

Fire Commission update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Commission not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members to note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Fire Commission update paper

Secondment opportunities in the Department for Communities and Local Government

1. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has written to all Chief Fire Officers to advise of two secondment opportunities within the Department. The letter, from Neil O'Connor, Director of the Fire, Resilience and Emergencies Directorate and Peter Holland, Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, states that the roles are for middle to senior managers. One will provide a range of advice and support for their work with fire services on changes to national resilience capability, firefighter communications and command and control room systems, and one will support our resilience and emergencies function.
2. Further information is available on the Civil Service recruitment website: <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment>. The closing date for the roles is 6 December.

Vulnerable and Disengaged Young People Fund

3. The Vulnerable and Disengaged Young People Fund, a new funding stream through the Cabinet Office Centre for Social Action, has up to £2m to help grow ambitious social action programmes to support England's most vulnerable young people. Organisations can apply for a development, evidence or scale-up grant. Applications can come from public bodies with a social mission or a clear objective in their corporate social responsibility policy towards increasing social action.
4. The closing date for bids is 6 December 2013. Further information on the fund and how to apply is available [online](#).

Pay policy and practice - guidance for councillors

5. The LGA have issued guidance to councillors on their responsibilities around pay and rewards policies. In particular the advice looks at the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 in requiring local authorities to set out the pay and reward policies for all staff in a local pay policy statement and to describe their arrangement for setting these policies. One particular issue the guidance looks into is the re-employment of staff who have been made redundant or have retired and are in receipt of a pension. Additional DCLG guidance in support of the Act identified various practices which are considered to be potentially unacceptable and which should therefore only be used in exceptional and justifiable circumstances and this is one of them.
6. The LGA has written to all fire authority chairs, copying in Chief Fire Officers, to highlight the issue.

Government to review policy on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

7. The Government is to review the condition of homes in the private rented sector and will consider whether or not new rules are needed on the installation of carbon monoxide and smoke alarms in privately rented homes. There are already rules in place requiring landlords to make sure homes are safe and habitable, through

measures including regular gas safety checks and making high quality repairs. The review will seek the views of the housing sector, and other interested stakeholders, as to whether the current regulatory system ensures adequate safety for householders, or whether it needs to be improved or simplified.

Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure 2011

8. From 30 April 2014 all new build or converted care homes, children's homes, halls of residence and rooms for residential purposes will be required to have sprinklers fitted and from 1 January 2016, all new homes and flats will be added. This is following the implementation of the Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure 2011 which was announced in October.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

9. JESIP have now agreed their Joint Doctrine. The doctrine focuses on the early stages of response to a major or complex emergency, creating a framework for Police, Fire and Rescue Services and Ambulance services to respond effectively together.
10. The Doctrine sets out the key principles for joint working as co-location, communication, co-ordination, joint understanding of risk and finally shared situational awareness. The Doctrine also sets out should train and operate based around, not only common principles but also terminology and ways of working, showing what responders should do in a multi-agency working environment.
11. However, the principles described are also applicable to the wider range of Category 1 and 2 response organisations and can be applied to smaller scale incidents, wide-area emergencies, and pre-planned operations.
12. The Joint Doctrine can now be downloaded from the JESIP website:
<http://www.jesip.org.uk/joint-doctrine/>

Fire Control

13. DCLG has published an update on the improvement plans being undertaken by fire and rescue authorities on control room services. This updates the document last published six months ago and gives a summary of improvements being delivered by each project. The update is available here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/245242/Future_Control_Room_Services_Scheme.pdf

National Operational Guidance Programme

14. The National Operational Guidance Programme has consulted on its first two pieces of operational guidance. These are "Environmental Protection" and "Water Rescue and Flooding". These are the programme's first pieces of draft guidance and to help FRAs with the consultation process a document outlining the format and objectives of operational guidance has also been released.

15. In addition, the programme was also managing the consultation for the handbook produced by DCLG and the Environment Agency, titled 'Environment handbook for the fire and rescue service'. The handbook was produced in partnership with the fire and rescue service and will replace the 'Environmental Protection, Fire and Rescue Service Manual – Volume 2, Fire Service Operations (2008)'.

Outside bodies updates

Cllr Jeremy Hilton - Strategic Resilience Board

16. At the last Strategic Resilience Board meeting Cllr Hilton asked that the Board look at the government's response to Sir Ken Knight's review and its potential impact on national resilience. This work will be taken forward by the Board.

Cllr Mark Healey - CFOA Retained Duty System Board

17. Cllr Mark Healey is the LGA representative on the CFOA Retained Duty System Board. At the last meeting the Board looked at the implications of using more retained staff. It was noted that the biggest issue was recruiting staff who could be available during the working day.

Cllr Rebecca Knox - Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

Background

18. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme has been gathering pace over the last couple of months. The Programme has now formally engaged with market at a supplier conference day, run a series of partner engagement events with services across the summer and developed a first draft of the Outline Business Case. The proposed timetable is for the Invitation to Tender to be issued in Spring 2014, with the award of contract planned for Summer 2015.

Fire and rescue authority engagement with the programme

19. Fire and rescue authorities are encouraged, both collectively and individually, to maximise the opportunities to influence this major programme and have direct ownership of the solutions that will be developed. It is vitally important that fire and rescue authorities ensure that they are adequately sighted on the programme within their authority and ensure that relevant partners and boards are engaged in the programme. To date the pace of the programme has been such that only limited impact has been felt by fire authorities, this is likely to increase somewhat in the coming months and authorities will need to be ready to react.

Outline Business Case

20. The first draft of the programme's Outline Business Case has now been drafted and the intention is, once the case has been further developed, to share the next iteration with fire and rescue authorities for comment. The anticipated sign-off of the final version is planned for Spring 2014. The Department for Communities and Local Government will be seeking fire and rescue authority assurance of the Outline Business Case via Fire Customer Group and the appropriate Chief Fire Officer Association Boards. The Outline Business Case will provide the Government with wide authorisation for the Programme to proceed towards the issue of an Initiation to Tender. It is accepted that fire and rescue authorities will not be in a position to firmly commit to any Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme solution until full costs, contracts and specifications are clear. The strategy for on-going engagement is therefore one of seeking authorities agreement to proceed in principle at key stages of the programme.

Elaborated Requirements

21. Following on from fire and rescue authority input at partner seminars to date, a further programme of engagement will be undertaken shortly in order to ensure that the elaborated requirements reflect the needs of fire and rescue authorities. The details of this engagement are still to be confirmed, but there will be further joint communications on this shortly through Fire and Rescue Monthly Bulletins and Chief Fire Officer Association circulars. It will be ensured that the development of the elaborated requirements is traceable back to the High Level User Requirements previously agreed by fire and rescue authorities in May 2012.

Transition Planning

22. Initial thoughts on transition planning and modelling were shared with fire and rescue authorities at partner seminars over the Summer. This work was primarily undertaken to inform the Outline Business Case; however, there is an awareness and understanding that there are a number of projects and initiatives taking place within fire and rescue authorities that means a number of the assumptions used in the planning and modelling will change over the coming months. Accepting the requirement to maintain existing interoperability arrangements during transition, the Programme is particularly interested to understand the opportunities and risks presented by the fire and rescue authority control room amalgamations, consortia and buddying arrangements and the impact this may have on any geographic based transition plan. Please get in touch with the programme if you have any concerns.

As-Is Data collection

23. Earlier in the year an As-Is data gathering exercise was undertaken to assess the range of costs to fire and rescue authorities of their communications. Approximately 75% of fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales provided data, but analysis revealed a great deal of variation in the responses received and the Fire Finance Network are providing the programme with assistance on this. It is anticipated that the programme will also need to run a further data collection exercise on the technical aspects of fire and rescue authority communications systems over the next few months.

David Cartwright - Fire Service College Customer Advisory Board (CAB)

24. The first meeting of the Customer Advisory Board (CAB) took place at the College on 10 September 2013 and was attended by representatives of CFOA (Des Pritchard in the chair), College Management, Peter Holland (CFRA) Jane Cockerill (DCLG - National Resilience), North Wales FRS, The Firefighters' Memorial Trust and David Cartwright for the LGA. Apologies were sent from ACPO, The Ambulance Service, Skills for Justice, Scotland and Northern Ireland FRSs.
25. Initial discussion centred upon the draft terms of reference, the function of the CAB and who should be invited to sit on the board. It was agreed that until the CAB had identified the training requirements of the Fire Service, the other blue light services would not be invited to attend. Indeed it was felt that, to satisfy the covenants laid upon the College, it might be worthwhile, initially, for there to be a separate group to cater for joint emergency service issues. Blue light interoperability was however seen as one of the main objectives of both the FRS and the College, and liaison with the other services would therefore continue.
26. The CAB agreed that it would like to see a return to a system of different accredited levels of command training that are universally accepted throughout the FRS, ranging from junior officer level, through middle management to aspiring chief officers. It was interesting to note that this is something the College of Policing is also considering at this time. There was also a useful discussion around who and how training standards should be set and who would monitor and validate those standards.
27. The Managing Director of the College (Jez Smith) said that there are potentially different and more cost-effective approaches to training than have been taken by FRS over the last number of years. The College is developing regional delivery capability and actively looking to partner with FRSs to achieve that. The intent would be to deliver regionally (reducing travel and subsistence and potentially keeping crews on the run), but more importantly to achieve efficiencies within the administration of training and improve utilisation of resources from the FRS. This can lead to a radically reduced total cost of training and significant savings.

28. He said that there is an over-supply of training facilities across the country, and therefore capital spend on new build facilities should be questioned by members as to whether there is an alternative course of action (using neighbouring services' facilities, or going to the College).

29. It was a very worthwhile first meeting.