

Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Title: Fire Services Management Committee
Date: Friday 16 October 2020
Venue: Via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Commissioner Andy Roe.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Committee formally noted their congratulations to those in the sector who had been recognised in the Queen's recent birthday honours list.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June 2020 were **agreed**.

3 Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Body Appointments 2020-21

The Chair invited members to comment on the contents of the report.

Cllr Healey expressed his concern that the On-Call Steering Group had not met in the last year. Roy Wilsher, NFCC Chair, confirmed that the Group had been disbanded and its work was being wrapped up in a wider programme being taken forward by the NFCC on working patterns. He reassured members that the LGA would be invited to take part in this and, confirmed that it was likely to start early in 2021.

Cllr Carter clarified that the Emergency Service Collaboration Working Group had met during 2019/20 but its structure was changing and he was still waiting to hear what the new format would look like.

Cllr Byrom asked for clarity on the FSMC meeting that was due to take place at the LGA Fire Conference. Mark Norris, Principal Adviser, confirmed that the Conference would now be taking place virtually and so officers were proposing to switch the FSMC meeting to Friday 5 March at 11am.

Members agreed to reappoint Fiona Twycross AM as the Committee's Diversity & Inclusion Champion. Fiona thanked the Committee and acknowledged the support from other members, particularly Cllr Knox, who had stepped in at engagements when she wasn't available.

Decisions:

Members of the Fire Services Management Committee:

1. **agreed** the Terms of Reference;
2. formally **noted** the membership for 2020/21;
3. **noted** the future meeting dates for 2020/21;
4. **agreed** the Committee's nominations to outside bodies; and
5. **agreed** to reappoint Fiona Twycross as diversity and inclusion champion.

Actions:

- Officers to contact the Emergency Service Collaboration Working Group secretariat to find out more information.

4 The Person-Centred approach to the Home Fire Safety Visit

The Chair welcomed Rick Hylton - Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Essex County FRS and Ged Devereux – NFCC Strategic Health Lead, to the meeting and invited them to give their presentation.

Rick thanked members for the opportunity to speak to the Committee. He outlined the progress that had been made by FRS's and others in recent years in reducing the number of fires in the home. However, there was a growing understanding in the sector that in order to make further improvements, prevention work should include risk reduction measures developed around the wider needs of the individual, not just the physical structure of their home. He said that the Government had recognised that there needed to be greater consistency across the country in this regard and the current NFCC project was designed to address this.

Rick then spoke about the variation in the prevalence of risk factors across the country and explained that the Framework identified core data that needed to be collected to understand those risks. This work was closely allied to the NFCC's Community Risk Programme. He said that the NFCC was well placed to deliver the project through the Central Programme Office.

Ged said that the NFCC had engaged with a range of FRS stakeholders in a series of regional workshops to obtain their views on the programme. All FRSs that participated accepted the rationale for the person-centred approach and there was broad consensus that the fire service prevention pathway needed to be strengthened to put it on an equal footing with protection and response. He said that the new approach to Home Fire Safety Visits sought to amalgamate the best elements of the Home Fire Risk Check and the Safe and Well Visit with the aim of reducing risk and changing behaviour.

Following the introduction, Members raised the following points:

- It would be important to work with council social care teams on the new approach, but concerns were raised about possible data protection issues.
- How can it be ensured that the new approach is widely taken up by FRSs? Rick said that there was a programme officer at the NFCC who was taking this forward with FRSs. In addition, HMICFRS were going to make this part of their inspection process so it was important that all services embraced it.
- Engagement with Registered Social Landlords was considered key to the success of the new approach.

The Chair thanked Rick and Ged for taking the time to update the Committee on their work.

Decisions

Members of the FSMC:

- **Noted** the progress that has been made with the development of the Person-Centred Framework and endorsed the new approach to Home Fire Safety Visits.
- **Supported** work and progress of the 20 next steps found at p. 20 of Appendix 1 of the report.

5 FSMC Priorities 2020-21

The Chair invited Lucy Ellender, Senior Adviser, to introduce the report.

Lucy said that following the input of Fire Commission at their meeting in September, the revised priorities for the coming municipal year were laid out in paragraphs 9 and 10 for members' comment. These would be used to develop a new work programme for the year.

Members raised the following points:

- Fire is one of the key stakeholders in flooding response situations and we need to recognise that these events will get more frequent with climate change.
- Members considered that there were such a large number of issues affecting the sector at the moment that it would be hard to fit them all into a work programme, and so there would need to be some kind of hierarchy to prioritise. It was also felt that some degree of flexibility should be retained in order to respond to changing circumstances, such as a severe Covid second wave.
- In the event of a prolonged economic recession due to Covid, concern was expressed about the fire safety implications of a potentially large number of semi-abandoned buildings.
- The priorities were considered to be quite reactive. Members suggested that for next year, a discussion forum should be set up with wider fire authority membership to determine more proactive priorities. Dependent on circumstances, this should ideally be an in-person meeting, as a virtual meeting was considered to be too restrictive for this sort of event.

Decision

Members of FSMC **agreed** the priorities for the coming year set out in the report.

Action

Officers to plan a discussion forum in Spring 2021 to help set priorities for 2021-22.

6 Police & Crime Commissioner Review

The Chair invited Lucy Ellender, Senior Adviser, to introduce the report.

Lucy said that the overall LGA submission to the review was attached in the Appendix to the report and was written on behalf of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board and FSMC. She reiterated the LGA's position that there should be no mandatory transfers of governance either to PCCs or Mayors. Where there was no local agreement to a proposed transfer of governance, the contested business case should be looked at by a panel with a range of expertise.

Jonny Bugg, Head of Fire Strategy and Reform Unit - Home Office, thanked members for inputting into the review. He said that the evidence had now been collated and the next stage was to explore the emerging issues with the Home Secretary. This would be happening during October.

Members expressed their support for the LGA's response to the review and stressed the importance of the Home Office listening to the views of local areas.

Decision

Members of FSMC **noted** the report.

7 Spending Review

The Chair introduced the report and asked for members' views on the future options for use of the funding provided by FRAs to support the LGA's and NFCC's joint work on the Spending Review.

Members expressed their support for the work that had been done so far and, in particular, thanked Amy Webb for all her work on the final submission to the Home Office. It was considered important that the momentum of this work was maintained in what was a very uncertain funding environment and so members supported retaining the money as set out in option 7.2 of the report. Members were clear that it was important to build a strong business case and to understand and communicate what the public benefit would be.

Roy Wilsher, NFCC Chair, agreed that the submission had been a very good piece of joint work and supported keeping the funding to enable an even stronger case to be built next time.

Jonny Bugg, Head of Fire Strategy and Reform Unit - Home Office, praised the joint submission and said that the Home Office was keen to protect the funding baseline and secure uplifts around specific new areas of pressure such as the Grenfell Inquiry and pensions. He said it was still not yet clear whether the Spending Review would be for one or three

years but the outcome should be known by early November 2020.

Lucy Ellender thanked members for their steer and said that she would go back and have discussions with Amy Webb and John Buckley, NFCC finance lead, about potential further areas of work, and report back to FSMC.

Decision

Members of FSMC **agreed** option 7.2 set out in the report.

Action

Officers to bring an update to the FSMC meeting on 11 December 2020.

8 Marauding Attacks

The Chair invited Roy Wilsher, NFCC Chair, and Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Smith, London Fire Brigade, to introduce their update.

There followed a confidential discussion after which members agreed to note the update.

9 Workforce update

The Chair invited Gill Gittins, Senior Adviser – Workforce & Negotiations, and Clair Alcock, Senior Fire Pensions Adviser, to introduce the update.

Gill updated members on the following issues:

- The consultation on the Brigade Managers pay claim closed today and Gill urged members to complete it if they hadn't already done so.
- The consultation on the LGA and NFCC draft Core Code of Ethics was now open, closing on 2 November.
- The LGA, NFCC and National Employers Fit for the Future consultation was also now open until 19 November.

Clair said that the formal Treasury consultation on remedying age discrimination closed on 11 October. Following substantial stakeholder engagement and assessing the risks of both options put forward in the proposals, the Scheme Advisory Board and the Employers had come to the conclusion that the Deferred Choice Underpin would provide most mitigation to those risks, and was therefore their preferred option. Clair said that the final decision was now in the hands of the Treasury but a large piece of work next year would be around communicating any changes to scheme members.

Clair then updated members on the Home Office Immediate Detriment guidance note. She said that as the note was not clear on FRA's legal powers, the LGA had requested legal advice on their behalf to inform a note which would be circulated to FRAs to assist their decision making going forward. Advice had also been sought on several technical areas of the note's application.

Following the introduction, members raised the following points:

- Tribute was paid to the work of the National Employers in relation to the negotiated pay settlement of 2% for grey book employees but concern was expressed about the difference between this figure and the Brigade Managers claim.
- In relation to the age discrimination cases, concern was expressed not only about the potential costs for FRAs but also about the availability of scheme administrators. Clair said that there was anecdotal evidence of providers dropping out of the market on the grounds that the scheme was becoming too complex to administer. She said that the Scheme Advisory Board would be looking into this potential risk in more detail.

Decision

Members of FSMC **noted** the update.

10 Building Safety update

The Chair invited members' comments on the Building Safety Update.

Fiona Twycross alerted members to a current fraud case involving EWS1 forms and urged them to be aware of this as a potential risk in their areas.

Decision

Members of FSMC **noted** the update.

11 National Fire Chiefs Council update

Decision

Members of FSMC noted the update without comment.

12 Fire Standards Board update

The Chair invited Cllr Nick Chard and Roy Wilsher to introduce the update.

Nick said that the Board was now working well after a relatively slow start. He said that they were finding the corporate areas more difficult to devise standards for than the operational areas.

Roy added that over the next year or so, new standards would start to be introduced on a regular basis.

Decision

Members of FSMC **noted** the update.

13 FSMC update

The Chair invited Rachael Aldridge, Adviser – Policy, to introduce the update.

Rachael informed members that the Annual Fire Conference would be going ahead as a virtual event next March as a result of the coronavirus

restrictions. She asked for members input on possible plenary sessions and speakers and said that a proposal would be brought to Lead Members in November and then to the Committee on 11 December.

Rachael reported that the first of Andy Fry's member development videos would be uploaded on the LGA website at the end of October. Members requested a link for this to be circulated to the Committee. This was agreed.

Finally, Rachael said that the latest meeting of the Diversity Champions Network had taken place the previous week and thanked Cllr Knox for stepping in to Chair the meeting.

Decision

Members of FSMC **noted** the update.

Action

Officers to circulate the member development link to the Committee.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Cllr Ian Stephens	Isle of Wight Council
Vice-Chair	Ms Fiona Twycross AM	Greater London Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Nick Chard	Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority
Deputy-chair	Cllr Keith Aspden	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Members	Cllr Eric Carter	Shropshire and Telford Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr Mark Healey MBE	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
	Mr Roger Hirst	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Cllr Nikki Hennessy	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr Karen Kilgour	Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Greg Brackenridge	West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr Carolyn Lambert	East Sussex Fire Authority
	Cllr Cleo Lake	Avon Fire & Rescue Authority
Apologies	Commissioner Andy Roe	London Fire Brigade
In Attendance	Jonny Bugg	Home Office
	Roy Wilsher	NFCC
	Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Smith	London Fire Brigade
	Deputy CFO Rick Hylton	Essex County FRS
	Ged Devereux	NFCC
	Stephen Adams	London Fire Brigade/NFCC
	Cllr Jane Hugo	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Authority

