

LGA Member Arrangements for Fire Authorities

Decisions

1. *That:*
 - (i) *the new member body be named the Fire Services Management Committee;*
 - (ii) *The new body be formed of 14 members, including 2 Regional Management Board (RMB) Chairs with political group membership thereof;*
 - (iii) *Membership should satisfy the following criteria:*
 - *Representation must include Combined Fire Authorities (CFAs), County Councils, Metropolitan Fire and Civil Defence Authorities and LFEPA;*
 - *The Chair of the Employers' Organisation NJC (Employers Side) (appointed by the LGA as the majority group) will be a Member of the new body; and*
 - *The Chair of the new body should also be the Chair of the Fire Services Forum.*
 - (iv) *The terms of reference for the Fire Services Management Committee (**attached** as Appendix 1), and the necessary revisions to the Safer Communities Board terms of reference (**attached** as Appendix 2), be agreed;*
 - (v) *The interim arrangements for the new Fire Services Management Committee be noted;*
 - (vi) *The allowances to be paid to Office Holders and Members of the new Committee be noted; and*
 - (vii) *There should be regular contact between the Chairs of the Safer Communities Board and the Fire Services Management Committee.*

Actions Required

2. *That:*
 - (i) *The LGA's political group offices be invited to make appointments to the Fire Services Management Committee in accordance with the LGA's political balance for a body of 14 Members, with the RMB representatives forming part of the groups allocation and the criteria set out under decision (iii) above; and*
 - (ii) *Safer Communities Board Office Holders be informed of future meeting dates of the new Committee, once agreed.*

Action by: LGA Secretariat

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LGA Member Arrangements for Fire Authorities

Summary

1. *In order that the LGA's new Member arrangements for fire and rescue authorities may be implemented, certain constitutional and practical issues require resolution. This paper provides details of the decisions that the LGA Executive and Group Leaders have made in relation to those constitutional and practical issues, and seeks the Board's endorsement of the new arrangements, specifically those that relate to the Board's terms of reference.*

Background

2. *Members are likely to be aware of the background that led the LGA to undertake a review of its Member arrangements for fire and rescue authorities. The review commenced towards the end of last year and involved a consultation of all fire authorities and local authorities with a responsibility for fire. The LGA's Group Leaders and LGA Executive later considered the outcomes from the review and the options for implementing improved Member arrangements. At the meeting of the LGA Executive on 10 March the principles of the new arrangements were agreed. This was reported to the Safer Communities Board at its meeting on 21 March 2005.*
3. *Since 10 March further consultation has been undertaken with leading Members regarding detailed proposals for implementing the new Member arrangements. The feedback was used to inform a report to Group Leaders in May, when details for implementing the new arrangements were approved. Those details are set out below.*

The LGA Fire Services Management Committee

The Name

4. *The name given to the new body is important for two important reasons. Firstly, constitutionally there are a number of titles that the LGA could not give to this body. These are titles such as Board, Executive, Assembly, Task Group, Forum, Commission and Panel. These titles have a constitutional status at the LGA that implies certain things about the nature, format or power of the body to which they are attached, which would not rightly represent the body that is being established.*
5. *Secondly, the name of the new body must be one that communicates to the fire community the role and status of the new body at the LGA. The crux of the message that emerged through the consultation in 2004 was the apparent absence of fire influence upon the LGA's policy making bodies. Therefore, whatever title we use for the new group must communicate to the fire community that its representatives are leading the fire agenda.*
6. *Three proposals were made during consultation on the details for implementing the new arrangements. These were:*

- *Committee;*
 - *Body; and*
 - *Advisory Group.*
7. *The suggestion was also made that whatever noun was selected as the name of the new body, it be prefixed with the term “Fire Management”. The term “fire management” is used by the ODFM with reference to the portfolio of ongoing fire modernisation work, and it is suggested that by synergising with the ODFM in this way, the LGA would be sending a clear message to the fire community about the role of the new group.*
8. **In light of the feedback received, Group Leaders agreed that the new Member body be named the Fire Services Management Committee. The Board is invited to endorse the name for the new body.**

The Size and Proportionality

9. *One of the fundamental aims of the new Member arrangements for fire is to achieve representational consistency and clarity. Therefore, in determining the size of the new body Group Leaders agreed that we must also satisfy the following criteria:*
- *Representation must include Combined Fire Authorities (CFAs), County Councils, Metropolitan Fire and Civil Defence Authorities and LFEPA;*
 - *Representation must include 2 Regional Management Board (RMB) Chairs with political group membership thereof;*
 - *The Chair of the Employers’ Organisation NJC (Employers Side) (appointed by the LGA as the majority group) will be a Member of the new body; and*
 - *The Chair of the new body should also be the Chair of the Fire Services Forum.*
10. *With regard to satisfying all the criteria listed above, the reality is that a number of the eventual Member appointments are likely to satisfy more than one. For example, the chair of the EO NJC will also represent one of the four types of fire authority, and any RMB representatives likewise. Achieving all the criteria will be a matter to be resolved during negotiation between political group offices.*
11. *On the issue of the specific question of the size of the new body, Member feedback favoured something between 10 and 14.*
12. **Having considered the information given above, Group Leaders agreed that:**
- **The new body be formed of 14 members;**
 - **Representation must include Combined Fire Authorities (CFAs), County Councils, Metropolitan Fire and Civil Defence Authorities and LFEPA;**
 - **Representation must include 2 Regional Management Board (RMB) Chairs with political group membership thereof;**
 - **The Chair of the Employers’ Organisation NJC (Employers Side) (appointed by the LGA as the majority group) will be a Member of the new body; and**
 - **The Chair of the new body should also be the Chair of the Fire Services Forum.**
13. **The Board is invited to note Group Leaders decision in relation to the size and proportionality of the Fire Services Management Committee.**

Terms of Reference

14. *In determining the terms of reference for the Fire Services Management Committee, there are some important distinctions to be made between what fire issues fall within the cross-cutting broader agenda of the Safer Communities Board, and what are day-to-day matters affecting fire and rescue services alone and which do not require the benefit of the Board's wider consideration.*
15. *The former Fire Modernisation Task Group evolved from what before that was known as the Fire Services Implementation Steering Group (FSISG). The FSISG terms of reference focussed largely on the Government's programme for fire modernisation and therefore, in part, remain relevant to the work of the new body. Those terms of reference form the foundation for the remit of the new Fire Services Management Committee.*
16. *Using the FSISG terms of reference as the basis for the remit of the new body, and then taking into account the view expressed by Members during consultation that there should be a higher profile Member body leading and influencing the fire agenda, there are a few amendments that should be made to the terms of reference of the Safer Communities Board. The changes have been carefully considered so as not to dilute the authority of the Safer Communities Board or its importance as the arena for cross-cutting policy discussion, but to still allow the new Fire Services Management Committee to take responsibility for some important elements of the fire agenda.*
17. *The terms of reference for the Fire Services Management Committee are **attached** as appendix 1 to this report. The amended terms of reference for the Safer Communities Board are **attached** as appendix 2, with amendments shown in bold.*
18. **The Board is invited to approve the terms of reference for the Fire Services Management Committee and the amendments to the Safer Communities Board terms of reference. Both documents have been approved by LGA Group Leaders.**

Interim Arrangements

19. *During discussion of the new arrangements with the fire community there has been clear support for the implementation of any new arrangements at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, being proactive in taking forward its plans for change would send a clear message to the fire community about the Association's determination to avoid a repetition of past difficulties and to act on the message it has heard from Members during the review.*
20. *Clearly, putting in place the new Member body as dealt with in this report will be complex and will involve discussions with a number of parties to agree the allocation of posts, etc. However, since the LGA does have an existing body of Members in the Fire Modernisation Task Group which is experienced and prepared for a meeting on 20 June 2005, then that group of Members could form the new body for one meeting as an interim arrangement, until political groups had time over the summer to agree the Membership nominations to the new body, ready for the new corporate year. This would allow the new body to agree its terms of reference and have an early discussion about its work programme and*

priorities before the new corporate year began, and could then “hit the ground running” at its subsequent meeting, probably in September.

21. Members are invited to endorse the proposed interim arrangements.

Allowances

22. *Separately, during recent discussions about Member Allowances Group Leaders have agreed the following allowances for Office Holders and Members of the new Fire Services Management Committee:*

- *Chair: £9471*
- *Other office holders: £4736*
- *Members: £1000*

23. Members are asked to note the allowances for Members and Office Holders of the Fire Services Management Committee.

The Relationship between the Board and Committee

24. *The Safer Communities Board will have strategic responsibility for fire and other community safety and public protection issues, and will seek to ensure that the role of fire authorities in achieving its broad objectives, for example in relation to arson prevention and working with vulnerable young people, is fully acknowledged. The Board's objectives are however too wide ranging and cross-cutting to deal with specific fire service issues. This is set out in more detail in the terms of reference attached.*

Implications for Wales

25. *Fire policy is now devolved to the Welsh Assembly under the Fire Services Act 2004. The WLGA is establishing its own arrangements for dealing with fire matters and the 3 Welsh Fire Authorities are paying a substantially reduced subscription to the LGA in the current year. Therefore, it is assumed that these arrangements will cover English fire authorities*

Financial/Resource Implications

26. *The allowances to be paid to Office Holders and Members of the new Committee will be met from within existing budgets. There are no additional budgetary implications resulting from the introduction of the new Committee.*

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