

Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Title: Fire Services Management Committee
Date: Monday 9 March 2015
Venue: Hilton Hotel Gateshead, Bottle Bank, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE8 2AR

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome and Conference Programme The Chair welcomed members to the Hilton Hotel, Gateshead, which was the venue for the LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition 2015. He highlighted a number of the speakers who would address the conference and the workshops which would be held over the following two days. These would include keynote speeches by Penny Mordaunt MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and Lyn Brown MP, the Shadow Fire and Communities Minister. There will also be a video from Cathy Bakewell, the new Liberal Democrat spokesperson on fire.	
2	LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition venue and location for 2016 and beyond Amanda Spicer, Events Organiser, introduced the report and explained that the Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel had been recommended for the LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition for 2016. As the Committee had previously taken a view to only consider venues of a high standard which had a fire sprinkler system in place throughout there was a limitation on the number of venues which would be appropriate. The Bristol Marriott met the criteria for sprinklers but had a smaller exhibition space and therefore would reduce by three stands. Members discussed the arrangements for future conferences and the following points were raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel was agreed as the venue for the 2016 conference.• Members expressed the view that they would not wish to consider venues without sprinkler systems as this would send the wrong message. However, members appreciated the trade off as this might limit the potential to expand the conference in future years.• It was suggested that a four year cycle of conference venues be agreed, with two venues in the south and two in the north in order to negotiate the best possible rates.• It was important that everything possible was done to expand the	

conference to broaden its reach in order to increase income from the event..

The Committee requested that a further paper on venues from 2017 onwards be brought back for consideration at the next meeting of FSMC in June 2015.

Decisions:

- That the Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel be agreed as the venue for the 2016 LGA Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition.
- That a further paper on venues for 2017 onwards be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

3 LGA Fire and Rescue Authority Perceptions Survey

Juliet Whitworth, Research and Information Manager, introduced the report and presented the initial findings of the LGA Fire and Rescue Authority Perceptions Survey to the Committee. It was highlighted that detailed analysis would be undertaken in due course and reported back to the Committee in June 2015.

The Committee noted that Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities had been surveyed in January and February 2015. It was designed to gather views on the LGA and help shape the LGA's future offer to the sector. The response rate to the survey was just under half of those who were sent the survey (which did not include elected members who were on the FSMC).

Headline figures from the survey included:

- 79% of Fire and Rescue Authorities would speak positively about the LGA
- 52% agreed that the LGA provided a value for money service
- 81% agreed that the LGA was a good advocate for the sector
- 56% said that the LGA helped with sector-led improvement
- Regarding useful elements of the offer, 29% said lobbying, 25% said pay negotiations, 12% said support from political group offices

In the discussion which followed the Committee made the following points:

- Once the full report was available for members, it was suggested that a working group to consider the results of the Perceptions Survey could be formed. Following full consideration of the findings of the survey at the next meeting it could make recommendations on the refresh of the offer..
- The detailed report should highlight the differences between perceptions of member councils and perceptions of Fire and Rescue member authorities / services. There should also be detailed breakdown of results based on geographical spread, type of fire service, etc if possible.
- The questionnaire which was sent out should be circulated to members of the Committee for information.
- Following consideration of the full report and recommendations

from the working group, firm proposals for shaping the future offer should be considered by the Committee in September 2015.

Decisions:

- A report containing detailed analysis of the LGA Fire and Rescue Authority Perceptions Survey to be considered at the next meeting in June 2015.
- Following full discussion of the findings at the next FSMC, members will agree whether a working group is needed to look at the future offer to Fire and Rescue Authorities, with proposals to be considered in September 2015.

Action:

- Perceptions Survey questions to be circulated to members of FSMC for information.

4 Industrial Relations Report

Gill Gittins, Principal Negotiating Officer, presented the report and highlighted current key issues regarding Fire and Rescue Service industrial relations. This included updates on the pension reform dispute between DCLG and the FBU, the NJC / DCLG Joint Working Group on Fitness and the Thomas Review.

In the discussion which followed the following points were raised:

- The pension reform dispute between the FBU and the Government was ongoing, and would more than likely remain a matter for the next Government following the General Election in May 2015.
- FSMC should seek further clarification on Fire and Rescue Authorities' need to form Pension Committees, in particular when Authorities were sharing services or formally merging.
- Adrian Thomas' review of Firefighter's terms and conditions was not being carried out in isolation. The service had faced unprecedented cuts but continued to manage well. A wide-ranging strategic review of the role of the firefighter in the future was already in hand through the National Joint Council. It was currently not known when Adrian Thomas would be publishing his review.
- It was currently unclear how the increased costs for Retained Duty firefighters' pensions would be funded. Further details on this were expected as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review following the General Election.

Decision:

- Members noted the report.

Action:

- Further update on pension issues to be considered by FSMC at the next meeting.

5 Response to Lyn Brown Consultation

Eamon Lally, Senior Adviser, circulated a draft letter to Lyn Brown MP, Shadow Fire and Communities Minister, in response to her recent consultation on the future structural organisation of the Fire and Rescue Service in England. He commented that it had been drafted in conjunction with Lead Members of FSMC, and that all members now had the opportunity to comment before the response was sent to the Shadow Minister.

The Chair suggested that reference to the working relationship between the Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service be added as there were good examples of collaboration.

In the following discussion members agreed that the letter should be from all Lead Members, thereby representing a cross-party response to the consultation, and that it should be more robust in setting the agenda for what the Fire and Rescue Service could deliver. Members took the view that a single Fire and Rescue Service in England, or large scale mergers between multiple authorities, was not the most effective or accountable way to deliver the service and that a localist approach led by local politicians was the best way to approach reform.

The Committee noted that the letter would be redrafted and reviewed again by Lead Members before the response was sent to the Shadow Minister.

Decision:

- That the letter in response to Lyn Brown MP's consultation on the 'Future of the Fire and Rescue Service in England' be redrafted to put forward a more robust response which reflected the views of FSMC and Fire and Rescue Services across the country.

Actions:

- Letter to Lyn Brown MP to be redrafted and circulated to Lead Members before submission to the Shadow Minister.
- Finalised letter to be circulated to all members of FSMC.

6 FSMC Update Paper

The report updated the Committee on activities undertaken by the Chair, Lead Members and the LGA since the previous meeting.

One member highlighted that he had attended the Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials course hosted by the Chair on 3rd and 4th February in Coventry, and commented that it had been an excellent and informative course.

Decision:

- Members noted the report.

7 Notes of the previous meeting

Members agreed the notes of the meeting held on 12 December 2014 as correct.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Philip Howson	East Sussex Fire Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr David Acton	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
Members	Cllr Michele Hodgson	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire Fire Authority
	Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Bell	
	Cllr Maurice Heaster	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
	Cllr Simon Spencer	Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset Fire Authority
	Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Apologies	Ms Fiona Twycross	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		
Helen Murray		
Eamon Lally		
Lucy Ellender		
Gill Gittins		
Amanda Spicer		
Juliet Whitworth		
Clair Alcock		
Paul Goodchild		