector led approach in the future.

Close of Meeting

At the close of the meeting, Councillor Sian Timoney, Vice-Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee, paid tribute to the Chairman, Councillor Brian Coleman.

Councillor Timoney, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Councillor Coleman for his strong leadership and robust chairmanship of the Fire Services Commission and Fire Services Management Committee over the past three years and wished him well for the future.

Date of Next Meeting:

Friday, 14 September 2012 at 11.00am in Local Government House