

Fire Services Management Committee

Agenda

Friday, 12 December 2014
11.00 am

Twin Towers Room
Fire Service College
London Road
Moreton-in-Marsh
Gloucestershire
GL56 0RH

To: Members of the Fire Services Management Committee
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



Fire Services Management Committee
12 December 2014

There will be a meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee at **11.00 am on Friday, 12 December 2014** in the Twin Towers Room, Fire Service College, London Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 0RH

A sandwich lunch will be available from 12.30pm.

Attendance Sheet:

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Political Group meetings:

The group meetings will take place from 10.00 -11.00am in the rooms listed below. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Labour:	Room M105
Conservative:	Room M106
Liberal Democrat:	Room M120
Independent:	The London Bar

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Labour:	Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263	email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative:	Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264	email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: Vanessa.Chagas@local.gov.uk

Location:

A map showing the location of the Fire Service College is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

Paul Goodchild
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Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £6.50 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Social Media

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgassc

Fire Services Management Committee – Membership 2014/2015

Councillor	Authority
Labour (6)	
Cllr David Acton (Deputy Chair)	Greater Manchester FRA
Cllr Michele Hodgson	County Durham & Darlington FRA
Ms Fiona Twycross	London FEPA
Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire FRA
Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands FRA
Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham FRA
Substitutes	
Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside FRA
Cllr Thomas Wright	Tyne and Wear FRA
Conservative (5)	
Cllr Kay Hammond (Deputy Chair)	Surrey County Council
Cllr Maurice Heaster OBE	London FEPA
Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester FRA
Cllr Simon Spencer	Derbyshire FRA
Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset FRA
Substitutes	
Cllr Mark Healey	Devon and Somerset FRA
Cllr Jean Rigby	Lancashire FRA
Mr James Cleverly	London FEPA
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Chair)	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire FRA
Independent (1)	
Cllr Philip Howson (Vice-Chair)	East Sussex FRA



LGA Fire Service Management Committee Attendance 2014-2015

Councillors	05.09.14					
Labour Group						
David Acton	Yes					
Michele Hodgson	No					
John Joyce	Yes					
John Edwards	Yes					
Fiona Twycross	Yes					
Darrell Pulk	Yes					
Conservative Group						
Kay Hammond	Yes					
Maurice Heaster OBE	Yes					
Simon Spencer	Yes					
Rebecca Knox	Yes					
John Bell	Yes					
Lib Dem Group						
Jeremy Hilton	Yes					
Roger Price	Yes					
Independent						
Phil Howson	Yes					
Substitutes						
Thomas Wright	Yes					
Les Byrom	Yes					

Agenda

Fire Services Management Committee

Friday 12 December 2014

11.00 am

Twin Towers Room, Fire Service College, London Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 0RH

Item	Page	Time
1. Welcome		
Including an update on developments at the Fire Service College from Jez Smith (Managing Director).		
2. Thomas Review	1 - 4	
3. Priorities for CFOA	5 - 8	
4. Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Working Group	9 - 14	
5. The Fire and Rescue Service: First 100 Days	15 - 36	
6. Industrial Relations Update	37 - 40	
7. FSMC Update Paper	41 - 46	
8. Notes of the previous meeting - Fire Commission	47 - 52	
9. Notes of the previous meeting - FSMC	53 - 57	

Executive Leadership Programme Graduation Ceremony

A sandwich lunch will be available from 12.30pm.

Members are invited to attend the Executive Leadership Programme Graduation Ceremony which will take place in the Lecture Hall between 1.00pm and 2.30pm, followed by high tea.

Date of Next Meeting: Monday, 9 March 2015, 4.00pm, at Fire Conference, Gateshead.

Thomas Review

Purpose of the Report

To update the Fire Services Management Committee on the current position.

Summary

This paper briefly describes the background and current position.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note that Adrian Thomas will address the meeting.

Contact officer:	Gill Gittins
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Thomas Review

1. Sir Ken Knight's '*Facing the Future*' Review, commissioned by DCLG, highlighted a number of areas in the fire service which he felt could be reformed, arguing that the conditions of service of firefighters could be an actual or perceived barrier to change although he also recognised that there could be political or management self-limitation at local level.
2. DCLG responded to the Review in July and announced that it was setting up an independent review into conditions of service. In August the Government opened the Review and announced that Adrian Thomas (a HR professional) would undertake the Review.
3. In summary the objective of the Review is to look at the conditions of service of chief fire officers and firefighters and the processes by which they are determined to consider whether they present barriers to reform, improvement and efficiency. Its terms of reference can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-opens-independent-review-of-firefighter-conditions>

4. Mr Thomas is due to report in February 2015. Initial evidence gathering sought information from fire authorities and staff through a number of questionnaires. Since then Mr Thomas has visited a number of fire authorities and met with representatives of the various trade unions. The LGA submitted a response to Mr Thomas which can be found here:

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/fire-and-rescue-services/-/journal_content/56/10180/6579795/ARTICLE

5. He has also met with the National Employers' Chair, Cllr Heaster, on two occasions to date. At the most recent meeting Mr Thomas was clear that as he is still in the evidence gathering stage his views may be subject to change. However he did touch upon issues such as: employer/employee interaction at local level; management of change: extent of employee buy in to the wider corporate team; management capability and recruitment (internal/external); are there clear restrictions in the Gold/Grey Books etc. which hinder efficiency? He also confirmed that elected members were invited to all his meetings with authorities. The expectation is that there will be a further meeting with Cllr Heaster and we are aware that Mr Thomas is also due to meet with the Independent Chair of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, Linda Dickens.
6. Members will be aware that Adrian Thomas is attending today's meeting of the FSMC and he will no doubt share with you some of his thoughts at the present time which will influence the questions you wish to ask. However, members may wish to consider in advance of the meeting any questions/issues that they may wish to raise. For example:

- What action does he anticipate will happen following publication of his recommendations? Does he expect it will be for fire authorities to consider whether or not to take forward any/all of the recommendations?
- Has DCLG expressed a view on what it would expect to see as the direction of travel?
- As part of the evidence gathering have the differing types of fire authorities and different approaches to delivery of the service been taken into account?
- In respect of evidence gathering are any examples of flexibility available at local level sought as well as any examples of restriction?
- Has he formed a view yet on expansion of the use of retained duty system personnel as suggested in the Knight Review?



**Fire Services Management
Committee**

12 December 2014

Priorities for CFOA

Purpose

For update and discussion.

Summary

Peter Dartford (Chief Fire Officer, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service) took up his role as the new President of the CFOA in September 2014. Peter will attend the meeting to update the Fire Services Management Committee on the CFOA's overarching priorities for 2015 and beyond.

Recommendation

Members are invited to discuss the issues set out in the paper.

Action

Officers to progress any actions as appropriate.

Contact officer: Helen Murray
Position: Head of Programmes
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Priorities for CFOA

CFOA's charitable aim and strategic objectives:

CFOA's aim is to "To reduce the loss of life, personal injury and damage to property and the environment by improving the quality of fire fighting, rescue, fire protection and fire prevention in the United Kingdom."

We look to accomplish this by:

- Leading and firmly influencing the future direction of the UK FRS on professional, managerial and leadership issues which affect the Service
- Being the focal point for professional advice that drives and contributes to the development of policy impacting upon the UK FRS
- Effectively communicating views and priorities
- Supporting our members to achieve individual and collective improvement

Overarching Priorities for 2015 and beyond

The current CFOA Presidential team have agreed to focus on the same core priorities, as we recognise that the association needs consistency. Many of the issues that affected us last year will affect us well into the future, and while there will always be short term concerns, our central objectives will remain the same.

Building Relationships

The relationships that CFOA has with our partners and stakeholders are critical to everything that we do. Be that the close and positive relationship we have with the LGA, the constructive links with government or our involvement with the wider fire and emergency services sector.

Strengthening existing bonds is coupled with a need to identify and build ties with a much broader range of parties. While we have always worked closely with colleagues in health, in particular the ambulance service, we have worked hard this year to involve ourselves much more widely in the health agenda. This was epitomised in the recognition received from NHS England's Chief Executive Simon Stevens at the LGA conference earlier this year.

It is of course perhaps even more important that we maintain strong relationships with our members, both the individual senior officers but also the fire and rescue services that are our professional partners. CFOA is working hard to improve how we communicate with all our members and looking at what additional value we can bring through new projects, products, events or research. Even taking the relatively simple step of moving our meetings and events around the country is an indication of our commitment to involve all fire and rescue services as closely as possible.

Supporting Transformational Change

It is well recognised that the fire and rescue service, as with local government in general, faces huge financial and political challenges in the future. Not only are services expected to find savings while protecting frontline services, we are under pressure to collaborate, transform and innovate like never before.

Fire and rescue services are tackling these challenges head on, but require support from other professional leaders and from their association. This might be through the excellent Peer Challenge system, which we are looking to improve and refocus, or through the representations that CFOA makes on behalf of services to government. We have pushed for greater flexibility in local taxation, more capital

support and help to simplify the process of local mergers – in particular the issue of council tax equalisation.

You will be aware of the work undertaken to create a central procurement hub, following jointly commissioned research which identified significant scope for savings. We already have 30 fire and rescue services on board and are looking at creating further hubs for areas such as HR.

Promoting the Wider Role of the Fire and Rescue Service

The significant role that the fire and rescue service can play within society is often overlooked or under-recognised. Some recent polling carried out for CFOA¹ showed that only 21% of those asked thought the fire and rescue service should be contributing to wider social issues. Clearly much more needs to be done to make the case for the wider role of the service.

Within the fire and rescue service we have come to recognise the links between the causes of fire death and various other social issues. Mental health problems, obesity, physical disability, old age, smoking, drink and drugs are all major contributory factors to both your chances of having a fire and dying as a result. These same factors are also major issues for our health and social services and our economy as a whole.

We know that firefighters have a unique ability to cross the threshold, enjoying widespread public trust and support. This often means we can reach those that others struggle to engage. Commonsense tells us we should be working with other agencies to exploit this, to improve outcomes for the public and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these interventions, whoever carries them out.

Specific Priorities for the coming year

While these are our overarching priorities, there are of course shorter term issues which are a focus of attention.

Industrial Action

The industrial action taken by the FBU over changes to pensions is a dispute between the government and trade unions, but of course our members have been required to deal with many of the consequences. We have remained clear that strike action is not the way to resolve the dispute, and have urged both sides to negotiate. It was disappointing that talks broke down, and that the government was unable or unwilling to make changes to their offer after weeks of further consideration and talks.

CFOA has done what it can to help find a resolution to the dispute, commissioning independent research on firefighter fitness from Bath University, challenging some of the actuarial assumptions within the scheme and meeting with both sides to encourage negotiation. Services are increasingly stretched and if there is further long term strike action this might begin to put contingency arrangements under pressure.

Adrian Thomas Review

The Adrian Thomas review will undoubtedly open up some interesting discussions about the way the fire and rescue service is structured, and the need for greater flexibilities. We have raised our concerns about the length of time given to the review and the lack of support, and have offered our own expertise to Mr Thomas.

CFOA believe that there could be greater flexibility within the grey book and the negotiation arrangements to allow services to implement new ways of working, new shift systems and so forth. Senior officers are not looking to degrade terms and conditions and history shows that firefighters often prefer the new systems that are put in place, and are often better off financially as a result. So many of the changes that have been made at a local level have been made *despite* the grey book, not because of it.

The review also includes questions about senior officer pay and conditions, a matter CFOA are looking forward to discussing in an open and frank manner.

¹ Populus Polling, September 2014 – 2,010 GB Adults



**Fire Services Management
Committee**

12 December 2014

**Fire Services Management Committee Operational Assessment and
Fire Peer Challenge Working Group**

Purpose

For update, discussion and approval.

Summary

FSMC Members agreed to re-establish a joint Local Government Association / Chief Fire Officers Association working group to refresh the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) Operational Assessment and peer challenge offer. This paper provides an update on the group's work and seeks approval of the revised offer for the FRS sector.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Comment on and endorse the work of the FSMC Working Group
- Provide views on the proposed offer and approach for peer challenge across the FRS Sector
- Consider the draft Operational Assessment Toolkit and approve the fire peer challenge offer for piloting

Action

Officers to progress work programme subject to Members' comments.

Contact officer: Chris Bowron
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Fire Services Management Committee Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Working Group

Background

1. Operational Assessment and fire peer challenge was jointly developed by the Local Government Association (LGA) and Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and is seen as a key element of sector led improvement for Fire and Rescue Authorities. There is a very good level of buy in to the process; all 46 FRAs have undertaken Operational Assessment and fire peer challenge over the last three years.
2. The process is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responsive to developments in the sector. Following an evaluation commissioned from Cardiff University in 2013, it was decided to update the process during 2014.
3. Members of the FSMC agreed to re-establish a member-led joint LGA/CFOA working group to review the Operational Assessment and peer challenge offer to the FRS sector.
4. This paper provides an update on the FSMC working group and presents their work in developing a revised peer challenge offer.

FSMC Working Group

5. It was proposed that the following members would lead the FSMC Working Group:

Councillor Kay Hammond – Surrey
Councillor Les Byrom - Merseyside
Councillor Jeremy Hilton – Gloucestershire

6. At the initial meeting it was agreed that Councillor Kay Hammond would Chair the working group.

7. The following officers were advisers to the working group:

Ann Millington – CFOA Director: Corporate Services and Sector Improvement and Chief Executive Kent FRS

Joy Brindle – CFOA lead on Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge and Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Tyne and Wear FRS

Gary Hughes – LGA Programme Manager
Andy Bates – LGA Principal Adviser

Eamon Lally – LGA Programme Manager

8. The FSMC Working Group has met twice and received an e-mail update once:
 - 17th June 2014
 - 5th September 2014 (e-mail update)
 - 24th October 2014
9. In addition to the working group, a CFOA Development Team was established to review the Operational Assessment Toolkit and a CFOA Sounding Board has also contributed thinking.

Update and progress

10. Working group members agreed that the current programme of sector led improvement had been successful, with all English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) having had or planning to have an Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge. All FRAs who have had a peer challenge have published their reports.
11. It was within this context that the FSMC Working Group agreed that the approach needed a refresh rather than a radical overhaul and at their first meeting members agreed the terms of reference for the group as follows:
 - 11.1 To discuss the strengths and review the areas for improvement of the current peer challenge process for the fire sector
 - 11.2 To discuss and confirm the positioning of Operational Assessment in the context of sector led improvement and the LGA sector led improvement offer
 - 11.3 To advise on the improvements needed to the peer challenge offer focusing specifically on the peer challenge process, peer training, peer competency framework and the quality assurance of peers.
 - 11.4 To advise on the promotion and communication of outcomes from fire sector peer challenge in light of the local accountability of performance to citizens.

Outcomes

12. Members considered the eight key recommendations from the evaluation of the Operational Assessment and fire peer challenge conducted by Cardiff Business School as follows:
 - 12.1 Assess whether **different types of peer challenges** might be appropriate
 - 12.1.1 It was felt that different types of peer challenges should not be offered and that the approach should ensure consistency (as this was a strength for the sector) but also be able to be tailored towards the specific needs of the FRA.

12.1.2 It was felt that by offering different types of peer challenges there was a risk of diluting the offer.

12.2 Introduce more flexibility within the process so that there is **variation in time spent on site**

12.2.1 This already happens where appropriate and is negotiated with the FRA. It was felt that 3 days was too little and that the current 4 days onsite enabled the teams to provide a robust outcome.

12.2.2 It was felt that any additional peer team capacity should be focussed around providing follow up activity.

12.3 **Update the Operational Assessment Toolkit** to further focus on transformational change, efficiency, innovation, collaborative working and finance, whilst retaining the strong operational focus which has proved successful in the past

12.3.1 It was agreed that balancing the focus on operational and corporate elements was important and that the approach should keep and strengthen the operational focus. It was also agreed that there was a need to strengthen the corporate elements, particularly around finance and transformation.

12.3.2 It was proposed that five core questions used by councils in their corporate peer challenges could be applied to the fire peer challenge. It was also important to keep the focus on delivering outcomes for communities and the current CFOA work on data could support this element. The five core questions will be supplemented with a question on outcomes being delivered.

12.4 Widen the composition of the team to **include peers from outside the sector**

12.4.1 It was agreed that this already happens but should be further developed and formalised within the toolkit.

12.5 Ensure that the **reports are robust and comprehensive**

12.5.1 This is a key responsibility of the peer challenge manager.

12.6 Formalise the current arrangements so that services may receive **additional follow up peer support**

12.6.1 It was agreed that follow up support should be offered and formalised within the Operational Assessment and fire peer challenge toolkit.

12.7 Ensure that where **performance data** exists, this is used to compare how fire authorities are performing

12.7.1 It was felt that this was a key area. The work on this by CFOA and the LGA to develop data sets for FRSs is important and will really help the sector.

12.7.2 It was advised that the work would fit with the FSMC Working Group timeframe and should be included as part of the refresh.

12.7.3 It was also agreed that the data should not be published in the fire peer challenge reports but rather used to help guide the team and to see if the FRA is using data to drive improvement.

12.8 Improve the **dissemination and signposting** to good practice across the sector

12.8.1 The Knowledge HUB (KHUB) is being used to share best practice from Operational Assessment and fire peer challenges.

12.8.2 It was also proposed to use the member bulletins to share best practice.

Additional Areas

13. The FSMC Working group also discussed the:

13.1 Link between the peer challenge offer and the Statement of Assurance and recommended that the latter should be pre-requisite reading for peer teams.

13.2 Importance of having high quality officer and member peers.

Summary of the proposed changes to the refreshed Operational Assessment toolkit and peer challenge offer

14. The proposed changes to the toolkit are:

- The inclusion of a separate section on Preparedness
- Integration of Mobilising and Control into the wider theme of Response
- Strengthening the focus on organisational effectiveness and change in line with the LGA's approach to corporate peer challenge
- Building an emphasis on use of data into each of the key assessment areas
- The introduction of key reference documents within the briefing sheets
- Updating the briefing sheets to take account of key operational developments

15. The proposed changes to the fire peer challenge are:

- Increased focus on:
 - leadership, governance, corporate capacity, financial planning and outcomes for communities
 - the specific priorities and challenges of the FRA – discussed and agreed at the scoping meeting
 - gathering and sharing notable practice
- Team composition – potential to include a peer from beyond the sector
- Flexible approach to on-site activity and formal follow-up
- Benchmarking – suite of comparative data being developed
- Refresh of the officer and member peer pool plus training as appropriate

16. [Here is a link to a draft copy of the revised toolkit](#). It is proposed that the revised approach is piloted in the first part of 2015, adjusted further as necessary and then

applied to all FRAs commissioning a peer challenge to take place from April 2015 onwards. Pilots are currently being identified.

Recommendations for next steps

17. In order to take this work forward, the FSMC are asked to endorse the peer challenge working group's endeavours, consider the refreshed draft toolkit and Operational Assessment and peer challenge offer and approve the piloting of this approach.

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications for the FSMC work programme arising directly from this report.

The Fire and Rescue Service: First 100 Days

Purpose of report

For discussion and agreement.

Summary

The attached LGA/CFOA document briefly sets out the sector's asks and offers to the next Government. It contains a number of proposals which are important to the fire and rescue service, which if adopted would make a difference to public safety and also save the public purse over £500m over the lifetime of the next Parliament.

Recommendation

Members are invited to review the draft document and endorse/amend the proposals.

Action

Officers to take forward as directed.

Contact officer: Helen Murray
Position: Head of Programmes
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The Fire and Rescue Service

Background

1. The Fire Commission on 17 October agreed the development of a LGA/CFOA fire and rescue-specific publication which would set out proposals in terms of an offer to the next Government, in line with the wider LGA publication *Investing in our Nation's Future; the first 100 days of the next Government* which we launched at this year's Annual Conference. The draft document is attached at **Annex 1**.

Development of key proposals

2. LGA officers drew up a long list of ideas with input from CFOA. These proposals then evolved through further discussion with Chiefs, Chairs/Portfolio Holders and officers in services across the country and through various online forums and networks. With additional support from colleagues across the LGA, an evidence base has been developed to support each proposal to assess our rationale and to ensure the costings stand up to scrutiny. Most of this evidence is robust and referenced with statistics, and others adopt a common sense approach. From a long list of proposals, and with advice from the FSMC's Strategic Adviser, Ron Dobson, we have sifted out the minor/less relevant ones and propose inclusion of the best proposals which have some public resonance, and will therefore be of interest to future national politicians.
3. During this process there have also been a number of areas which we originally developed where continued lobbying has started to pay off. For example the consultation on the Bellwin scheme proposes reducing the access threshold and paying 100% of costs which will be favourable to FRAs. Similarly, we have been successful in securing £1m for the National Operational Guidance programme and therefore do not need to include these.

Structure of the document

4. The draft document is deliberately short to ensure that it holds attention of the readers. After a foreword by both the Chair of FSMC and the President of CFOA, we have included a short introductory section in order to provide some context for the proposals. In terms of new content, the document starts by proposing a Secretary of State statement in order to make a positive statement about the value and changing nature of the service and to cement the fire and rescue service's place as part of wider public services.
5. In the first Public Services Bill we propose 4 new measures, all aimed at keeping key sections of the population safer. By focusing on people in rented accommodation; young drivers; and people in sheltered housing, all of whom have increased risk of

fire/accident, we register the importance of the legislative framework needing to support prevention measures.

6. In the first Fiscal Devolution Bill, we propose 4 measures focusing on flexibility around council and other tax flexibilities at the local level. We also include the same proposal as in the original document about local government taking responsibility for allocating funding. This does not detract from our wider messaging around finances which will continue into the next Comprehensive Spending Review.
7. In the first Budget, we propose a range of issues: from incentivising business to install sprinklers, to a securing a share of the Proceeds of Crime money to extending the Fire Kills campaign.

Headline messages

8. Overall, the document has a strong prevention theme which we believe will be both attractive politically and this also make strong financial sense. Providing additional incentives and protections to both vulnerable and young people will be uncontroversial, and chime with the general direction of travel about keeping people safely in their own homes for as long as possible so we would hope to get some traction on these ideas. We feel that this positions the service as being central to the big debates in our society.
9. The headline financial saving to the public purse is £500m over the life of the next Parliament. This equates to around 25% of the annual fire and rescue national budget. However, it is important to note that not all costs and benefits are directly attributed to the fire and rescue service and the key savings identified in the document come from the proposals around driving (lowering the drink-drive limit and introduction of a graduated licensing scheme) with the other impacts being negligible.
10. We are not advocating these new measures in return for a larger than anticipated cut of 8.5% to Fire and Rescue funding in the next Parliament. Rather, our argument is that we can reduce demand on a range of public services and these measures can form part of the answer to help fire and rescue balance budgets.

Wider issues

Equality and Diversity

11. Given the fact that 80% of costs are workforce costs, we were keen to include a workforce dimension. Although there are no specific asks in this context, partly because the Adrian Thomas review is examining a number of these issues, our research revealed that equality and diversity issues now need to come to the fore. Members will be aware of efforts to increase the numbers of women/BME staff and under the last Government with a specific target of 15% for all female operational staff and 7% for BME by 2009. Unfortunately, the figures currently stand at 4.5% (women)

and 3.9% (BME) and is clearly not reflective of the general population. Separately Members will be aware that the Minister has written to Chief Fire Officers about the culture and values in the service. Although individual services have their own policies on equality and diversity, there is a gap in terms of strategic workforce issues at the national level and we therefore propose to host a roundtable with key CFOs and Directors of HR to explore these issues, and what can be done to address these, in early February. We will bring the conclusions to the FSMC in March.

Whitehall Departments

12. We also did some preliminary exploration of the costs and benefits of bringing the emergency services civil service teams together in Whitehall. The location of emergency services across three Government Departments (Department for Communities and Local Government, Home Office and Department for Health) can create barriers and tensions in terms of interoperability on the ground as each central Department has different political imperatives. There are clearly some advantages in bringing this together centrally as the blue light services are similar in some ways. But they are also different in many ways - whether it be the inspection regimes, governance, funding or pay arrangements. On balance, we concluded that the risks, particularly around the fire service being subsumed by the much larger police service, outweigh the benefits in the shorter term. However, we know that Government is being asked to develop a range of models for different Whitehall arrangements and as this moves forward we will want to keep Members informed so that we can influence discussions.

Conclusion and next steps

13. Once agreed and published, we will be promoting several of these proposals through the national and trade press and online features, our regular bulletin, blogs and comment pieces. Our communications team are drawing up a strategy to ensure there is wide visibility of this piece, and we will be writing letters to key politicians and parliamentarians from all parties and those with an interest in the fire and rescue service. These opportunities will raise the profile of the fire and rescue service. This will also provide Members with a quarry of information and ideas when positioning the fire and rescue service with politicians locally.

Financial Implications

14. All publication costs will be met from existing LGA budgets.

The Fire and Rescue Service: Making our Nation Safer and More Prosperous

Foreword

Investing in our nation's future: The first 100 days of the next government was launched last year by the Local Government Association (LGA). It set out the challenges any new government will face in May 2015 and provided a local government offer on how to help them deal with the most pressing issues.

Through their work to build safe and resilient communities, Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) make a major contribution to the country's shared prosperity, protecting people and places from harm and creating the conditions for economic prosperity. Although many of the proposals in the 100 days publication would be beneficial to Fire and Rescue Authorities as part of the wider local government family, this document presents specific asks and offers directly relevant to the fire and rescue sector.

This document sets out from an LGA and Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) perspective what the service offers to a new government. The main focus of the new policy ideas is to broaden and deepen prevention work – from reducing road traffic collisions, to legislation for the installation of sprinklers, to preventing unnecessary deaths and injuries, which in turn mean less demand and reduced costs for public services. But there are also proposals to cement the Fire Service as a key partner within other blue light services and to ensure it receives the recognition it deserves, whether it be from ensuring the service has the legislation it needs, to a share in the proceeds of crime, to helping to look after our ageing population.

The LGA and CFOA have worked together to develop this set of costed proposals which will make a real impact on the ability of fire and rescue services to prevent, protect and respond more effectively and play an important part in delivering public service efficiency and improvement. This set of proposals will enable the fire and rescue service to continue their good work, take fire prevention to the next level, and provide additional tools in our armoury to keep communities safe, while also saving over £500 million.

Signed:

Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Chairman LGA Fire Services Management Committee
Peter Dartford, President, Chief Fire Officers Association

Introduction

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) play a key role in building safe and resilient communities, protecting people and places from harm and creating the conditions for economic prosperity. Fire deaths are at an all-time low and the number of fires continues to fall, thanks to prevention and safety work by services across the country and regulation from central Government where it is needed. Other public services see the value of prevention in order to reduce demand on services, but rarely do we see a service which can demonstrate the benefits of prevention in such a visible and cost effective way. But there is more that can be done.

As part of the wider local government family, many of the considerations and issues for debate about wider local government are relevant to the fire and rescue service. Fire and Rescue Authorities are grappling with a number of issues – from funding cuts, to industrial action, to ageing vehicles. Yet there are important differences too, most notably their resilience responsibilities as defined in the National Framework¹ and the legal context which means they have to provide minimum levels of community resilience and safety. This means that alongside delivering a first class local response, FRAs need to be prepared to respond to wider incidents which demand a multi-service response, across geographical boundaries. A wider debate is needed to avoid further cuts compromising the service's capacity and capability.

The 46 Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales spend approximately £2.1 billion² protecting the communities that they serve, with more than 80 per cent of staffing costs being spent on frontline operational firefighters. In his review, Sir Ken Knight³ concluded that the service 'spends to budget'. The LGA has demonstrated⁴ that there is a clear link between numbers of incidents and costs which means that if incidents continue to reduce, and demands on emergency response reduce, there will be some scope for savings.

However, the service is uniquely placed to actively contribute to some of society's most difficult issues, particularly around health and wellbeing. The workforce is now multi-disciplinary with a wide range of skills and expertise which communities can rely on. The service now provides education work with young people; works with older people in their homes to keep them safe; acts as a role model for young people on the edge of crime; delivers first aid support; works with community safety partners to prevent and tackle crime; and helps to build business and community resilience. As it transforms itself, there is no doubt that the fire and rescue service has a central role in public services.

As local government funding declines further, the service has stepped up to the challenge of working across the blue light services, through sharing buildings and control facilities, co-responding with police and ambulance services and procurement arrangements. There is still more to do and the Transformation Fund projects will accelerate this work. However, central Government is lagging behind – Whitehall needs to catch up and break down their silos to better reflect local activity, join-up policy nationally and ensure we can involve all partners in this work.

Fire and rescue services are democratically accountable and a vital part of local government. This is a service anchored in local communities, with services and

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5904/nationalframework.pdf

² £2.123 billion budgeted 2014/15 spend on fire and rescue services in England

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365581/RA_Budget_2014-15_Statistical_Release.pdf

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200092/FINAL_Facing_the_Future__3_.md.pdf

⁴ tbc

resources designed around local risks and responses, directly engaging with residents when difficult decisions have to be taken. Some areas are now developing different structural and governance arrangements and we support this incremental, locally-led approach.

The recommendations from the Thomas Review of terms of conditions⁵ of firefighters, although resource neutral, will provide further analysis and ideas for reform of the workforce. The professional and political leaders of the service, those represented by the LGA and CFA, will have a responsibility to take these recommendations forward. We are committed to providing the best possible service to our communities and we want to ensure that the terms and conditions enable and positively support new ways of working.

Our Mission: Prevent, Protect and Respond

Fire and Rescue Authorities continue to work hard to reduce the number of fires and road traffic collisions. There has been a 17 per cent reduction in fires or false alarms in Britain since 2011-12 and FRAs attended a total of 192,600 fires in 2012-13, 29 per cent fewer than in the previous year. Importantly, fire-related deaths in Britain are also reducing; in 2012-13 there were 47 fewer deaths than in the previous year and lower than in any year in the last fifty years⁶.

Beyond the devastating effect fire deaths can have to families and communities, fire deaths are estimated to cost £1.65 million each⁷. In 2004, the total economic cost of fire in the UK was estimated at £7.03 billion, equivalent to almost one per cent of the gross value added of the economy⁸. Of that cost, £2.5 billion can be attributed to the consequential costs of fire such as property damage, lost business and the loss to the economy from injuries and deaths. By 2008, this estimated cost had increased to £8.3 billion⁹.

The service needs to continue to focus on prevention. There is a moral and economic case for doing so. Through a wide range of fire safety activity, Fire and Rescue Authorities are determined to hold on to and increase these gains.

Prevention work is not just related to fire safety. Because of a trusted reputation officers provide bespoke fire advice and support through home safety fire checks in over 700,000 homes, and the service already uses visits to deliver other public safety messages and provide help or support, particularly to the elderly population. The service has a unique brand, with high levels of public satisfaction¹⁰, and confidence and this allows the service to target activity on vulnerable people, providing advice and support across the breadth of public services to help keep them safe.

What does this mean for the fire and rescue service?

Successive governments have been keen to recognise and value the work of the fire and rescue service. But the role of a firefighter has changed considerably over the years and we need clarity and understanding about a broader social mission for the fire and rescue service.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-opens-independent-review-of-firefighter-conditions>

⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version.pdf

⁷ tbc

⁸ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/fire/fireandresiliencestatisticsandre/firestatistics/economiccost/>

⁹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1838338.pdf>

¹⁰ tbc

The new Secretary of State for Local Government's public statement, May 2015

This statement would provide the government with an immediate opportunity to outline expectations of the fire and rescue service and what the government will do to ensure that these expectations are met.

The statement will also provide an opportunity for the Secretary of State to pay tribute to the professionalism and commitment of firefighters in providing a first class service for our communities; and to highlight the high esteem in which the profession is held by the public. The Secretary of State would also recognise that the re-design and delivery of public services in a context of reduced resources, changing customer demands and expectations, and evolving technology must continue apace in all public sector organisations, including smaller ones like the fire and rescue service. The statement would include an acknowledgement that the world of firefighting has changed significantly over the past 30 years and will continue to do so; fire prevention is vital for the safety of our communities, rescues from floods and road traffic accidents are more prevalent than from fires and firefighters are engaged in collaborative working with other public service colleagues in activities that stretch well beyond firefighting. We would expect the Secretary of State to recognise this as all positive but challenge the service to go even further.

In making a comment about the workforce, a broad statement about fire and rescue services needing a diverse workforce with the skills and ambition to work flexibly, efficiently and creatively to keep local communities safe might be expected; as well as clarification about recruiting as widely as possible to reflect local communities, providing rewarding careers and ensuring a positive environment for industrial relations.

Finally, a Ministerial statement could finish with a call to action from all partners as a shared responsibility between fire and rescue authorities, the workforce, the trade unions and local communities. The statement would therefore commit the government to supporting effective and productive relationships between all these partners.

The first Queen's speech

To ensure that Fire and Rescue Authorities can continue to meet their responsibilities and the expectations of the communities that they serve, the new government must announce a new **Public Service Bill** that will:

- Make four million households in private rented properties safer by making it mandatory to install and maintain smoke alarms; and to ensure that electrical systems in these properties are maintained annually in line with gas certification requirements.
- Introduce a new Data Sharing Bill (rather than data protection) to streamline existing rules and require all public bodies, such as the NHS, to share data in order to protect vulnerable people.
- Lowering the drink-drive limit to bring it into line with those in Northern Ireland and Scotland, reducing fatalities and providing savings of as much as £285 million a year; and introducing a graduated licensing scheme for young drivers up to 19 years old. These combined measures would lead to a reduction of up to 9,434 casualties, with associated savings of £509 million.

- Make 500,000 sheltered housing properties safer by extending the Regulatory Reform Order to ensure there are regular audits and inspections of the entire premises, preventing hundreds of fires a year, and ensuring that these vulnerable residents have the same protection as care homes.

A new **Fiscal Devolution Bill** will:

- Ensure that future local tax regimes give more flexibility (including the removal of de facto capping of council tax) for FRAs to determine with their communities the balance between service levels and local taxation.
- Allow Fire and Rescue Authorities to set locally appropriate fees, charges and subsidies, enabling them to support those who need it most and driving down the number of false call outs.
- Introduce new flexibilities around capital receipts so that Fire and Rescue Authorities can recycle this into prevention work.
- Establish an independent body for the distribution of funding to Fire and Rescue Authorities, acknowledging the commitment in the Autumn Statement to introduce indicative multi-year budgets to provide stability.

The new government's **first Budget** should:

- Recognise that further cuts to Fire and Rescue Authorities' resourcing needs to be based upon a clearly understood risk assessment.
- Make a commitment to provide £200 million to fund all national resilience assets (such as high volume pumps) when they come to end of their life in 2016/17.
- Inject £114 million a year into a much needed programme of capital investment to ensure equipment and appliances remain fit for purpose.
- Provide an incentive for businesses to install sprinklers by implementing a reduction in stamp duty in new or renovated properties that are fitted with sprinklers, reducing the £1.29 billion a year cost of these fires. Returning just 1.5 per cent of the £2.9 billion in stamp duty collected on commercial properties annually would meet the cost of installing sprinklers in the 8,000 commercial premises that caught fire in 2012-13¹¹.
- Give Fire and Rescue Authorities access to a share of the assets recovered from criminals who have been prosecuted for cannabis farms offences (as well as a range of other crimes including arson) under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
- Extend the £1 million Fire Kills campaign around smoke alarms to include core messages around the three most frequent causes of fires: cooking, cigarettes and alcohol, to prevent fires happening in the first place.

Introducing these measures will ensure that English Fire and Rescue Authorities, working alongside other public sector organisations, could ensure their communities are safe and save over £500 million to the public purse.

¹¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version_pdf

Proposal	Cost to the public purse	Transfers from central to local government	Savings to the public purse	Better Outcome made possible
Mandatory smoke alarms in private rented properties	0	0	6,531,300.00	This will reduce the risk of fire and associated deaths and injuries for 4 million households
Data Sharing Bill	negligible	0	0	Better tailored public services; vulnerable people could be targeted for Home Safety Assessments and other assistance; a further focus on prevention and protection
Lower drink-drive limit	0	0	285,000,000.00	77-168 deaths avoided each year
Graduated Driver licensing	0	0	224,000,000.00	A reduction of at least 4,471 casualties
Extension of RRO to sheltered housing	0	0	2,106,300.00	This will reduce the risk of fire and associated deaths and injuries for people in sheltered accommodation
Flexibility in future local tax regimes (council tax)	0	0	0	FRAs can better respond to local circumstances
Flexibility in setting fees charges and subsidies	0	0	0	FRAs can support those who need it most
Removal of council tax referendum rules	0	0	0	FRAs can better respond to local circumstances
New flexibilities around capital receipts	0	0	0	FRAs can recycle this money into prevention work
Establishment of an independent body for the distribution of funding to FRAs	0	0	0	Ensure funding is distributed to FRAs in a fair and transparent way
Future FRA cuts are based on a full risk assessment	0	0	0	Resourcing for FRAs is more closely matched to, and responsive to, the basis on which the service is delivered
National resilience assets are centrally funded	0	0	0	Continued national funding beyond 2017
A reduction in SDLT for properties with sprinklers	43,500,000.00		32,000,000.00	59-211 million boost to the economy
Ongoing annual capital injection to keep Fire and Rescues Authorities at "stand still" rates	0	114,000,000.00		A minimum of £315 million return on investment
Some of the proceeds of crime passed to FRAs	0	400,000.00		The cost of fighting cannabis factory fires would non longer fall on the taxpayer as it would be covered by the criminals themselves
Shift of focus in £1 million Fire Kills campaign	0	0		Better return on investment as the work targets a larger proportion of the population
	43,500,000.00	114,400,000.00	549,637,600.00	

NET SAVING TO PUBLIC PURSE OFFERED	£ 506,137,600.00
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TRANSFER FROM CENTRAL TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT REQUESTED ie OPPORTUNITY COST TO TREASURY	£ 114,400,000.00
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Evidence Base

Additional detail and costing on all proposals can be found here:

Proposal: Keep people in the private rented sector safer

Electricity is the cause of nearly 50 per cent of all UK fires, and every year some 70 people are killed and 350,000 injured by faulty electrics and electrical equipment. Surveys carried out for the Electrical Safety Council show that those in rented accommodation are at a higher risk of electric shock¹. According to the English Housing survey, the private rented sector in England accounts for some 18 per cent of the UK housing market, or roughly 4 million homes. However, private rented homes make up 32 per cent of the homes most at risk from fire. The Housing Survey also shows that private rented accommodation is the least likely to have a working smoke alarm of any tenure type.²

Proposal: Increase data sharing between public services

Fire and rescue services across the country have had great success in sharing data with other public services in order to improve outcomes and better target interventions. However, the current picture is patchy, and there remains some reluctance to share data, either due to lack of resources or fears around data protection. However, the current government has been committed to a more open and transparent data strategy³ in the UK public sector in general, which is welcome.

The enormous success of the UK FRS in driving down fire deaths, injuries and incidents⁴ has been thanks to a clear focus on prevention and protection. This approach is improved by better targeting and taking into account the widest range of risk factors, which is only possible with high quality data. Working with partners enables interventions to have maximum impact and deal with as many of those risk factors at once as possible.

We are supportive of the Cabinet Office's efforts to create a more open data sharing policy with a view to creating better tailored public services, while protecting sensitive information⁵. We await the forthcoming white paper, due to be published in January 2015. We would urge the next government to push ahead with a new data sharing (rather than data protection) policy and take steps to encourage all public bodies to share data in order to facilitate collaboration, accessibility and transparency.

Proposal: Keep drivers safer

Young drivers are far and away the most at risk group on the road. Teenage drivers make up just 1.5 per cent of licensed drivers yet 12 per cent of all road casualties involve a teenage driver⁶. Drivers aged 16-19 are more than twice as likely to die in a crash as drivers aged 40-49⁷. Road accidents are the single largest accidental killer of young people aged 16-24 in the UK. Young drivers are most at risk immediately after passing their test. Research shows that nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of drivers between the age of 18 and 24 have a crash within six months of passing their driving test⁸.

Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) is a key way that these figures could be reduced and is already in place in a number of countries, including Australia, New Zealand, parts of Europe

¹ <http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/mediafile/100114764/Tenants-Safety-A5-Leaflet-2014.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2012-to-2013-fire-and-fire-safety-report>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-transparency-and-accountability-of-government-and-its-services>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2013-to-march-2014>

⁵ <http://datasharing.org.uk/current-proposals/>

⁶ <http://www.trl.co.uk/news-hub/transport-news/latest-transport-news/?id=801723739>

⁷ <http://www.brake.org.uk/info-resources/info-research/road-safety-factsheets/15-facts-a-resources/facts/488-young-drivers-the-hard-facts>

⁸ <http://www.theaa.com/resources/Documents/pdf/young-drivers-at-risk.pdf>

and many US States. A form of GDL is also in place in Northern Ireland⁹, and the NI Assembly is looking to strengthen this legislation.

A 2011 analysis by the Cochrane Collaboration¹⁰ studies the impact of GDL schemes as implemented in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and overall found them to be effective in reducing crashes amongst younger drivers, with the most restrictive schemes being the most effective. For example when introduced in New Zealand, car crash injuries reduced by 23 per cent for 15-19 year olds and 12 per cent for 20-24 year olds¹¹.

A report produced for the Department for Transport in 2013¹² found that minimum learner periods, minimum practice hour requirements, night time restrictions and passenger restrictions were most effective in reducing risk. It also recommends that a GDL scheme which includes a lower drink drive limit and zero tolerance mobile phone policies are also more effective.

The DfT report estimates that the introduction of a GDL system in the UK would lead to a reduction of 4,471 casualties with associated savings of £224 million. This is just for the most at risk age range of 17-19; clearly if applied to the full age range these savings could be even higher. These are claims reinforced by an analysis by the RAC foundation in 2014¹³, which provides a breakdown of expected casualty reductions and savings by local area.

We would support the introduction of a GDL scheme, such as that as proposed by Brake¹⁴ that required a minimum number of taught hours, restrictions on night time driving and passenger numbers and a lower or zero tolerance approach to drink driving. We would also welcome the wider use of “black box” technology for younger drivers which can have clear safety benefits if used effectively - as discussed in the policy paper by RoSPA¹⁵.

Alcohol was reported as a contributory factor in 4,963 road crashes in 2012¹⁶, representing around 4 per cent of all crashes. However, they are also disproportionately lethal, responsible for 230¹⁷ deaths, from a total of 1,754¹⁸ – around 13 per cent. This figure, after coming down over a number of years, has plateaued in the past three years. Some 6.4 per cent of people surveyed as part of the ONS crime survey¹⁹ in 2012/13 admit to drink driving at least once or twice a year, which if replicated in the population at large represents some 1.9 million of the UK's 30 million drivers.

Many people exceed the drink drive limit without realising it: a lower limit would remove this ambiguity and make it clear that even one drink is too many.

A NICE report²⁰, produced in 2010, makes it clear that even one drink – typically resulting in a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.02 and 0.05 – will increase the chance of having a fatal crash by three times. Increasing BAC from 0.05 to 0.08 increases that risk a further six times. The risk of having a fatal crash increases exponentially the more that is drunk.

The NICE report estimates that by lowering the limit from 0.08 to 0.05, based on similar changes made in Europe, between 77 and 168 deaths could be avoided each year. With the

⁹ <http://www.racfoundation.org/media-centre/young-driver-safety-solutions-age-old-problem-press-release>

¹⁰ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD003300.pub3/pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.trl.co.uk/reports-publications/report/?reportid=2683>

¹² <http://www.trl.co.uk/reports-publications/report/?reportid=6844>

¹³ http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/graduated_driver_licensing_regional_analysis_trl_270514.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.brake.org.uk/info-resources/info-research/road-safety-factsheets/15-facts-a-resources/facts/489-graduated-licensing>

¹⁵ <http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/black-box-technology.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras50-contributory-factors> (RAS50001)

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras51-reported-drinking-and-driving>

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2013>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras51-reported-drinking-and-driving> (RAS51101)

²⁰ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100921035225/http://www.nice.org.uk/media/3FE/1A/BloodAlcoholContentEffectivenessReview.pdf>

average cost of a road death estimated at over £1.7 million²¹, this could produce savings from fatalities alone of as much as £285 million a year. It is shown that lowering the limit would have a deterrent effect upon even drink drivers who knowingly drive above the current limit.

However, they are clear that lowering the limit will only have maximum effect if an effort is made to raise awareness and understanding of BAC limits, since only 3 per cent of people surveyed could correctly name the BAC limit.

Both the Northern Irish²² and Scottish²³ governments are looking to introduce a 0.05 limit in the near future. England and Wales will soon be left with the highest drink driving limit in the EU (alongside Malta). 15 of the 27 have a BAC limit of 0.05, with the remainder using a limit below that²⁴. Some even maintain a zero tolerance policy, in effect setting the limit at the lowest detectable limit.

We therefore call for the government to lower the drink drive limit in England and Wales to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05. It is also clear that more needs to be done to increase awareness amongst the driving public, timed to coincide with the change in the law.

Proposal: Keep people in sheltered housing safer by extending the 2005 Regulatory Reform Order

This is about the definition of sheltered housing which gives older adults or younger disabled people the chance to live independently in their own home, managing their own affairs for as long as possible. Some residents may have domiciliary care provided through social services, voluntary agencies, family and friends. Properties are often flats or bungalows and operate a link to a 24 hour control centre which enables help to be summoned in an emergency at any time via phone, pullcords or pendants. Schemes may comprise 20-50 properties and these generally form part of the same building. Extra Care or Very Sheltered Housing is used to describe sheltered housing aimed at people who are more dependent on care services but who can still manage in their own home with the extra support that is provided on site. For many of these people this can delay the need for a full time residential or nursing placement.

London Fire Brigade attended 540 incidents in sheltered housing in 12/13, an increase of 7.4 per cent from 09/10. There have been seven fatal fires in sheltered accommodation in London between April 2009 and March 2013.

The Regulatory Reform Order 2005 (RRO) requires the responsible person for the premises to carry out an adequate risk assessment covering common parts and communal areas of the building. However individual units in which the residents live are considered private dwellings and therefore are not covered by the audit and inspection regime (which does apply to care homes).

Extending the Reform Order to the 480,000 sheltered housing dwellings in England²⁵ would therefore bring these properties in line with care homes, clarifying the confusing legislation that governs fire safety in these properties. Further to this, communities would welcome the introduction of this approach to help protect and support vulnerable and elderly people living in sheltered accommodation.

²¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/10289/ras60001.xls

²² <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-doe-120514-new-drink-drive>

²³ <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Lower-drink-drive-limit-118e.aspx>

²⁴ http://archive.etsc.eu/documents/Drink_Driving_Towards_Zero_Tolerance.pdf

²⁵ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/sheltered-retirement-housing-full.pdf>

Proposal: Flexibility in local tax regimes

Because Fire and Rescue Authorities levy low council tax precepts and often provide services which cover more than one local authority boundary, the cost and administrative burden of a council tax referendum makes such an approach practically impossible.

CFOA has gathered and analysed the costs to local authorities of running a referendum using Government published data and the cost guidelines issued by the Home Office for running the Police and Crime Commissioners elections as a comparison. If all precepting fire authorities had decided to run a referendum to raise their council tax by 5 per cent for 2014/15 the costs would total an estimated £41 million yet the income raised would be just £38 million.

In comparison, if the corresponding billing authorities held a similar referendum to raise council tax by 5 per cent the cost of running the referendum would be £41 million but the income raised would be nearly £500 million. The difference between the highest and lowest fire precept is 80 pence per week, significantly smaller than the difference between the highest and lowest overall council tax bill (£20 per week).

The public have clearly expressed an interest in engaging in debates about their local fire service. Any new system should allow FRAs to engage with their local community properly about the balance between resources and taxation without artificial constraints that effectively prevent such a mature debate taking place.

Proposal: Flexibility to set rates and discounts for council tax and business rates

Giving councils and FRAs the flexibility to set rates and discounts for council tax and business rates will allow authorities to provide support to those that need it most.

Proposal: More flexibility to retain capital receipts to fund prevention work

Local government, including Fire and Rescue Authorities can bid to use receipts from sales of capital assets to fund the revenue costs of service reforms. This follows a technical consultation over the summer. The total amount of capital receipts that will be granted this flexibility is limited to £200 million across the two years 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Although this is a positive move, more flexibility could be given as the total level of flexibility amounts to only 20 per cent of the total amount of 'assets held for sale' by local authorities. Upper limits should be determined locally and annually by prudential considerations determined by local government, rather than by an arbitrarily imposed national cap. The bid-based nature of the process is unhelpful and our preference would be a system which allows councils and Fire and Rescue Authorities to judge how this money should be spent, allowing services to spend it on fire prevention work.

Proposal: Independent body for distribution of funding

In line with our wider calls for local government funding, we advocate clarity of funding over a 5 year period, in line with the length of a Parliament in order to assist financial planning and provide stability. Financial certainty is crucial to good quality, well-run public services. We welcome the Chancellor's decision to work towards multi-year settlements for local authorities, clinical commissioning groups, schools and adult education providers. We also urge the Government to establish an independent body for the distribution of funding to councils and fire and rescue authorities. This would take the politics out of financial distribution and would redistribute business rates income across the country in a way which would ensure those areas with less business activity do not lose out.

Proposal: Recognise that resourcing is related to risk

Fire and rescue services are unique amongst local government services in that its service delivery is based upon risk and not directly demand related. The legislative basis requires each FRA to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan, assess and mitigate all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks and to apply resources accordingly.

Fire and rescue budgets are already oriented heavily towards frontline service provision – three quarters of costs are staff wages, of which 80 per cent are firefighters. Most premises costs are fire stations; most vehicle costs are fire engines or specialist response vehicles.

It is often argued that the reduction in incidents should inevitably lead to a reduction in firefighter numbers. This holds true to a degree and most services have reduced their firefighter numbers over the recent years as more efficient staffing models are introduced.

However, the relationship between firefighter numbers and the number of fires is not straightforward – fewer fires do not directly equal fewer firefighters. While demand has fallen, risk remains and could increase given the impact that the recession is having on households and lifestyles and our service must provide resilience against this. This is best illustrated by the number of Control of Major Accident Hazard sites across the country which has remained fairly static at approx. 350 since 2005. The absolute risk of an incident at one of those sites remains relatively low - but the FRS has to plan to have the resources to cope with when an incident does happen, which would require very large levels of highly skilled and prepared resource. The range of incidents firefighters are expected to respond to has increased dramatically in recent years. National resilience against both criminal and natural threats requires that we maintain a minimum level of resources at all times. For most other (non-responsive) services, reductions in resources can be accommodated by scaling back the range or level of service. For the FRS, as a largely responsive service, the range and level of service can only be adjusted if the risks reduce or change in nature.

Proposal: Commitment to fund national resilience assets

Unlike most other local public services, Fire and Rescue Authorities have national resilience responsibilities defined in the National Framework 2012 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This model of risk planning has not only a local perspective but is also based upon national risk assessments as the fire and rescue service is part of the critical national response to all manner of major incidents and potential disasters.

The FRS has made significant strides to be more efficient in order to minimise the impact of the reductions in government funding, however inevitably the number of firefighters and appliances is reducing which reduces the capacity to deal with risks. Government must continue to assure itself that the impact of its funding reductions and other significant financial pressures has not compromised the capacity and ability to respond to risk both locally and more particularly nationally.

The Government does provide a number of specific assets and specialist vehicles that are strategically located around the country as part of its national resilience planning. These resources are currently funded by specific grant. These assets need to continue to be funded by central Government, and directed to the lead FRAs.

Proposal: £114 million capital investment

Fire Authorities' capital investment is for the main part in the following key areas: fire stations build, refurbishment and maintenance; fire appliances purchase, ICT equipment, specialist operational equipment and personal protective equipment.

Expenditure is on the maintenance and replacement of standard assets that are required to deliver the essential service. The need for such investment is clearly demonstrated in the tables below which estimates the required annual investment in fire stations and appliances just to 'stand still'.

An estimated annual investment of a minimum £114 million is required in fire stations and appliances alone in order to maintain the current infrastructure in England. There is significant evidence already of a backlog in asset investment with many fire stations in poor condition and an ageing vehicle infrastructure. This may impact upon firefighter and community safety.

The Government's funding stream from 2011/12 to 2014/15 of £70 million per annum is the only departmental expenditure to fire and rescue services as capital grant. This is now the only capital funding stream for fire and rescue authorities to maintain core assets such as fire appliances and fire stations and to meet their statutory requirements in terms of building and equipment safety and compliance.

Proposal: Reduce stamp duty on properties with sprinklers

Current English law does not require sprinklers to be fitted in all but the largest and most at risk commercial premises. Despite the fact that sprinklers are proven to work to protect life and property, few business owners or construction companies who build commercial premises choose to fit sprinklers.

While total fires are reducing, the cost and impact of fires on businesses is actually growing. BRE estimates the cost of commercial fires at around £1.29 billion a year²⁶, and the growth in insurance claims as a result of fire as 12 per cent between 2006 and 2008²⁷. The CEBR, in a January 2014 report, estimated that preventable fires within warehouses alone had cost £1 billion and 5,000 jobs over five years, with a loss of £160 million in government tax income²⁸. All of this is before taking into account the wider disruption to a local area caused by large commercial fires and the impact upon the environment, both locally and generally. If all warehouse premises were fitted with sprinklers, the BRE estimates possible savings of between £59 million and £211 million per year²⁹.

CFOA has set out a clear and comprehensive case for sprinklers in the Business Case for Sprinklers document, including in commercial settings³⁰.

One reason that sprinklers are not fitted is the perceived cost to business of fitting and maintaining the systems. Furthermore, sprinklers are often most effectively and cheaply fitted during the initial construction or renovation of a building, while the potential savings (in terms of reduced fire damage and business losses) are only felt in the long term. Those building commercial premises often have little incentive to fit sprinklers if they intend to sell them on.

²⁶ <http://www.business-sprinkler-alliance.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/01/BRE-Report.pdf> (p102)

²⁷ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121108165934/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1838338.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.cebr.com/reports/economic-impact-of-warehouse-fires/>

²⁹ <http://www.business-sprinkler-alliance.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/01/BRE-Report.pdf>

³⁰ www.cfoa.org.uk/download/38472

We believe the government should incentivise the fitting of sprinklers through the tax system, in order to safeguard businesses for the long term and protect workers and the environment.

Proposal: Give FRAs access to a share of the assets recovered from cannabis farms criminals

Cannabis farms can represent a real danger to the public, dangerous electrics, booby traps and unsafe changes to the building can all put the public and firefighters at risk.

A total of 7,865 cannabis farms were identified in 2011/12 compared to 6,866 in 2009/10, which is an increase of 15 per cent from 2010/11. These farms often include equipment needing large amounts of energy such as lamps and heaters, which is sourced from illegally bypassing electricity meters. Wiring, cabling and plugs were identified as sources of ignition in around 7,000 fires meaning that a large number of these farms are a significant fire risk. These unsafe electrics may also be close to water pipes and other irrigation systems for the crop making it highly unsafe for any other residents in the building. The danger to firefighter safety when a fire is detected is very real.

These farms have a significant cost with the illegal sourcing of energy alone costing the public £70 million a year³¹. Between 2010 and 2012 police have seized over a million plants with an estimated value of £207 million³². This is clearly big business and consumes resources from a number of different local agencies, including fire and rescue services.

The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 is an important mechanism to ensure that criminals do not enjoy the benefits of their criminal behaviour. FRAs should have access to a share of the assets recovered from offenders who have been prosecuted for crimes related to growing cannabis (as well as a range of other crimes including arson).

Under the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme operated by the Home Office, local communities only currently receive a maximum of 50 per cent of what is recovered from criminals who have been operating in their area. In 2012 – 13 the National Audit Office stated that £133 million had been confiscated from criminals equating to £66 million for local areas. This local money is then divided between the investigating authority (eg police, local authorities etc), the prosecuting body (eg the Crown Prosecution Service) and the courts service.

We believe that more of this money should be returned to local areas. Fire and Rescue Authorities should also have access to a share of the assets recovered from offenders to help them recover costs for fighting these dangerous fires and to put towards further prevention activity. There are approximately 125 of these fires across the UK each year³³ costing approximately £3,186 to attend each one at a cost of nearly £400,000 overall³⁴. Recovering approximately 0.6 per cent of the £66 million returned to local areas would help to cover the costs of attending these fires and allow further prevention work about knowing the signs of a cannabis farm, identifying farms early before the public are put at any further risk.

31 OFGEM press notice "OFGEM proposes new rules for suppliers to tackle electricity theft" <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/ofgem-publications/76213/electheft-2july.pdf>

32 UK National Problem Profile: Commercial Cultivation of Cannabis 2012" 2012 <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2012/20120430CBACCoCPP.pdf>

33 Based on the figure for these fires in London which represents 20% of the Fire and rescue service http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/LatestNewsReleases_14111480.asp

34HM Government

"The economic cost of fire: estimates for 2008" February 2011

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121108165934/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1838338.pdf>

Proposal: Fire Kills campaign will be expanded to contain new core messages around cigarettes, cooking and alcohol

The national smoke alarm campaign was originally started in 1988, and re-branded as Fire Kills in 1999. It has now been running for 26 years. At the start of the campaign the focus was on promoting the installation of smoke alarms within the home. Smoke alarm ownership has now increased to 92 per cent of households in 2014 in comparison to 9 per cent³⁵ in 1987.

In 2003 the campaign shifted its focus from the installation of smoke alarms to their maintenance. This new direction was chosen following concerns that a number of people who owned smoke alarms did not test them regularly. In 2011-12 the campaign concentrated around two campaign blasts when the clocks change in March and October, and in 2013/14 the slogan 'Tick, tock, test' was used for the first time.

Analysis in 2009 estimated that 4 – 10 lives were saved per campaign blast, with 6 blasts of advertising each year costing approximately £1 million each. Since 2009 the cost of the Fire Kills campaign has reduced to £898,000 in 2010-11 and £980,000 in 2011-12. The campaign had a budget of £1 million in 2012/13.

To evaluate the campaign in 2014/14 1,750 people were surveyed: they found the impact of the clock change message led to 12 per cent of people testing their smoke alarm over the October 2013 clock change weekend, and 14 per cent in March 2014.

The campaign is very much a partnership between central Government and local FRAs and the national work has been run against a backdrop of community safety campaigns and initiatives run at a local level by FRAs. Approximately 600,000 personnel hours were spent on community fire safety campaigns and initiatives in 2013 – 2014 and 672,019 home fire safety checks were carried out. Legislation was also introduced in 1991 which required the fitting of smoke alarms to all new residences.

All of this work has contributed to a significant reduction in fire deaths, although the rate of decline has slowed.

Instead of the focus being solely on identifying when a fire has already started in the home (especially since in 19 per cent of fires a smoke alarm was present but did not go off) a larger number of people could be saved by the Fire Kills Campaign if it is expanded to include other core messages about the causes of fire so that fires are prevented from happening in the first place.

The fire statistics for 2012 - 13 show that the main source of ignition in accidental dwelling fires was the misuse of cooking appliances, which caused 52 per cent of fires. Whilst the main cause of fire fatalities in the home was attributed to cigarettes which caused a third of all accidental fire fatalities and 6 per cent of fires in 2012 – 13, these sorts of fires have also been linked in the past to alcohol consumption³⁶. In 2011/12 alcohol or drug use was found to be a contributory factor in 8 per cent of fires, 41 fatalities, and 1,208 injuries from 2,483 accidental dwelling fires³⁷.

³⁵ HM Government "Fire Statistics: Great Britain April 2012 to March 2013"

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version.pdf

³⁶ Examples include: <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/FeatureFireRiskAndAlcohol.asp>; <http://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/news/alcohol-really-can-put-fire-in-your-belly>

³⁷ HM Government "The effect of alcohol or drugs on casualty rates in accidental dwelling fires, England, 2011-12"

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/35829/effect_of_alcohol_on_casualty_rates_in_fires_in_the_home_FINAL_2_.pdf

A national campaign targeted at these interlinked causes of fires and fire fatalities could therefore have an impact on 58 per cent of all fires, as well as helping to prevent the 120 deaths and the 4,805 non-fatal casualties caused by these fires in 2012 – 13³⁸.

Whilst the national campaign supports local activity through themed fire safety months, and publicises particular safety weeks, we feel a national campaign reinforcing local activity around the causes of fire would be a powerful tool.

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³⁸HM Government “Fire Statistics: Great Britain April 2012 to March 2013”
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version_pdf

Industrial Relations Update

Purpose of the Report

To update the Fire Service Management Committee on the current key industrial relations issues.

Summary

This paper briefly describes the position in respect of the current key industrial relations issues as at the date of issue of the report.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note the issues set out in the paper.

Contact officer: Gill Gittins
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DCLG/FBU Pension Scheme Reform Dispute

1. Members will be aware that this dispute remains unresolved.
2. Since the last meeting of the FSMC there has been further strike action by Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members in England and Wales (excluding control members), including a continuous period over 4 days. Periods not covered by strike action are covered by action short of a strike involving matters such as refusal to undertake voluntary overtime, attend events or in some circumstances work across borders. The new Pension Regulations have been laid. However, the dispute remains active and a further 24-hour period of strike action in England has just been announced commencing at 09.00 on 9th December.
3. The FBU has lobbied at political level to ensure support for an Early Day Motion in order to oppose the introduction of the new Pension Regulations for the proposed 2015 pension scheme for England. Ed Miliband is the primary sponsor. Further signatories, can be viewed here: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2014-15/454> .
4. We remain in close contact with both parties to the dispute and available to further assist in identifying a resolution to this eight-point dispute in any way that it is appropriate to do so. In that regard, as far as fitness is concerned and under the auspices of the NJC, employer and employee representatives agreed an approach 'in principle' earlier this year. Members will be aware that work cannot conclude until such time as the position in the dispute around authority initiated early retirement has been resolved. We have also continued to work with both parties on the matter of the proposed joint working group on fitness issues and are optimistic that discussion will shortly result in an agreed position between all three parties.
5. Members will be aware that DCLG recently issued a consultation paper to fire authorities on matters relating to fitness issues, which mostly reflects the 'in principle' position referred to in paragraph 4 above. Whilst there is concern about the appropriateness of, or need for, inclusion in the National Framework a response has been provided to DCLG. A copy of the consultation response can be found here:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/12157/Proposed+changes+to+the+Fire+and+Rescue+National+Framework+Dec+2014/22b60000-55f0-47ea-a1d3-722f8c96c4e9>

NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services - commitment to joint work

6. The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services has been engaged in constructive discussion through its commitment to work jointly on 'changes identified by each Side to ensure that there is a pay framework alongside terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service which reflect the responsibilities of, and current and future demands on, the

service and the profession'. This includes the increasing need to consider how the workforce's skills and commitment can best be utilised and the type of activities undertaken. To support this discussion a joint survey of fire and rescue services was undertaken to map out what currently happens on the ground and to identify the types of activity felt to be of additional value for the future.

7. A number of work streams have been identified, as set out in a circular issued by the NJC last month, which can be found [here](#) .
8. The National Employers have appointed a number of specialist representatives on each of the work streams and arrangements are currently being put in place to commence work as soon as practically possible.

Local assistance

9. Since the FSMC last met we have, through the NJC, undertaken conciliations for six fire and rescue services.
10. We have also, through the NJC, worked with two fire and rescue services to deliver joint industrial relations training for managers and trade union representatives so that they can review their industrial relations relationship and commit to specific improvements (and how and when they will be achieved) where necessary.



Fire Services Management Committee Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Committee 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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Position: Adviser
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Fire Services Management Committee Update Paper

Councillor Jeremy Hilton

1. In October the Government released their latest update of the future control room services scheme. Cllr Hilton responded to the report saying that the report highlighted the work that fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) have been doing to strengthen their control room operations. The report showed that partnerships were effective in developing and implementing improvements on time and within budget and that savings of £129 million are expected to be delivered by 2024.
2. Cllr Hilton has also provided quotes on a number of other press releases including the announcement of the fire transformation fund winners, the Government's award of £1 million for continuation of the National Operational Guidance programme and a call for safety warnings to be displayed on e-cigarettes. The press release on e-cigarettes was widely discussed in the media and featured on the BBC news website, the Daily Mail, the Telegraph, Sky News, the Independent as well as many other news outlets. In response the Government launched a number of tips to help consumers use e-cigarettes safely and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills commissioned a number of Trading Standards departments to investigate whether current e-cigarette safety information is sufficient and widely available enough to consumers. Cllr Hilton has also written a *first* article on the fire transformation bids to highlight the work of the sector.
3. On 25 November Cllr Hilton, Cllr David Acton and Cllr Kay Hammond met with Lyn Brown MP, shadow fire minister. They discussed Lyn Brown's speech to the Fire Sector Summit where she advocated for a national fire service in order to meet funding challenges; sector-led improvement; and the progress of the sector with co-responding, collaboration, and merger; a statutory duty for flooding and the RDS pensions issue. A follow up letter and additional information was agreed by all Lead Members.
4. On 3 December Cllr Hilton, Cllr Acton and Cllr Hammond held a very positive meeting with Clive Betts MP, Chairman of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee, to discuss key issues facing the fire and rescue sector, including the Adrian Thomas terms and conditions review and the sector's response to the Knight Review. Members highlighted the importance and value that Fire and Rescue Authorities place in the peer review process and also stressed the need for more local flexibilities to allow for closer working with the other blue light services. In response, Clive expressed an interest in seeing examples of interoperability in action and getting a better understanding of the barriers to additional joint working.
5. Invitations from Cllr Hilton have gone out to speakers at the LGA's Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition. Clive Betts MP is confirmed as speaking at the conference along with Peter Dartford, Kieran Timmins, Adrian Thomas and Matt Wrack. We hope to be able to confirm the other speakers shortly.

6. The programme for the next Fire Leadership Essentials Programme was discussed by Cllr Hilton at a meeting with officers. The new programme will focus on the leadership challenges that the sector is facing as it changes and transforms services for communities. You can book a place for the next Leadership Essentials Programme happening between 3 – 4 February by emailing grace.collins@local.gov.uk.
7. Cllr Hilton also attended a meeting on the peer challenge toolkit, along with a number of other Members to discuss the update of the peer challenge toolkit and make suggestions for further changes, including a refresh of the peer pool.

Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 Regulations

8. On 28 October the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 regulations were laid before Parliament by the Fire Minister, Penny Mordaunt MP. She also announced the commencement of a consultation in incorporating firefighter fitness assessments and standards in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The LGA response, cleared by Lead NJC members, can be found via the link in paragraph 5 of item 6 (Industrial Relations Update).
9. During her ministerial statement the Minister made a number of points including:
 - 9.1. The Government is proceeding with the enhanced early retirement terms for those who retire from age 55, not just from age 57.
 - 9.2. The accrual rate (i.e. the rate at which you build up your pension) will also be at a faster rate than the 2006 scheme and calculated on a career average arrangement.
 - 9.3. A firefighter who suffers ill-health will receive a larger ill-health pension under the final scheme than the Fire Brigades Union's preferred scheme.
 - 9.4. The consultation on putting fitness principles into the statutory Fire and Rescue National Framework for England was announced. This will require fire and rescue authorities to put in place local fitness policies and procedures to support firefighters to maintain their fitness. If a firefighter loses their fitness through no fault of their own, it will also require the authority to consider initiating the process for an unreduced pension.
 - 9.5. The minister said that the Government also reduced the cost to authorities of early retiring firefighters on an unreduced pension, making it a more cost effective option should they wish to do this.
 - 9.6. Firefighters will be able to take partial retirement (sometimes known as flexible retirement), meaning that they can, when they reach 55, continue to work and draw a pension at the same time.

- 9.7. Those transferring to the 2015 scheme will see a reduction in the employee contribution rate of 2 percentage points in 2015- 16.
10. The Minister's statement can be found: <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/2014-October/28th%20October/3.DCLG-Reform-firefighters-Pensions.pdf>. The Minister has also written a series of open letters to firefighters outlining the changes and these can be found on the Government's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/firefighters-pension-scheme-reforms.

Future Control Room Services Scheme

11. The Government's latest update of the future control room services scheme shows the progress being made by the 22 control room projects. The projected savings of the schemes now stand at £130 million, which is £1 million more than reported in the last update in March 2014 and, significantly, £2 million more than the original early estimates.
12. The document can be found on the Government's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-control-room-services-scheme-summary-national-picture-of-fire-and-rescue-authority-improvement-plans-october-2014-update

Procurement

13. Following Ann Millington's attendance and presentation to the Fire Commission in June to discuss joining up procurement within the fire sector, CFOA consulted on the draft procurement strategy. That consultation has now closed and so far 30 FRAs have said they would be willing to start the process of joining up on procurement. The project has received funding to set up a back office function to coordinate procurement activity. This will be based in Devon and Somerset.
14. The project will be looking to get smaller categories of procurement sorted as well as procurement for larger items such as fire engines. The spending categories are currently being finalised, the next step will be to agree which authority acts as the technical lead and how the procurement will be done, which could either be via a Professional Buying Organisation (PBO) or another authority.
15. The project has written to all the Professional Buying Organisations (PBOs) and explained that in future, when the service needs them, an appropriate process will be in place to choose which organisation works on what categories or projects dependant on their expertise, costs etc. The project will continue to work with the PBOs to find the best and most solution for the services' needs.

Blue light collaboration: National Overview

16. At the beginning of November the Cross Emergency Services Blue Light Integration Working Group published *Emergency Services Collaboration – the current picture*. The

document provides an overview of the collaboration work already underway in the blue light services to provide a better service for communities and save money.

17. The overview will provide a baseline for the Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group to commission research into those areas of collaboration that appear to provide the most potential for improving services. This research will provide a firm evidence base for those services wishing to pursue their own transformational projects and for future policy development.
18. The full document can be found on the Public Services Transformation Network's pages: <http://publicservicetransformation.org/media-zone/news/513-emergency-services-collaboration-the-current-picture>

National Operational Guidance

19. The Government's contribution towards the future funding of the National Operational Guidance Programme has been agreed in principle. On 20 November officers from the programme attending the Department for Communities and Local Government's Investment Sub-Committee to discuss the programme's bid for £1 million per year of government funding. The sub-committee agreed to recommend that funding for 2015/16 be approved. The recommendation may be subject to the Secretary of State's approval, and the programme team is working with DCLG officials to support that process. The committee also agreed with the principle, that the funding is required for a three-year programme, however it is not possible at this stage to commit to funding beyond the current Comprehensive Spending Review.

Fire Kills – Annual Report

20. The Annual Fire Kills Report was released on 25 November. The report details the work undertaken by the Fire Kills campaign in 2013 to 2014. The campaign, run in partnership with local fire and rescue authorities, aims to raise awareness of key fire safety messages to the general public.
21. In the 2013/14 campaign the phrase "Tick, tock test" had been used for the first time to reinforce the clock change message. The Government had used smaller more targeted interventions, using local news, social housing newsletters as well as the tradition radio and tv. The evaluation survey found that 12% of people checked the alarms in October 2013 and 14% tested in March 2014.
22. The full report can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-kills-campaign-annual-report-2013-to-2014.

Autumn Statement

23. On 3 December the Chancellor gave his Autumn Statement. He announced new employer contribution rates will be introduced for the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, the Judicial Pension Scheme and devolved public

service pension schemes in Scotland and Northern Ireland from April 2015. (P.68, paragraph 2.13 here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-2014>)

24. There is uncertainty from the announcements about whether the average employers' contribution rates will reduce or increase for firefighters' pensions, only that new rates will be introduced. We also do not know what impact, if any, this will have on funding. We will continue to update Members as new information becomes available.

Note of last Fire Commission meeting

Title: Fire Commission
Date: Friday 17 October 2014
Venue: Committee Room 14, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>LGA Fire Commission membership, Terms of Reference and meeting dates</p> <p>Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Chair), introduced the report and informed members that the Fire Commission was to meet twice a year and not four times a year as stated in the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Members raised a concern over the timing of the next meeting in May, as this was close to the next elections, which would not give all authorities the time to make appointments to their local Fire and Rescue Authorities. It was agreed that officers would canvass the lead members to move the date back to June.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>Officers to look at moving the next meeting in May to June – Now agreed 5 June 2015.</p> <p>Decision:</p> <p>Members agreed the membership of the Commission and the Terms of reference with the alteration to two meetings a year.</p>	
2	<p>Priorities for 2014/15</p> <p>Clive Harris, Senior Adviser, introduced the report setting out the key priorities for the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) and the Fire Commission. These were based on a combination of ongoing work, recent policy announcements and a forward look with the general election in May 2015.</p> <p>Members welcomed the report and commented that the Fire Commission and FSMC should be leading the way and advising Fire and Rescue Authorities on what they needed to plan for in the run up to the next general election.</p> <p>Decision:</p> <p>Members agreed the priorities for 2014/15.</p>	

3 Attendance by the Fire Minister

The Fire Minister, Penny Mordaunt MP, informed Members that she welcomed the opportunity to speak to the Fire Commission. She welcomed Cllr Jeremy Hilton as the new chair of the Fire Commission and thanked Cllr Kay Hammond for her work as the previous chair. She explained that the fire and rescue service was a vital part of the front line emergency services, which was evidenced in the reduction in the number of deaths caused by fire. She recognised the difficult job all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) were facing with reductions in budgets, industrial action and actions short of a strike.

She informed members that the firefighter pension scheme regulation was nearing implementation. In addition there would be a joint working group looking at ways of supporting firefighters fitness issues.

There were areas that needed greater improvement and investment, most notably around leadership and collaboration. This would, in the future, provide a better return on investment and drive further efficiencies within the fire service.

The Government had recently announced an Independent Review of Conditions of Service for Operational Staff in the Fire and Rescue Service. This was to be led by Adrian Thomas in response to the Knight Review on terms and conditions. The terms of reference had been drafted by government; however it will be up to Adrian Thomas to decide on what to report back. Members were informed that Adrian Thomas was now in post and that there had been over 2,500 responses to the questionnaire. It was hoped that this independent review would shape the future of the fire service and bring about more collaborative working between the emergency services.

Members were informed that the £75 million transformation fund had now been allocated on a range of services and products. Members were encouraged to view the DCLG website to see what had been allocated.

Members thanked the Minister for speaking to them and raised a number of questions, which the Minister responded to, including:

- It was not possible to recall all the projects that had been successful in bidding for money from the transformation fund, but encouraged Members to check the DCLG website.
- It was important to visit as many FRA's as possible over the coming months and Members were reassured that the Minister would visit as many FRA's as possible.
- There was a lot of work to do around interoperability, there needed to be more in depth conversations with relevant government departments to ensure emergency services work closely together in the future.
- It was re-iterated that the Independent Review was independent and the Government had no say in the final recommendations from Adrian Thomas.
- The Firefighter Pension Scheme had taken into account the view of FRA's and had been consulted on.

- The increased figures in payments to retained firefighters were not yet known. This was dependent on the number of retained firefighters taking up the option of the pension scheme.

Decision:

Members thanked the Minister for attending and responding to questions raised.

4 Independent Review of Conditions of Service for Operational Staff in the Fire and Rescue Service

Sarah Messenger, Head of Workforce, introduced the report and informed members that a joint submission from the FSMC and LGA lead members on the Employers' Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) had been submitted on 29 September. Members were informed that Adrian Thomas was keen to emphasise that the review was independent and that he had no pre-conceived ideas. The review was expected to report to the Secretary of State at DCLG in February 2015.

Sarah commented that she had made a number of observations including:

- The LGA response makes clear that there may be scope to make some changes that will enhance the balance between national activity and local flexibility.
- Although there had been challenges with industrial relations, there are a number of examples of good industrial relations at a local level, including those supported nationally.
- One of the challenges is to ensure that the recommendations are as flexible as possible, as well as ensuring the fire service make the best possible use of resources.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

5 Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

Dave Webb, CFO Leicestershire, and Darryl Keen, ACFO, Hertfordshire introduced the presentation and explained that this was the largest cross service work ongoing anywhere. Members were informed that the airwave provision worked across all emergency services and was controlled by contracts owned by the Government which were due to expire between 2016 and 2020.

The Emergency Services Network proposed would be used by all emergency services and would be more flexible than the current system. The advantage of this system was that FRA's could ask for the service to provide for what it required, which would be more affordable in the long term. It was not economically viable to change the use of airwaves; therefore the best option was to transfer the existing system on to a more updated platform.

The timetable to achieve the transition was optimistic and it was agreed that a transitional programme was put in place to counter any slipping in the timetable.

Darryl Keen informed Members that although the fire service only made up 5% of the total order they were being treated as an equal partner in the process. The programme encompassed four key areas, namely Delivery Partner, User Services, Mobile Services and Extension Services. The programme ensured that the cost of this programme was less than a commercial alternative.

Members were informed that the cost implications for the fire sector was being discussed and views of the fire service were being fed into discussion at the main sounding board. The funding and finance group had oversight of everything that had gone in and out of the finance group.

Members welcomed the report and raised a number of questions to which Dave Webb responded including:

- Mobile phones were not an option, this was because mobile networks crashed and some areas of the country still did not have a mobile network signal. It was important to remember that the airwaves used by the emergency services were much stronger and more robust than mobile networks.
- It was hoped that each authority would be asked if the service works for them and to ensure any add-ons were done quickly, thus avoiding costs getting out of control.
- Everything will be done to ensure that the service is fully operational as soon as possible. This had been identified as a key risk, although there was no set solution if the timings slipped.

Decision:

Members **noted** the presentation and thanked Dave Webb and Darryl Keen for their time.

**6 The fire and rescue service's proposition to the next Government:
The First 100 Days**

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes, introduced the report and informed Members that the 100 days document set out the key ideas for the next government. This was a good opportunity for the fire sector to include campaigns and ideas which can be put forward to the next government. Members were informed that the 5 hills campaign had been going for a number of years and that this might be an opportunity to revamp a similar campaign.

Members welcomed the report and agreed to send any ideas to officers at the LGA.

Decision

Members **noted** the report and agreed to send any ideas to officers.

7 Fire Commission Industrial Relations report

Gill Gittins, Principal Negotiating Officer, introduced the report and informed Members that following increased levels of discussion between DCLG and the FBU the expectation was that the draft Regulations would be laid the week commencing 27th October. It was not known whether those discussions would impact upon the content.

The NJC's commitment to joint working on pay terms and conditions for the future would now move into the work streams phase covering areas such as emergency medical response; multi-agency response; environmental challenges; youth and other social engagement work; and inspections and enforcement.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

8 Fire Commission update report

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

9 Notes from the previous meeting

Members **agreed** the minutes from the previous meeting on 13 June 2014.

Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Title: Fire Services Management Committee
Date: Friday 5 September 2014
Venue: Millbank Room, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Membership and appointments to outside bodies 2014-15 The Chair welcomed new Members of the Committee and noted the work of retiring Members. The Committee noted the outside bodies for the year 2014/15 and agreed the places on each body. Members requested the LGA have two places on the Cross Emergency Services Group. The Chair also introduced Ron Dobson CBE as the new Strategic Adviser to the Committee until he leaves the service. Action: Officers to write to retiring Members of the Committee thanking them for their work. Officers to ask for two places on the Cross Emergency Services Group. Officers to circulate list of outside appointments to all Members of the Committee. Decision: Members noted the report and agreed the places on the outside bodies.	
2	Priorities for 2014/15 Helen Murray, Head of Programmes, introduced the report stating that priorities that had been agreed in previous years were still ongoing. In addition to those priorities Members were asked to agree the four priorities outlined in the report, those being: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work to assist resolution of the current industrial action;• The Independent Review of Terms and Conditions;• Political engagement; and	

- Transformation: blue light interoperability.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments including:

- The industrial dispute was between the Government and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). However, it was important that the Committee had an oversight of the dispute without being involved in it.
- Any meetings with Ministers, or setting of agendas should be done in consultation with other lead members of the Committee.
- A forward plan of work would assist lead members direct the travel of future agendas and reports for the Committee.
- Funding up to the next general election and beyond, particularly in the context of the next Comprehensive Spending Review should be one of the key priorities for the Committee.

In addition Cllr Hammond reminded the Committee that the Fire Bulletin was a quarterly report updating the Fire community on work and events.

Action:

To include funding as a priority going forward.

All lead members to be involved with meetings of Ministers and setting the agenda for future work.

Decision:

Members agreed the priorities as set out in the report and added funding to the programme of work.

3 Independent Review of Conditions of Service for Operational Staff in the Fire and Rescue Service

The Chair introduced the report to the Committee and informed Members that the questionnaire from DCLG had now been sent to all Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Chair requested that Adrian Thomas be invited to the next meeting of the Committee on 12 December.

Sarah Messenger, Head of Workforce, explained the Committee that the Review crossed a number of policy areas. It was important that the LGA had a joined up response on the different aspects of the Review, in particular consulting with the National Joint Committee (NJC). The Committee were asked for a steer on an LGA response.

Members welcomed the report, broadly agreeing with the suggested response and contributed a number of different views on the Independent Review.

Some Members were concerned that the NJC had not been involved in any early discussions regarding the Independent Review. It was the role of the NJC to look at the terms and conditions, and Members noted that the NJC has already committed to reviewing the role of firefighters. In addition

some Members felt that it was not the role of DCLG to review terms and conditions as they did not directly employ firefighters.

It was felt by some Members that the review undermined the role of Fire and Rescue Authorities and explored the value in sending a written response to make key points, rather than responding to every individual question.

In response Members agreed that the Committee needed to respond on behalf of the fire sector and that any response should outline the role of the NJC and the FSMC.

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes, informed the Committee that the deadline to respond had been extended from 19 September to mid-October. In addition the Committee agreed to share the response from the LGA with all Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Actions:

Officers to invite Adrian Thomas to the next meeting of the FSMC on 12 December.

Officers to compile a LGA response and clear this with Lead Members of the FSMC and NJC members. Once agreed, the review should be shared with all Fire and Rescue Authorities to inform their individual responses.

Decision:

Members agreed the recommendations within the report.

4 Review of Flooding

Clive Harris, Senior Adviser, introduced the report and outlined the summary of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA's) response to the flooding from December 2013 to February 2014. In total the report outlined 44 recommendations, of which the most relevant to the Committee were outlined in paragraph 8 of the report.

Cllr Hammond commented that it was good to work with CFOA on flooding and it would be helpful for the Committee to speak with Cllr Mike Jones and other Councillors within the LGA to learn more on the input fire services can make to the Ministerial Recovery Group work.

Members welcomed the recommendations, but commented that they were unsure as to why CFOA were reluctant to pursue a statutory duty making the fire service the primary lead on flooding incidents. Ron Dobson provided clarification about CFOA's position on co-ordination and rescue.

It was noted that the Prime Minister had agreed to support all the Pitt Review recommendations including making the fire service the primary body for flooding incidents. In addition Members commented that fire authorities would need to play a more strategic role in the future with regards to flooding.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

Action:

Officers to ensure that the views of fire and rescue authorities are fed into the LGA's wider work on flooding.

5 Industrial Relations Report

Sarah Messenger, Head of Workforce, updated Members on the latest Industrial Relations dispute. Members were informed that agreement had been reached on an 1.0% increase in pay for employees covered by the NJC.

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes, informed the Committee that the Minister for Fire, Penny Mordaunt had agreed to attend the Fire Commission on 17 October, however she was not available until 1.30pm, which would mean the re-arranging of the meeting to a later time.

Action:

Officers to inform Members of the re-arranged Fire Commission meeting time.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

6 Update paper

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes, advised Members that Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority had agreed to supply volunteers for the Fire Conference in Gateshead in March.

Members welcomed the update paper and asked for Chair's engagements to be detailed in future reports.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

7 Notes of the previous meeting - Fire Commission 13 June

Decision:

Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2014.

8 Notes of the previous meeting - FSMC 18 July

Decision:

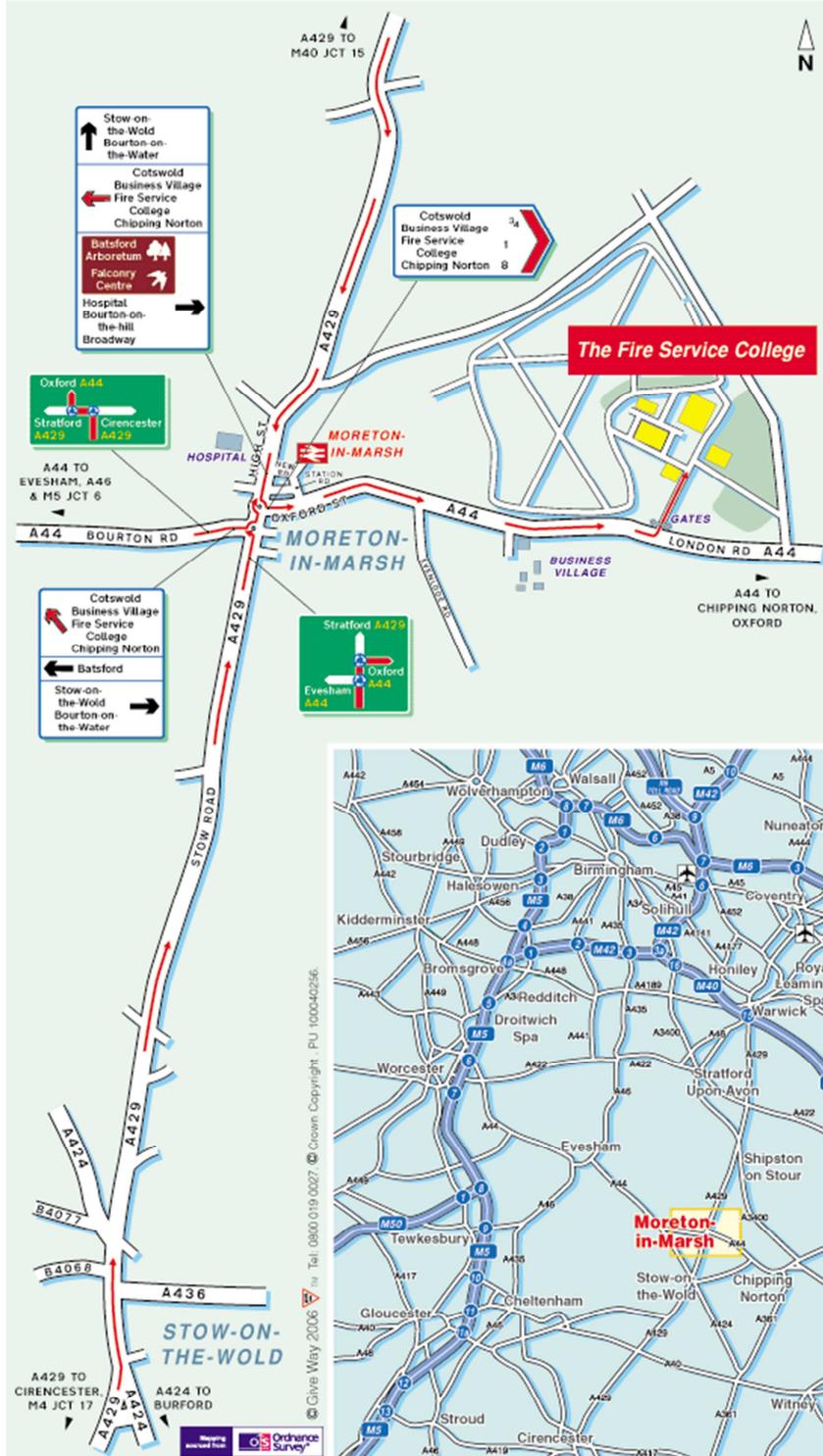
Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2014.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Philip Howson	East Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr David Acton	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
Members	Ms Fiona Twycross	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
	Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Maurice Heaster	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
	Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Simon Spencer	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Thomas Wright	Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
Apologies	Cllr Mrs Michele Hodgson	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		

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 Gloucestershire
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Public Transport



Moreton-in-Marsh Station

Approximately 20 minutes walk away.

For information on train operators and times phone National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950.



Birmingham International Airport

Approximately 1 hours drive away.

London Heathrow Airport

Approximately 1 hour 45 minutes drive away.

London Gatwick Airport.

Approximately 2 hours drive away.

