

23 September 2015

Chief Fire Officers Association Reform Programme

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The previous Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) President, Paul Hancock, gave a presentation at the last Fire Commission on CFOA's plans to revise their governance and operating procedures. These changes were agreed at CFOA's Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 14 September. The CFOA presidential team also met with FSMC Lead Members in July to discuss the links between FSMC and CFOA around the government's fire reform agenda going forward. This paper updates members on the change to CFOA's governance and discussions with the LGA around the fire reform agenda.

Recommendations

The Committee are asked to:

1. Note the changes to CFOA's governance and operating procedures;
2. Note the decision by FSMC Lead Members and the CFOA Presidential team to meet regularly to discuss the fire reform agenda; and
3. Comment on the draft principles set out in paragraph 11 to inform the ongoing discussions between the LGA and CFOA about the oversight and strategic direction of work across the fire and rescue service around the fire reform agenda.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact Officer: Charles Loft
Position: Senior Adviser
Telephone No: 020 7664 3874
Email: charles.loft@local.gov.uk

Chief Fire Officers Association Reform Programme

Background

1. At the May Fire Commission, the previous CFOA President, Paul Hancock, gave a presentation on the reforms CFOA proposed to make to their own governance and operating procedures. Lead Members then met with the Presidential team at CFOA over the summer to discuss these changes and CFOA's relationship with the LGA.

Issues

The National Police Chiefs Council

2. CFOA's proposals for its future governance and operating models are based on the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC, formally Association of Chief Police Officers). The NPCC has a permanent chair, Chief Constable Sara Thornton, and the main decision making forum of the NPCC is the Chief Constables' Council, where every police force is represented. Sitting underneath this there are 12 coordination committees that look at specific issues ranging from crime operations to workforce.
3. Under these committees there are Chief Officers who lead on specific issues. For instance under the Crime Operations Committee there are individual leads for domestic abuse, rape, drugs and cyber-crime.
4. The NPCC is funded by police forces and supported by a legal agreement under Section 22A of the Police Act 1996 signed by all chief constables and police and crime commissioners (PCCs), which states that they will collaborate with each other in the running and funding of the NPCC. The NPCC's chair is employed full time, and there is a small team to run and support its work.
5. The NPCC also works collaboratively with the Association of Policing and Crime Commissioners, through the Police Reform and Transformation Board, which aims to support the service to transform policing by 2020. The Board is chaired by North Yorkshire's PCC, Julia Mulligan and brings together a number of PCCs, chief constables, the National Crime Agency, the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the College of Policing. The Police Reform and Transformation Board has drafted a vision for policing in 2020 that sets out how and why the police needs to change, the aim is to publish the vision in summer 2016. The Board will then oversee and support the transformation of policing to ensure that it is coherent and provides a good service to the public.

CFOA's proposals

6. CFOA are proposing to become the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The Council will be their main decision making body, with a number of coordinating committees sitting

underneath that. The chair for the NFCC will be employed on a 2 or 3 year basis and Fire and Rescue Authorities have been asked to contribute towards the costs of providing the new chair. They have also outlined the possibility of joint working committees with the NPCC and discussed how the LGA can be involved in their coordinating committees.

7. The proposals have been consulted upon and CFOA agreed to move to the new structures at their CFOA Annual General Meeting on 14 September. The intention is to have the new governance structures and procedures in place by April 2017, when the new chair of the NFCC will take over. Until then the new CFOA President, Dave Etheridge, and Vice-President Andy Fry, will lead CFOA.

Future joint working with the LGA

8. The Home Office has made it clear that while it has set out an agenda for fire reform, officials do not intend to try to run the service from Whitehall and it is for the sector to deliver on that agenda and to devise the machinery for doing so.
9. At the request of CFOA Lead Members met with the presidential team on the 27 July to discuss their proposals for reforming CFOA, and how the LGA and CFOA might work together on the reform agenda. At that meeting it was agreed that a new joint bi-monthly meeting would be set up between the Lead Members and the CFOA presidential team to discuss the fire reform agenda, and potentially act as a joint programme board to oversee and coordinate work by the LGA and CFOA on the fire reform agenda.
10. At the August Tripartite meeting between officers from the LGA, the Home Office and CFOA, there was a further discussion regarding the joint bi-monthly meetings, and how FSMC and CFOA could jointly oversee key elements of the fire reform programme such as the work around procurement, collaboration, transparency, diversity and inspection. Since then discussions have been held at an officer level between the LGA and CFOA about how the joint Lead Members/CFOA meetings could function as a programme board and link in with the new NFCC structures. These discussions are still ongoing and evolving, and may mean the agreement between Lead Members and the CFOA presidential team to meet regularly is replaced with an alternative arrangement.
11. As these discussions continue it would be helpful to have a steer on the principles to be used to guide the discussions with CFOA going forward. A draft set of principles are set out below for members to comment on:
 - 11.1. Members should steer policy, provide strategic direction and oversee work across the fire and rescue service around the fire reform agenda to ensure it is coherent and improves the services received by the public, with chief fire officers responsible for implementing this work.
 - 11.2. FSMC provides the mechanism for members to provide a policy steer, and set the strategic direction of work related to the fire reform agenda, with FSMC's Lead Members providing day to day oversight of the work.
 - 11.3. Work streams to take forward the fire reform agenda should be commissioned by FSMC via the Lead Members from appropriate bodies including CFOA, with those bodies reporting back to FSMC on a regular basis.
 - 11.4. Duplication of work should be avoided with appropriate liaison therefore being undertaken with the National Joint Council.

23 September 2015

11.5. Where appropriate the Home Office would be invited to participate in any future arrangements between FSMC and CFOA to take forward the fire reform agenda, with other stakeholders involved if relevant.

12. It is clear that both the LGA and CFOA/NFCC perform important functions in representing the fire family. Both members and officers can contribute usefully to discussions on the future of the service, bringing their own experiences and responsibilities to bear. Members however have a key role shaping and leading transformation and joint arrangements with CFOA would ensure that councillor's voices were at the heart of the reform programme.

Next steps

13. Members are therefore asked to:

- 13.1. Note the changes to CFOA's governance and operating procedures;
- 13.2. Note the decision by FSMC Lead Members and the CFOA Presidential team to meet regularly to discuss the fire reform agenda; and
- 13.3. Comment on the draft principles set out in paragraph 11 to inform the ongoing discussions between the LGA and CFOA about the oversight and strategic direction of work across the fire and rescue service around the fire reform agenda.

Financial Implications

14. There are no financial implications arising from the report.