

## **Fire and Rescue Peer Challenges**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion and approval.

### **Summary**

At the July FSMC meeting, Members asked for further work to be done to review the list of FRA Member Peers and to ensure that appropriate training was in place so that the extensive programme of Fire Peer Challenges scheduled over the forthcoming years are delivered to the highest and most professional standard.

This paper confirms that the accredited Member Peer pool has been reviewed; and sets out a proposed programme of training. It also proposes a Member Sounding Board and Member input to the agreed Chief Fire Officer Sounding Board to be held in December to review progress and evaluate learning.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to discuss and endorse this work.

### **Action**

Officers to progress work programme subject to Members' comments.

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## **Fire and Rescue Peer Challenges**

### **Background**

1. Members have previously discussed the successful take up of the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Programme. Whilst there is a comprehensive officer peer training programme in train, Members agreed that as political leadership is an integral component of the approach to OpA self assessment and Fire Peer Challenge it was essential that a parallel training programme is designed and delivered to Member Peers.
2. Members also agreed to review the current list of accredited peers with the National Lead Member Peers. Although the corporate peers have a range of skills which are directly transferable and applicable to Fire Peer Challenges, Members were keen to ensure that Peers also have recent and relevant experience of fire authorities to give the programme real credibility in the fire sector.

### **Member Peer Training - Outline programme**

3. Building on the successful delivery of 11 officer peer training sessions, and with learning from previous Members sessions in mind, the following outline programme is proposed for Member Peers. This will ensure that all Peers are familiar with the new product, and will act as a refresher for Peers who undertake this work.
4. The draft training programme will cover:

#### **4.1 Fire Peer Challenge - The New Approach**

- 4.1.1 How there has been a fundamental change to the national performance framework with no inspection and greater local accountability and transparency.
- 4.1.2 How the new peer challenge offer looks and feels different to previous inspection based approaches.
- 4.1.3 How members and officers worked together to develop the offer and its fit as part of the LGA's Taking the Lead approach to sector led improvement.

#### **4.2 Overview of the Fire Peer Challenge and OpA process**

- 4.2.1 How the new peer challenge works and the fit with the new Operational Assessment.
- 4.2.2 The roles and expectations of the peer challenge team members.
- 4.2.3 The principles of peer challenge and the skills needed.
- 4.2.4 The outputs from the challenge – feedback, report and signposting.

#### **4.3 The role of a Member Peer – Group discussion session**

- 4.3.1 How to effectively provide specific political input into the peer challenge and ensuring positive and professional relationships with the respective FRA elected members.
- 4.3.2 How to effectively lead on and provide input into the peer challenge on the areas of:
  - community leadership
  - political leadership and governance
  - professional and political relationships within the FRA
- 4.3.3 How to effectively work with peer team members and the lead officer peer.

#### **4.4 A Peer's Perspective**

- 4.4.1 Feedback from a Member peer on their experience.

#### **4.5 Putting it into Practice - Simulation Exercise**

- 4.5.1 Delegates examine a Fire & Rescue Service peer challenge scenario.
- 4.5.2 Work in groups to gather data and evidence.
- 4.5.3 Develop feedback.
- 4.5.4 Discussion in groups.

#### **4.6 Debrief – Feedback and Evaluation**

- 5. Each training session will be facilitated by an LGA Peer Support Programme Manager and will be for a full day.
- 6. The following dates for Member Peer training are proposed:
  - 6.1 30 October 2012 – Birmingham
  - 6.2 01 November 2012 – London
- 7. These are initial training sessions and more will be organised shortly.

#### **Member Peers**

- 8. Following the last discussion each National Lead Member Peer has been in discussion with FSMC Lead Members to review their Member Peer list. Some minor changes have been made but each are now confident that the Member Peers on offer have recent and relevant experience with ten being drawn from the current and past Membership of the FSMC itself.
- 9. With the refreshed Member pool and the planned training programme, we will be able to field skilled Members Peers for the forthcoming Fire Peer Challenges.

These are usually sourced at least three months in advance of the onsite work. Ongoing review and monitoring of the peer pool will continue to ensure there are adequate numbers and skilled peers in place.

10. Member peers are involved in a range of peer support activity in addition to peer challenges, including support to new leaders and administrations following a change of control, mentoring and councillor development. If Members are interested in becoming a peer they should contact the relevant national lead member peer or head of Political Group Office to discuss:

- 10.1 their experience and expertise;
- 10.2 the current demand for member peers; and
- 10.3 the areas where we require more peers.

#### **Chief Fire Officer Sounding Board**

11. Invitations for the Chief Fire Officer Sounding Board will be going out in mid September to all CFOs who have a led, or received, a Fire Peer Challenge. This event will be hosted in partnership with CFOA and it is proposed that there is Member input from FSMC.
12. It is proposed that a similar Member Sounding Board is organised when 10 Fire Peer Challenges have taken place. We anticipate this will be held in December.

#### **Financial Implications**

13. There are no financial implications for the FSMC work programme arising directly from this report as the Fire Peer Challenge programme is a core part of the LGA's overall Taking the Lead programme.