

## **Chairman's report**

### **Purpose of report**

For noting.

### **Summary**

This paper summarises the meetings and events that the Fire Commission Chairman has attended since the Commission's last meeting.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the content of this report.

### **Action**

Officers will take action as directed by members.

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## Chairman's report

1. This paper provides information on the meetings and engagements that the Chairman of the Fire Commission has attended on behalf of member fire and rescue authorities.
2. I led the latest series of the **Fire Leadership Academies** which took place on 12-13 February and set out the leadership challenges and opportunities facing the sector. I presented the importance of member/officer relations and how to create a more open and transparent culture of leadership. The Leadership Academy was attended by a range of councillors with responsibility for fire and rescue services, drawn from county, metropolitan and combined authorities.
3. On 26 February I made the closing address at a **Future Fire and Rescue Services Event**, organised by Policy Knowledge and attended by delegates from the Fire Service, Ambulance Service, British Red Cross and also the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). The event looked in-depth at a number of key issues following Sir Ken Knight's review in 2013. I addressed members of the Fire and Rescue Service Community on a number of key issues including, the need for services to be innovative, plugging the financial gap and the importance of education in fire prevention to make longer term savings.
4. I attended the **LGA Annual Parliamentary Reception** on the evening of 26 February, which was hosted by LGA Vice-President Steve Reed MP and saw councillors from across the country join MP's and Peers to discuss current and future challenges of public service delivery. A number of Communities and Local Government Ministers attended the reception including Eric Pickles, Secretary of State Communities and Local Government and Brandon Lewis, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Communities and Local Government.
5. On 25 March I chaired the Reforming Blue Light Services Conference which examined how to develop effective partnerships and discuss the future for **integrating our emergency services** and was attended by senior representatives of the Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services. Speakers at the conference included Brandon Lewis MP and Sir Ken Knight.
6. On 24 April I visited **Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority**. I spoke with the Cabinet member for Fire, Councillor Les Caborn, as well as the Leader of the Council, Councillor Izzi Seccombe, and Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer, on a number of local and national issues including, how county-wide CSPs are working with Health and Wellbeing Boards and the issue of deploying defibrillators across geographical borders, the use of volunteers in FRS's and youth engagement schemes.
7. On 25 April I visited **Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Authority**. I spoke with Councillor Peter Robinson, the Cabinet member for Fire as well as Dave Ramscar, the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The discussion was wide-ranging and included discussion on their co-responding work and how this would be extended in the future. I also visited their training facilities.

8. On 30 April I attended a **CFOA Fire Futures Forum**, on fires in waste management and recycling centres. The discussion focussed around CFOA's recent publication: <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/17512>. The Group also heard from Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service on some recent enforcement activity, as well as discussing guidance on fighting these fires.
9. On 8 May I visited **Cumbria Fire and Rescue Authority**. I met with Cllr Barry Doughty the portfolio holder with responsibility for Fire and Rescue and Ian Cartwright, the Chief Fire Officer. I was told about the scale and topography of Cumbria and the challenges of delivering the fire and rescue service in this area. I also heard about the difficult decisions that members had taken to reconfigure the service. The Cumbria Fire HQ is in a building which also serves as a community hub. It is on a campus site with the Police HQ and Cumbria Fire is hoping soon to host an ambulance station on the same site. Cumbria undertakes some impressive community safety work. In line with the recommendations of the recent peer challenge it has moved away from targets for home visits towards a risk based targeting of the most vulnerable. It is working closely with other agencies to achieve this. Cumbria has also championed the greater use of defibrillators and has used volunteers to roll out a training programme in their use. Cumbria remain concerned about the sustainability of the retained service in its current form. Cumbria is also concerned that the existing method for assessing the rurality element of funding is not sufficient with dealing with the particular circumstances of delivering a fire service in this location.
10. I have written out to all North East Fire and Rescue Authority Chairs and Vice-Chairs to invite them to an **informal dinner** which has now been set for 3 July. The purpose of the event is to explore the challenges the region is facing going forward. I am also writing out to FRA Chairs in the South West to arrange a similar event.
11. I had a bilateral meeting with **Brandon Lewis MP** on 12 June.