

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: Fire Services Management Committee
Date and time: Friday 14 September 2012, 11.00am
Venue: Smith Square Rooms 3 and 4

Attendance

| Position | Councillor | Council |
|--------------|---|------------------------|
| Chairman | Cllr Kay Hammond | Surrey CC |
| Vice chair | Cllr Sian Timoney | Luton BC |
| Deputy chair | Cllr Jeremy Hilton | Gloucestershire FRA |
| Members | Cllr Mark Healey | Devon & Somerset FRA |
| | Cllr Maurice Heaster OBE | London FEPA |
| | Cllr John Bell | Greater Manchester FRA |
| | Cllr David Topping | Cheshire FRA |
| | Cllr Kevin Foster | West Midlands FRA |
| | Cllr John Joyce | Cheshire FRA |
| | Cllr Julie Young | Essex FRA |
| | Cllr John Edwards | West Midlands FRA |
| | Cllr Keith Aspden | North Yorkshire FRA |
| Substitutes | Cllr Nick Harrison | Surrey CC |
| | Cllr Les Byrom CBE | Merseyside FRA |
| Apologies | Cllr Brian Copping (Deputy Chair) | Shepway DC |
| | Cllr Navin Shah | London FEPA/ Harrow LB |
| Officers: | Helen Murray, Gary Hughes, Eamon Lally, Gill Gittins, Steve Service (LGA) | |

Councillor Kay Hammond welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting, and introduced herself as the new LGA Chairman for Fire. She announced that she had met with the new Minister for Fire, Brandon Lewis earlier that week and had a productive conversation. The Minister had readily agreed to attend a forthcoming FSMC meeting and a Commission meeting in the new year. She asked Officers to arrange this for November and invite Chairs and CFOs to attend as observers.

**Stephen
Service**

1. Fire Services Management Committee Membership and appointments to outside bodies 2012-13

Helen Murray, Head of Programme introduced this item. Helen drew Members' attention to Appendix C for this item, which outlines the outside bodies for last year. She asked Members to consider whether they wish to continue appointing to the current bodies and if so, to nominate Members for 2012/13.

Members agreed the following Members as representatives:

CLP Sub-Group for Fire - Cllr Kay Hammond
Cllr Sian Timoney
Cllr Jeremy Hilton
Cllr Brian Copping

The Committee agreed that Kay will meet the Minister quarterly to raise ongoing issues, with the rest of the sub group available for difficult and continuing issues.

Firefighters' Pensions Committee - Cllr Maurice Heaster

Strategic Resilience Board – Cllr Mark Healey
Cllr Jeremy Hilton

Fire Service College Strategic Stakeholder Board – Cllr John Joyce

CFOA, RDS and Operational Training Working Group – Cllr Mark Healey

Members agreed that the Fire Service College and Fire Peer Challenge working groups have fulfilled their initial remit, and could therefore be removed from the list. Outstanding issues regarding the College would be picked up by Cllr Joyce in his role on the strategic stakeholder board, while matters regarding

training, managing and supporting peers could be addressed by the Board as they arose.

Cllr Hammond announced that Commissioner Dobson had agreed to continue as strategic advisor to the FSMC for another year. Cllr Hammond said that she was keen to meet the other executive officers who provide advice to the FSMC and the NJC.

Decision

Members formally noted the membership for the LGA Fire Services Management Committee and appointed to the outside bodies as outlined.

Action

LGA Officers to arrange meeting between Cllr Hammond and FSMC executive officers.

Gill Gittins

Officers to inform outside bodies of any changes in, or confirm continuation of, LGA representatives.

**Stephen
Service**

Officers to confirm any new appointments directly to members and also via a paper for information at the next appropriate full Committee meeting. (The list is attached at **Appendix A**).

**Stephen
Service**

2. Future priorities

Eamon Lally, LGA Senior Advisor presented a summary of priorities suggested by FAs across England in response to Cllr Hammond's letter to Chairs and CFOs.

On the **work time directive**, the Chairman reported that during her meeting with the Minister, he assured Cllr Hammond that he will continue to represent Fire Authorities' case in Europe, opposing any restrictions that would prevent authorities from doing their job.

Some Members felt that the LGA should encourage consideration of work patterns as a whole rather than just those of retained firefighters.

Members raised the issue of **new ways of working** and the potential opportunities for pooling resources in partnership with

the other emergency services. Engaging with young people was offered as an example where partnership working could provide direct benefits.

With the introduction of **PCCs**, Members were keen to foster a strong working relationship as early as possible between the Fire service and these individuals who would have their own mandate upon being elected. However, some Members expressed anxiety that PCCs would have a primary remit to save money above all else. While the reputation of Fire was second to none in the mind of the public, they warned of the dangers of not getting the relationship right.

Cllr Hammond responded that she was looking to develop a stronger relationship with the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and suggested that issues such as PCCs/FRAs working could provide the remit for a joint working group.

Some Members felt that **equality and diversity** needed to be reevaluated in the wake of the recent successful recruitment of new female Fire Officers. There was a perceived risk that following this positive step, the agenda had lost focus. Others argued that the impact of E&D was limited at a time when many FRAs were not recruiting. Members agreed that sharing good practice between FRAs and addressing some key E&D issues informally was a potential means of addressing the situation.

Commissioner Dobson noted that some unions had adopted ambiguous positions on equality and diversity, with the fire brigades union recently removing guaranteed voting rights from minority representatives (in practice this removes guaranteed seats for LGBT, women and ethnic minority representatives on its national committee). He emphasised that the FSMC would need to monitor this and consider the approach which employers should take.

Members were concerned about whether the FSMC would be able to do justice to all priorities expressed by FRAs. Cllr Hammond responded that one of the main reasons for seeking the views of FRAs was to identify the synergies between them rather than try to address every authority's individual needs. Members agreed that the issues which were most urgent and had the biggest impact should be given precedence by the LGA.

Cllr Hammond thanked Members for their input and proposed to

meet with the other lead members to develop the work programme further. As part of the planning process she intended to discuss ways to harness the knowledge and expertise of the Fire Commission on these issues.

Action

Officers to progress as directed by Members.

Eamon Lally

3. Fire and Rescue Peer Challenges

Gary Hughes, Programme Manager for Peer Support presented an outline programme and dates for proposed training sessions for Member peers. He added that the political groups now feel that there is an adequate number of Member peers for the Peer challenges planned.

Two Sounding Boards have also been proposed to review the current list of peers; a Chief Officer Sounding Board, with Member involvement and a separate Member Sounding Board. Members said that CFO Paul Fuller would like to be involved in the Officer sounding Board.

Members argued that current lists of trained Members rely on anecdotal information on issues such as whether they still sit on a Fire Authority and whether they are still interested in peer work. Helen confirmed that all the lists had been updated but there was more to be done to ensure lists were kept up to date. Cllr Timoney agreed to discuss the Labour list with Cllr Bryony Rudkin as the lead peer for her group.

Councillors noted that both of the training dates offered took place during half term and urged officers to be mindful of peers with children. They asked for a schedule of peer challenges to be circulated. On the dates clash, Gary responded that these had been provisional and he agreed to reconsider timing based on this feedback.

Some Members argued for the FSMC to scrutinise the allocation of peers to requests and the quality of peers. However Cllr Hammond said that it was the responsibility of lead peers to check on peers' involvement and vetting the membership of other groups as a committee would be inappropriate. The emphasis should be on persuading lead members to ensure a pool of quality peers who were suitably trained.

Decision

Members **endorsed** the work programme as outlined.

Action

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|---|--|
| Officers to seek alternative dates for Member Peer training. | Gary Hughes |
| Paul Fuller to be included in the Officer Sounding Board. | Gary Hughes |
| Cllr Timoney to discuss Labour list with Cllr Rudkin. | Cllr Sian Timoney |
| Schedule of peers reviews to be circulated to members of the committee. | Gary Hughes / Steve Service |
| Officers to action in accordance with the Committee's decisions. | Eamon Lally |

4. Retained Business Rate Scheme Technical Consultation

Eamon Lally summarised the Government's proposed changes to the retained business rate scheme. He stressed that the detail of the proposal was complex and that the full impact of changes was difficult to ascertain, however it was anticipated that the effect on FRA funding would be tough.

The LGA's consultation response emphasised that the Government's postponed release (December 2012) of details of FRA funding for the next 2 years made it difficult for FRAs to assess their situation. Furthermore, there was currently no evidence that the Government were aware of the risks presented by the changes.

Eamon added that he would invite Kieran Timmons to come to the Fire Commission to talk about the proposals in more detail if Members wished. The Commission agreed that this would be helpful and asked if the plain English guide to business rates issued by DCLG could be circulated to the Committee.

Cllr Hammond welcomed views from Members on the LGA's consultation response.

Members commented that the proposal was an important document. They emphasised that a more robust formal response to the consultation was needed in the circumstances,

and asked Officers to stress that FAs were “not as confident as the Government” when considering the risks of the proposals.

Members made several detailed comments on the content of the consultation response which were noted by Officers. Officers agreed to share the final draft of the response with lead members before sending it to ensure the content was suitably robust.

Members agreed that despite the consultation closing before October, it was appropriate that a report on this item should be presented at the next Fire Commission. Cllr Hammond said that more work on understanding the impact of the proposals needed to be done in the meantime.

Action

Kieran Timmons to be invited to do Business Rate scheme presentation to October Fire Commission, and produce simple illustrative examples to show impact on different types of FRAs.

Eamon Lally

CLG’s plain English guide to be circulated to Members.

Steve Service

LGA Officers to share final version of consultation response with lead Members.

Eamon Lally

Report on the Retained Business Rate Scheme to go to Fire Commission in October.

Eamon Lally

5. Primary Authority Scheme and the Fire and Rescue Service

Helen Murray introduced this item. She stressed that this was a preliminary look at the issues involved as many different views existed in different FAs on the Primary Authority approach. The Government propose to run pilots of the scheme through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Some Councillors argued that the need for the scheme was unclear and that it seemed to create unnecessary bureaucracy. Members agreed that it would be sensible to gather more information regarding the potential impact of the scheme before making a decision on the LGA’s position.

With a preponderance of headquarters in London, Members were concerned that London could end up being responsible for

much of the regulating. Commissioner Dobson agreed that this was a genuine concern, but emphasised that achieving consistency was the ultimately aim of the proposal.

Cllr Hammond concluded that some advantages and opportunities could be seen in taking up the scheme, but FAs needed to see the outcome from the pilots before developing a firm view. She proposed that this item return to the FSMC agenda once more work has been done.

Decisions

*The Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.*

Action

Officers to report back to the FSMC on this issue once the scheme has been piloted.

LGA Officers

6. Industrial Relations

The Committee received an update from Gill Gittins, LGA Principal Negotiating Officer on the latest developments in industrial relations.

Decisions

*The Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.*

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Gill Gittins

7. FSMC update paper

On the **DCLG secondment programme for firefighters**, Commissioner Ron Dobson said that where this had previously been fully paid by DCLG, there would now be a financial cost for FRAs beyond a capped limit. Members commented that with budgets already tight, the additional cost could dissuade FRAs from releasing officers in future. Cllr Hammond agreed to write to the Minister on this issue.

Cllr Hammond asked Members to encourage officers to attend the Rescue Conference at the London Fire Brigade **World**

Rescue Challenge event on 19 October.

Members asked for the calendar of Board dates for 2012/13 to be re-circulated in light of the FSMC being held the day before the **Fire conference** on Monday 11 March. LGA Officers agreed to book accommodation for all FSMC Lead members, and let them know once this was confirmed.

Cllr Hammond said that in her conversation with the Minister on **sprinklers**, Brandon Lewis signalled that he was reluctant to regulate on the issue and suggested that cultural change could be achieved through institutions such as care homes leading by example.

The Chairman reported that she had emphasised to the Minister that FRAs are taking legal advice over the issue of **retained firefighters' pensions**.

Action

Letter to be sent from Cllr Hammond to Brandon Lewis MP about the secondment scheme and the capped costs, asking for all costs to be reimbursed.

Eamon Lally

Calendar of Board dates for 2012/13 to be re-circulated.

Steve Service

LGA to book accommodation for all FSMC Lead members, and let them know once confirmed.

Clive Harris

8. Note of the last meeting - 16 July 2012

Members approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

Date of Next Meeting:

Friday, 16 November 2012 at 11.00am in Local Government House

Appendix A

Fire Services Management Committee – Outside Bodies and structures

Outside Bodies

| Organisation / contact details | Background | Representatives |
|---|---|--|
| CLP Sub Group for Fire | Chair will meet the Minister quarterly to raise ongoing issues. CLP available for difficult and continuing issues. | 4 places Cllr Kay Hammond (Con) Surrey CC Cllr Sian Timoney (Lab) Bedfordshire and Luton FA Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Lib Dem) Gloucestershire CC Cllr Brian Copping (Indep) Shepway DC |
| Firefighters' Pensions Committee Anthony Mooney, DCLG anthony.mooney@communities.gsi.gov.uk | The Firefighters' Pensions Committee is a consultative body, representative of key stakeholders in the Fire and Rescue Service, on issues related to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s). | 1 place Cllr Maurice Heaster, LFEPA (Con) |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Strategic Resilience Board</p> <p>Helen Davies / Karen Smith, DCLG Email: Helen.Davies@communities.gsi.gov.uk Karen.Smith@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p> | <p>The Board aims to deliver a sector-led approach to sustaining New Dimension capabilities into the future through establishment of an assurance framework and body managed by CFOA through the FRS National Resilience Board.</p> | <p>2 places</p> <p>Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Lib Dem) Gloucestershire CC</p> <p>Cllr Mark Healey (Con) Devon & Somerset FRA</p> |
| <p>Fire Service College Strategic Stakeholder Board</p> <p>Kim Robinson Tel: 01608 650831 Email: krobinson@fireservicecollege.ac.uk</p> | <p>The Fire Service College is responsible for providing leadership, management and advanced operational training courses for senior fire officers from the UK and foreign fire authorities. The Board ensures stakeholder involvement in the activities of the College.</p> | <p>1 place</p> <p>Cllr John Joyce (Lab) Cheshire FRA</p> |
| <p>CFOA, RDS and Operational Training Working Group</p> <p>Paul Hancock, Chair: Tel: 01606 868810 Email: paul.hancock@cheshirefire.gov.uk</p> | <p>The Group meets to discuss work practices for retained duty systems and develop recommendations.</p> | <p>1 place</p> <p>Cllr Mark Healey (Con) Devon and Somerset FRS</p> |

LGA structures

| LGA Structure | Background | Representatives |
|--|---|--|
| Sprinklers Campaign Working Group | <p>The Sprinklers Campaign Working Group was set up to develop a campaign to highlight the importance of fitted Sprinkler systems and increase public awareness of the issue.</p> | <p>5 places</p> <p>Cllr John Edwards (Lab) West Midlands FRA</p> <p>Cllr Rebecca Knox (Con) Dorset FA</p> <p>Cllr Richard Hobbs (Con) Warwickshire FA</p> <p>Cllr Dave Hanratty (Lab) Merseyside FA</p> <p>Cllr David Milsted (Lib Dem) Dorset FA</p> |