

2012/13 Priorities

Purpose of report

For discussion, final input and endorsement.

Summary

At the September meeting, the Fire Services Management Committee discussed a 'long list' of priorities which had been submitted from FRAs across the country. Since then, Lead Members have had a further discussion to determine the main priorities and scheduling of agenda items for discussion and decision throughout the 12/13 meeting cycle. This paper sets out a plan for the work of FSMC and the Fire Commission in the coming year, drawing also on the discussion by the Fire Commission about the format and content of meetings.

Taking on board Members' comments about the Fire Commission, we have revisited the terms of reference for that forum to reflect the purpose and status of the Commission and have included the revised terms of reference for approval.

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

1. consider and comment on the forward plan and to agree a final version; and
2. agree revised terms of reference for the Fire Commission.

Action

Officers to draw up detailed workstreams in the light of this discussion; and amend the Fire Commission terms of reference.

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Background

1. The LGA's Leadership Board have now agreed the overarching priorities for the 2013/14 business plan and are asking Boards and Panels to discuss priorities in line with these. The original 6 priorities have now streamlined to three, recognising that the priorities we agreed for the current year – **economic growth, funding for local government and public sector reform** – are still relevant as we move into the next financial year. Improvement has been integrated as a theme which runs through each of these.

Proposed priorities

2. The Chairman and Members have been keen to ensure that this year's programme of work accurately reflects the views of our member authorities. There were a wide variety of subjects and issues submitted by FRAs for consideration and although we cannot pursue all of these because of resource constraints, we have tried to incorporate most of them to some degree in the forward plan. A good proportion chimed with our existing work on major strategic issues such as input to the next Comprehensive Spending Review, resilience and business continuity and pensions arrangements.
3. Whilst these priorities form the key planks of the work programme, we propose that the FSMC maintains an oversight role for some significant pieces of work currently in train such as ensuring the sale of the Fire Service College proceeds satisfactorily and rolling out the new Fire Peer Challenge programme, and ensuring we support FRAs to deliver Firecontrol projects. Reports and discussions will be tabled at an appropriate time throughout the year. There will also be a regular slot for Members to feed back to the wider Committee the outcomes of discussions they have had on external bodies where they have been representing the LGA.

Feedback from the Fire Commission

4. Members provided some extremely useful comments in response to the Chairman's review of arrangements for the Fire Commission, both in terms of format and content which would be most beneficial for Members. In summary, in order to make the most of these meetings, Members felt that there should be a mix of issues discussed in more depth with a clearer focus on the purpose and objective of the issue; that we should take a more proactive approach to issues with more notice provided about the forward plan and meetings scheduling; time could be allocated to showcasing good practice from FRAs and adopting a workshop style if appropriate; the ability to network with colleagues remains important, as does the valuable opportunity for Members to put questions to the Fire Minister once a year. Members were also keen to establish a clearer link between the FSMC and the Commission as well as between the FSMC and the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. There were also suggestions for a newsletter/bulletin which would provide FRAs with information and updates on actions in between meetings.

5. The proposed priorities and meetings agendas have been developed to reflect these views and are summarised in the attached table. This is an outline plan which will need to remain flexible and responsive to deal with urgent business. Some items inevitably require a longer discussion to explore fully hence some flexibility and spaces in the agendas. Officers will manage the moving of agenda items carefully in consultation with Lead Members to ensure we use the time available to maximum benefit.

Fire Commission Terms of Reference

6. In the light of the renewed role of the Fire Commission, it was timely to revisit the terms of reference for the Fire Commission. To date, the description has been relatively broad as a 'forum for the needs and concerns of FRAs'. However, in order to reflect the more structured and defined role, we have developed some new terms of reference for consideration by FSMC members as follows:
7. The Fire Commission shall provide the forum within the LGA for all Fire and Rescue services across England and Wales. The Fire Commission will act in a way that complements the principles and corporate priorities of the LGA as a whole.
8. The purpose of the Commission shall be to:
 - 8.1 Provide the forum in which fire authorities can discuss matters of common concern and exchange good practice and experience.
 - 8.2 Discuss in-depth policies and issues and feed in views to the Fire Services Management Committee, so that the Fire Services Management Committee can take into account the needs, priorities and aspirations of all fire authorities in formulating and promoting its policies.
 - 8.3 Assist in promoting the role and interests of fire authorities and the ability of those authorities to meet the needs of the communities they serve.
9. The Commission will achieve these objectives by:
 - 9.1 Bringing together representatives of fire authorities four times a year and arranging other meetings, conferences and seminars as appropriate.
 - 9.2 Working closely with the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee to inform their decisions.
 - 9.3 Appointing representatives to work on sector specific campaigns, task and finish groups, and projects identified by Members.

Conclusion and next steps

10. Following a decision by FSMC on its priorities, officers will prepare a detailed work programme to manage the day to day work and the Chairman will write to all members of fire authorities letting them know about the agreed priorities.
11. Subject to Members' agreement, these revised terms of reference will need to be ratified by LGA's General Assembly in July 2013. In the meantime, they will be made available publicly on the website.

Financial Implications

12. All work can be met from existing resources.

FSMC	F Commission	FSMC	F Commission	FSMC	FSMC	F Commission	FSMC
16 November – Minister attending	7 December	25 January	15 February – Minister attending	12 March (at conference)	17 May	14 June	19 July
Priorities; and FSMC/SSCB joint working group PCCs/FRAs	Initial Analysis of Autumn statement	President of CFOA: Vij Randeniya	In-depth discussion of H+S implications of Atherstone	Run through conference arrangements	CSR submission	Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme	End of year report, including finance report
Intervention Protocol: condoc response	Good practice case study	Improvement support model or Conference publications or Skills for justice	Sprinklers update	Primary Authority	Report back on PCCs/FRA working group	In-depth discussion One Year On: how is the Localism Act working for FRAs (including Community Right to Challenge/trading and charging)	Review of Strategic Resilience Board arrangements
Assurance statement: condoc response	Pensions	Equalities Paper	Industrial relations update	No updates required: only urgent business	Conference feedback	Industrial relations update	Industrial relations update
Autumn statement letter	Priorities	NJC arrangements: stakeholder involvement	Minutes from 25/1 FSMC		Industrial relations update	Minutes from 12/3 and 17/5 FSMC	Update paper
Industrial relations update	Minutes from 16/11 FSMC	2014 Conference	Update paper		Report back on outside bodies	Update paper	
Report back on outside bodies	Industrial relations update	Industrial relations update			Update paper		
Update paper	Update paper	Report back on outside bodies					
		Update paper					