

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	Fire Services Management Committee
Date and time:	Friday 17 May 2013, 11.00am
Venue:	Westminster Suite Room 8.1

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chairman	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey CC
Vice chair	Cllr Sian Timoney	Luton BC
Deputy chair	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire FRS
	Cllr Brian Copping	Shepway DC
Members	Cllr Maurice Heaster OBE	London FEPA
	Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester FRA
	Cllr David Topping	Cheshire FA
	Cllr Kevin Foster	West Midlands FRA
	Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire FA
	Cllr Julie Young	Essex FRS
Substitutes	Cllr Ann Holland	Essex FA
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside FRA
	Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire FRA
Apologies	Cllr Mark Healey	Devon & Somerset FRS
	Cllr Navin Shah	London FEPA
	Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands FRA
	Cllr Keith Aspden	North Yorkshire FRA
Officers:	Helen Murray, Eamon Lally, Gill Gittins, Clive Harris, Jane Marcroft, Steve Service (all LGA)	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
	<p>Councillor Kay Hammond welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting. She congratulated those who had been re-elected in the local elections on 2 May.</p> <p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>The Chairman gave an update on work she had taken part in since the last committee, including work on the handover of the Fire Service College to CAPITA and a recent meeting with the Fire Minister. She asked that a Chairman's report be added to future FSMC agendas as a standing item. Helen Murray, LGA Head of Programmes agreed to pass on information on Kay's activities to LGA officers.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Chairman's report be added to future FSMC agendas as a standing item</p> <p>Helen Murray / Stephen Service</p> <p>Sir Ken Knight's Efficiency Review</p> <p>Cllr Hammond noted the publication of Sir Ken Knight's Efficiency Review the same morning.</p> <p>Members emphasised the importance of being seen to take action on the issues it raised quickly, as there was a risk of the sector losing control of the improvement agenda if it was not seen to respond fast enough.</p> <p>Cllr Hammond asked that the question of the FA response be put on the next Fire Commission agenda. She said that in her recent meeting with the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis MP indicated that Sir Ken's findings would be treated as an Independent report, with DCLG responding in the autumn. DCLG wish to get input from key stakeholders, including the LGA, before they give their formal response.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Sir Ken Knight's Efficiency review next steps to be included as an item on the next Fire Commission agenda in June.</p> <p>Eamon Lally / Stephen Service</p>	

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1. Comprehensive Spending Review Submission

Eamon Lally, LGA Senior Adviser introduced this report. He said that the LGA's submission at the end of April had not ask for more money from Government, but a fair settlement for fire in comparison with other parts of the public sector and greater flexibility on spending.

Members said that they did not feel anything was missing from the submission but some questioned the weight it was likely to have in light of Sir Ken's review.

The question of how to best manage public expectation was raised in light of the cuts to fire services. Members argued that the public perception of risk to communities from fire was bigger than the issue of the adult social care budget. FAs need to pre-empt public criticism of service reduction with dialogue regarding the budgetary implications.

At the same time, Cllr Timoney said that FAs needed to avoid the over-complicated and confusing situation created in local authorities where 200+ public consultations had been issued in response to budget cuts.

Cllr Hammond also asked that good practice be shared between authorities about where good practice had taken place to feed into a model on public consultation.

Decision

Members noted the spending review submission.

Action

LGA Officers to produce FA model on public consultation, utilising examples of good public consultation from Fire Authorities.

LGA Officers

2. Peer Improvement Support Model

Gary Hughes, LGA Programme Manager – Peer Support introduced this item. He said that recent proposals for the development of the programme included a member sounding board to review progress and peer mentoring regarding change of control. He announced that Cardiff University had been commissioned to review the programme with 10 FAs. It was anticipated that the results would be available in July.

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While members who had taken part in challenges found the process to be positive and the feedback received constructive, they argued that there were some potential issues over reviewers' objectivity, given that authorities were allowed to choose their team from a list and specify political affiliation. It was highlighted that the peer challenge was likely to feed into the sector's Assurance Framework, so the process of team selection needed to be robust.

Members advocated an approach where the team offered was non-negotiable, noting that this point was also underlined by Sir Ken's Efficiency Review. Members asked Peer Support officers to provide a breakdown of what peer requests had been made by fire authorities and what had been offered.

Despite the need for organisational objectivity, members also highlighted the need for peers to have fire experience. They argued that this should be prioritised over political affiliation.

Cllr Hammond said that the process of follow-up after a review could also be improved as assessors were keen to know what steps were taken to resolve the issues highlighted.

Some members felt that any reviews taking place after the initial one should involve different sets of peers to objectively measure how much had changed since the previous report.

On the offer of Leadership Academy places to Chairs, members questioned whether the 12 places proposed would be enough. Gary agreed to increase this number to 16 and include deputy Chairs in the offer to encourage succession planning within authorities.

In response to a question on how FRAs were alerted to the Peer challenge offer, Helen said that a message had gone out to all authorities following the Fire conference. Gary proposed that a reminder be sent out as the take-up so far had been less rapid than the regular Leadership Academy.

Action

Officers to provide a breakdown for the Committee of what peer requests have been made by fire authorities and what had been offered.

Gary Hughes

Officers to increase number of Leadership Academy places from 12 to **Gary Hughes**

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16 and extend the offer to Deputy Chairs as well as Chairs.

Officers to send reminder to FRAs regarding the free Leadership Academy and extend the offer to Deputy Chairs as well as Chairs.

Gary Hughes

Officers to take account of Member's comments, including those regarding peer team objectivity in taking programme forward.

Gary Hughes

3. Report back on FRA / PCC working group

Cllr Young and Clive Harris, LGA Adviser presented this item. They announced that the group's final report, drawing on information collected from CFOs would be issued in June. Some interesting feedback was gathered, including some anecdotal evidence about cultural divisions between police and fire in the workplace. However, rather than making concrete recommendations on next steps to CFOs, the group felt that the results were better presented as issues for them to action as they saw fit.

Cllr Young said that given the relatively short time between the PCC elections and the working group's survey, this was best seen as a provisional temperature check. She recommended revisiting the issue of PCC/ fire working at a later date to check on whether the situation had developed.

Cllr Hammond agreed that the relationship between fire authorities and PCCs was still at an early stage, but the Committee needed to be seen to be leading progress in this area. She thanked the group for their work and asked for an item to be included on the next Fire Commission agenda regarding next steps.

Action

Fire/PCC next steps to be included as item on June Fire Commission.

**Helen Murray /
Steve Service**

4. LGA Fire Conference and Exhibition 2013 – Conference feedback

Jane Marcroft, LGA Events Organiser presented this report. She said that feedback to the 2013 event had been generally positive and announced that the 2014 conference would take place on 11-12 March. She invited comments from members.

While members complimented staff for doing a good job despite

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difficult weather, the heating problems with the venue were noted. Cllr Hammond said that this was down to a widespread infrastructure failure rather than just burst pipes and lessons needed to be learned to ensure the scale of the problem was communicated effectively.

Members reported that use of twitter during the conference was variable. It was suggested that more could be done to encourage delegates to tweet more.

Cllr Hammond said that getting member engagement earlier in the planning stage of the conference was a priority and asked that a targeted Working Group from Fire Commission members be set up.

Cllr Hammond asked for thanks to be recorded to East Sussex and its volunteers for hosting and staffing the event.

Action

Officers to take forward arrangements for Fire Conference working group and include as item on Fire Commission in June.

**Clive Harris / Jane
Marcroft / Steve
Service**

5. Emergency Services Mobile Communication programme

Clive Harris drew Members attention to paragraph 6 of this report which outlined an ESMC Customer Group which DCLG have asked the LGA to sit on. Commissioner Dobson added that this was an important working group which dealt with the cost and usability issues of the programme.

Members questioned the influence that the group would have given the high number of reporting lines beyond it. Cllr Hammond added that the fire service were not customers but purchasers and should be feeding in at a higher level, with a strategic rather than technical focus.

Action

Officers to seek more strategic LGA role in programme in light of Members' comments.

Clive Harris

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6. Industrial Relations

Gill Gittins, LGA Principal Negotiating Officer updated members on the latest developments in industrial relations.

Members **noted** the report.

7. Outside bodies update

Eamon Lally updated Members on the Strategic Resilience Board, which received a presentation from the Home Office on proposals to introduce joint training for emergency services staff on responding to chemical misuse emergencies. The Board is also preparing a review of national fire assets.

Cllr Hammond said that she had met with Home Office colleagues at the JESIP Strategic Board. At the meeting, she highlighted the work of the peer programme in developing members and officers.

Cllr Hammond also had a brief meeting with lead members regarding Capita taking over the Fire Service College. The LGA is to be given 3 places on the new Governance structure – 1 place on the management Board and 2 on the College Advisory Board. She emphasised that these appointments would not be remunerated by the college.

Action

Officers to add Fire College Board places to list of Outside Bodies.

**Helen Murray /
Stephen Service**

8. FSMC update paper

Members **noted** the update.

9. Note of the last meeting - 11 March 2013

Members **noted** the minutes of the previous meeting.

10. AOB

Helen said that at the recent public accounts committee, Sir Bob Kerslake had given assurances that the **fire control** process would be completed by March 2015.

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Action

Officers to include Fire control progress as item on next FSMC agenda.

**Helen Murray/
Steve Service**

Date of Next Meeting:

Friday, 19 July 2013 at 11.00am in Local Government House.