

## Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

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**Title:** Fire Services Management Committee  
**Date:** Thursday 20 September 2018  
**Venue:** Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

### Item Decisions and actions

#### 1 Chairs Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Cllr Ian Stephens, welcomed members to the first Fire Services Management Committee meeting of 2018/19.

There were no declarations of interest.

Apologies were received from Cllr Jason Ablewhite and Cllr Chris Pillai is a substitute.

#### 2 Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

Thomas French introduced this item and drew members' attention to the list of outside bodies. A brief conversation was had about outside body appointments and it was agreed that each political group would make their nominations and the appointments would be discussed by lead members and officers after the meeting.

Members highlighted some inaccuracies with their local government authority titles which were amended.

##### Decision:

Members noted the report.

##### Action:

It was agreed for Cllr Chard to be the Fire Services Management Committee Finance Champion and Ms Twycross to be the Fire Services Management Committee Diversity Champion.

Officers and lead members to agree appointments to outside bodies. See [Appendix B](#)

#### 3 Fire Services Management Committee Priorities 2018-19

Charles Loft introduced the Fire Services Management Committee priorities for 2018-19.

The paper reflects discussion from Lead Members meetings and the last Fire Services Management Committee meeting in June 2018.

Members made the following comments

- Fire Services Management Committee should consider better scrutiny of police and crime commissioners.
- Workforce should include broadening the role and supporting diversity
- Collaboration work with other bodies, such as Adult Social Care around mental health should be emphasised.
- Inspections should be its own priority and not within Transparency and standards.
- It is important that Fire Services Management Committee focuses on Inspections this year, with support being provided to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) including a mechanism for sharing learning.
- The work on building safety should include sharing the learning from the Grenfell Tower enquiry and also the implications for how fire services deal with public enquires.
- The LGA should have a place in the governance of the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme, and there should be additional funding for FRAs.
- The work on Automatic Fire Suppression Systems needs to continue from last year.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report.

**Action:**

Officers will take note of comments and deliver the programme of work agreed by members.

#### **4 LGA Peer Support offer**

##### **LGA Peer Support offer**

Gary Hughes gave a background to the LGA Peer Support Offer and why it was formed. In 2016, the Fire Services Management Committee created a working group on Peer Support to review the offer, but it was agreed to pause the working group till a framework of inspections was available. Now the LGA is in a position to develop its peer support offer.

The Fire Peer Support Framework will have three core elements:

- Inspection Peer Support
- Leadership and Governance Support
- Targeted Support

Gary explained the offer had been developed with the sector, including a session at the 2017 LGA Fire Conference and reaching out to colleagues in NFCC. The framework is there to support sector led improvement not to set up a different body that is parallel to the inspections.

Members made the following comments

- There is concern that there is no clarity on what support is being offered, whether this is pre- or post-inspection, and the length of the peer review, which should be

less than the previous 3-4 days.

- The governance within the service would be an important element of the Fire Peer Review offer.
- How would the offer be funded going forward.
- Support leading up to an inspection is important, like in the education sector where schools are supported before an OFSTED inspection.

Gary Hughes responded

- The peer support needs to be supportive of sector level improvement and not a burden on services.
- Peer support would be on going, not just in stages of pre and post inspections.
- Peer Support can cover wider than just the inspection process.
- MHCLG is still keen to support sector led improvement and the LGA improvement grant can support fire authorities.

**Decision:**

Members approved the proposals.

**Action:**

Gary Hughes will bring an evaluation report to Fire Services Management Committee in March 2019.

## **5 Annual Fire Conference 2019**

### **Annual Fire Conference 2019**

Jess Norman updated Fire Services Management Committee on the progress of planning the next Fire Conference. Jess Norman highlighted the agenda for Fire Conference and asked members to consider submitting workshop bids.

Members made the following comments for the next Fire Conference:

- Diversity should be a standing item in the main conference and gender balancing in the plenary sessions should be kept at a standard.
- Education in the fire safety is a changing business and needs to be explored.
- The LGA should have a place at conference on Fire Suppression and the work of Grenfell.
- The Shadow Fire and Emergency Services Minister, Chris Williamson MP should be invited.
- Having a main theme at the conference would be helpful for lobbying on shared issues. Prevention, the role of fire and rescue services in public health, services engagement with health and wellbeing boards and protecting vulnerable people should be at the centre of conference, or alternatively a paper at FSMC.
- Cllr Chard representing employer interests and Matt Wrack (FBU) employee interests should be invited to speak on an appropriate subject, such as broadening the role. Their own authorities would be putting in bids around apprenticeship schemes, the use of technology in promoting fire safety

**Decision:**

Members noted the progress in planning the next Fire Conference

**Action:**

Officers to work on a paper on adult social care and the fire service for a future Fire Services Management Committee meeting.

Officers to send information on workshops and how to submit bids to members.

## **6 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings**

Mark Norris introduced the report on the LGA's building safety related work since the last Committee meeting. Mark Norris highlighted the work that has been done on private high-rise building with combustible cladding systems and the work that has been done on Fire Door testing.

Mark Norris went through the proposed model for the Joint Inspection Team, with the LGA working in partnership with MHCLG. Initial feedback will be sought on the model from Lead Members of Fire Services Management Committee with a paper coming back to Fire Services Management Committee at a later date.

Members made the following comments

- Members should be involved to ensure greater scrutiny of the process.
- Members will have to bear the reputational risk if this does not go through well. There needs to be a clear line of accountability.
- Lead Members can feed their comments from their groups to further add to the process.

Mark Norris responded

- The LGA will be doing operational work around this with local authorities. Work on this will also be reported to the Grenfell Task and Finish Group and the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

**Decision:**

Members noted the report

**Action:**

Officers to take forward comments from members.

## **7 Finance**

In response to Home Office interest on reserve levels in connection with the approach for additional 'broadening the role' funding, work had been undertaken by the National Employers. Bevis Ingram reported on that work, the type of analysis and narrative provided and that matters had now moved on. The Home Office has asked the National Employers to do further analysis on associated issues. In responding, that work will also be mindful of wider financing issues and the pressures that the fire service faces.

Members commented

- The work has been done from the National Employers to show that fire services are all unique and have their own problems. This has been helpful for talks about finance with the Home Office.

- Capital funding is as important as reserves funding.
- Fire Service funding has changed, due to what the services now does and the financial climate. So how the services use reserves has now changed.

**Decision:**

Members noted the verbal report

**Action:**

Officers to take forward comments from members.

## **8 Workforce Update Report**

Gill Gittins and Clair Alcock updated the Fire Services Management Committee on matters in relation to fire service industrial relations and pension matters. Gill Gittins highlighted a couple of areas from the report circulated in advance of the meeting.

Gill Gittins reported on the broadening the role negotiation and related additional funding issues. As far as England and the Home Office was concerned discussions continued. The focus had now moved away from reserves following the information provided by the National Employers. There remained pressure from the Scottish Government to secure a deal quickly given it had already indicated its financial support. Positive discussions were taking place with Welsh Government.

Gill Gittins reported on the three regional meetings with Chairs and Chief Fire Officers and the themes of affordability and frustration on how long the negotiations were taking although recognising that the negotiation was complicated by the need to secure additional funding. It was felt that without a guarantee of funded outcomes any suggestion of an independent review would not aid the negotiation, cause further delay and be relevant only in England. Chairs and CFOs had been clear on the level of contribution FRAs could make in terms of any uplift in pay and that was shared with members.

Clair Alcock reported to members an update on the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2016 valuation results, in common with other public sector schemes, the employer contributions are going to significantly increase due to the effect of the discount rate falling to 2.4% from 2.8% and the employer cost cap has been breached, which means the pension benefits will need to be improved.

The scheme advisory board, on which sit a number of FSMC members will be responsible for consulting with government on the appropriate method of improving member benefits.

Clair also confirmed that following the FSMC meeting in January and consultation with the Firefighters pensions' technical group, a request to HMRC will be submitted seeking guidance on the correct tax treatment where a lump sum is revised twelve months after retirement.

Members commented

- Both the employee and employer sides of the NJC needed to have a shared view on the level of ask of governments. That would be informed by employee side expectations in terms of pay uplift (which was awaited). But more than 2% was unaffordable for FRAs. Scotland was more progressed in terms of additional funding, than England, as is Wales

**Decision:**

Members noted the report circulated with the agenda and verbal report.

**Action:**

Officers to take forward comments from members.

**9 Fire Services Management Committee Update paper**

Jess Norman introduced the report that outlined issues of interest to the Fire Services Management Committee.

**Decision:**

Members noted the verbal report

**10 Minutes of the previous meeting**

Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Ian Stephens	Isle of Wight Council
Vice-Chairman	Ms Fiona Twycross AM	Greater London Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Nick Chard	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Keith Aspden	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Members	Cllr Eric Carter	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Mark Healey MBE	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
	Roger Hirst	Essex County Council
	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Nikki Hennessy	Lancashire County Council
	Cllr Judith Hughes	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
	Cllr John Robinson JP	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority
	Apologies	Cllr Jason Ablewhite

**Appendix B- Outside Bodies**

Outside Body	Group nominations in 2018/19
Arson Prevention Forum	1 place Cllr Kevin Dodds (Lab)
Central Programme Office	1 place
Engagement Forum	Cllr Ian Stephens (Ind)
Central Programme Office	1 place
Engagement Forum: Community Risk Sub-forum	Cllr Nikki Hennessy (Lab)
Central Programme Office	1 place
Engagement Forum: Digital	Jason Ablewhite (Con)
Central Programme Office	1 place
Engagement Forum: People	Cllr Roger Price (LD)
On-call Steering Group (formerly CFOA, RDS & operational training working group)	2 places Cllr Judith Hughes (Lab) Cllr Mark Healey (Con)
Emergency Service Collaboration Working Group	2 places Cllr Eric Carter (Con) Cllr John Robinson (Lab)
Fire Service College Engagement Forum	2 Places Roger Hirst (Con) Cllr John Edwards (Lab)
HMICFRS FRS Inspections - External Reference Group	3 places Cllr Rebecca Knox (Con) Fiona Twycross (Lab) Cllr Keith Aspden (LD)
Interoperability Board (JESIP)	1 place Roger Hirst/Cllr Nick Chard (Con)
National Occupational Committee	1 place Cllr John Robinson (Lab)
Fire Standards Board	1 place Cllr Nick Chard (Con)
Strategic Resilience Board	2 places Cllr Les Byrom CBE (Lab) Cllr Ian Stephens (Ind)