

20 September 2018

Fire Services Management Committee Priorities 2018-19

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper sets out proposals for the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) priorities for 2018-19 for comment. The proposals are based on both corporate LGA priorities and options for broader work based on a combination of areas of interest previously indicated by Committee members, ongoing work and recent policy announcements by Government. Subject to members' views, officers will develop a work programme to deliver these priorities.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the priorities.

Action

Officers will deliver the programme of work agreed by members.

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Background

1. At this first meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC), members are asked to consider the policy priorities for the work programme for the coming year. In making these decisions, members are asked to consider two issues:
 - 1.1. The work that the LGA Leadership Board has asked Boards to undertake based on the overall policy priorities of the LGA
 - 1.2. Specific policy priorities based on the remit of this Committee.
2. This paper builds on the draft priorities outlined in the end of year report considered by the FSMC in June and takes account of the Committee's comments then. Priorities are listed in the following paragraphs in order of significance.

Work commissioned from LGA policy Boards by the LGA Leadership Board

3. As in previous years, LGA policy Boards are being asked to incorporate cross-cutting LGA priorities within their work programmes. The LGA's business plan, refreshed last Autumn, sets out the organisation's existing corporate priorities:
 - 3.1. Britain's exit from the EU
 - 3.2. Devolution and funding for local government
 - 3.3. Inclusive growth, jobs and housing
 - 3.4. Children, education and schools
 - 3.5. Adult social care and health
 - 3.6. Supporting councils
4. The work of the FSMC makes a contribution to a number of these overarching themes. Of particular relevance are the importance of and the link between fire safety and the LGA's work around housing, funding issues around new burdens that may arise for the fire safety aspects of the building safety review, collaboration around health and changes to fire peer challenge alongside the development of the inspectorate.

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FSMC Priorities

5. Transparency and standards:

- 5.1. Continue to engage with HMICFRS around the inspection process, ensuring that the impact of inspection on fire and rescue services is understood, any new burdens are highlighted to government and that the sector's views are taken into account as the process evolves in response to experience of its implementation.
- 5.2. Ensure the sector's views are considered as the corporate governance inspection model is developed.
- 5.3. Ensure that there is an effective response to the findings of inspections. This will include updating the Fire Peer Challenge and Operational Assessment offer to the sector alongside the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to ensure that it provides value to the sector and complements the inspection regime.
- 5.4. Participate in the new Fire Standards Board, which will oversee development of standards for fire and rescue services. This will include shaping the work programme the NFCC's Central Programme Office develops for taking forward the standards work.

6. **Funding:** The Comprehensive Spending Review, the Fair Funding Review and the Hackitt Review will all have an impact on the funding of the fire and rescue service. FSMC will respond to these issues to ensure that the fire and rescue service continues to be funded primarily based on risk. This will also include lobbying to ensure that any lessons from recent major incidents, including those from the wildfires over the summer, with implications for capacity (and hence funding) in the fire service are learned and reflected in funding decisions and national resilience planning.
7. **Governance:** FSMC will continue its work associated with the greater involvement of Police and Crime Commissioners in fire and rescue service governance structures. FSMC will consider what good governance should look like and will continue to provide advice and assistance to fire and rescue authorities around this agenda.
8. **Grenfell tower:** the impact of Grenfell tower on the fire and rescue service will continue for the foreseeable future. The LGA has responded to the Hackitt Review's final report and the government consultation on banning the use of combustible materials on the exterior of high-rise residential buildings and is working with government on delivering a regulatory system fit for the twenty-first century. FSMC's view will inform the LGA's response to the ongoing and proposed consultations on the building regulations fire safety guidance (Approved Document B), take forward the recommendations from the Fire Suppression Systems Working Group and monitor the impact on Fire and Rescue

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Authorities (FRA) of increased inspections post-Grenfell. The key elements of our work around Hackitt are likely to be:

- 8.1. Ensuring that the pace in implementation of the Hackitt review recommendations is sustained;
 - 8.2. Consider any recommendations arising from the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry at the conclusion of Phase 1 of its work, including any that have implications for the governance of fire and rescue services;
 - 8.3. Influencing the form the Joint Competent Authority takes;
 - 8.4. Ensuring fire services and councils have adequate powers and meaningful sanctions; and
 - 8.5. Ensuring any new burdens are fully funded.
9. **Workforce:** it is likely that the results from the first round of HMICFRS inspections will highlight the need for further work around the culture in fire and rescue services. FSMC will work with FRA members to provide a leadership training programme on Inclusion and Diversity. We plan to hold five events for members, reflecting the recommendation of the summit we held earlier this year that the LGA could contribute most to the diversity agenda by providing training for members. The events will take place in December-February and will be held in Manchester, West Yorkshire, London, the West Midlands and Exeter. Details are still being worked out. We will continue to promote the Memorandum of Understanding and hold another Summit in April 2019 to discuss what work has happened over the past year.
10. **Collaboration:** FSMC has consistently supported increased collaboration between the fire service and the other emergency services. It has also highlighted to government the increasing role taken by the service in supporting broader health objectives, and the value of this role has been increasingly recognised. FSMC will continue to work collaboratively within the LGA to consider cross-cutting priorities more constructively with other Boards (for example around mental health) and also support better collaboration between fire and rescue authorities and local authorities.
11. **Procurement and value for money:** the National Fire Chiefs Council will be pressing ahead with improving procurement practices and obtaining better value for money from its purchases. So far the Committee's role in progressing this agenda has been purely supportive, but it may be that a more active role is needed to help make progress in this area in the year ahead. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme may need further examination over the coming year as the implications of the delay of the programme are further understood.

Communications and Events

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12. There are a number of internal and external communications channels available to help the FSMC promote the work it is doing and to seek views from our member authorities, including a Fire Bulletin.
13. We have a full programme of conferences and events which support these draft priorities and are design to support members and officers with new issues and improving their ability to protect the public and communities they serve. Conferences already being planned include:
 - 13.1. 28-29 November 2018: Leadership Essentials Fire and Rescue
 - 13.2. 9 January 2019: Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Masterclass (London)
 - 13.3. 18 January 2019: Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Masterclass (West Yorkshire)
 - 13.4. 26-27 February 2019: Leadership Essentials Fire and Rescue
 - 13.5. 12-13 March 2019: Fire Conference
14. Further details on individual programmes are included in the Update paper. Three other Culture, Inclusion and Diversity Masterclasses are planned.

Implications for Wales

15. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee's work will focus changes for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in Cardiff.

Financial Implications

16. This programme of work will be delivered with existing resources. Additional supporting projects may be commissioned subject to funds being available from a small directorate / team budget.

Next steps

17. Following the Committee's discussion, officers will prepare a detailed work programme to manage the day to day work. The priorities agreed by the Committee will also be reported back to the LGA Executive.