

## **Fire Commission update paper**

### **Purpose of report**

For information.

### **Summary**

The report outlines issues of interest to the Commission not covered under the other items on the agenda.

### **Recommendation**

Members to note the update.

### **Action**

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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### **Pension Reforms: local pension boards**

1. Section 5 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 requires public service pension schemes to establish local pension boards. The pension boards will be required to assist the scheme manager in securing the effective and efficient governance and administration of the pension scheme and any statutory scheme connected with it, and ensure that they are operated to an appropriate standard. Pension boards will have oversight of the fire and rescue authorities' administration of the Firefighters' pension schemes 1992, 2006 and 2015. In addition the pension boards will ensure that schemes secure compliance with any requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator, and will undertake any further matters as the scheme regulations may specify. These Boards will need to be in place by 1 April 2015.
2. The LGA is exploring with Government what options there might be for Fire and Rescue Authorities to collaborate on the establishment of local pension Boards.
3. The LGA is currently commissioning training for Councillors who are appointed to these boards. Training sessions are being planned for winter 2014/15 in various locations around England.

### **LGA's Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition**

4. Following discussion at the May Fire Services Management Committee, members agreed that the next Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition would take place at the Hilton in Gateshead. We have now confirmed the dates of the conference as 10 – 11 March 2015. We previously held the Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition at this venue in 2011 and feedback was very positive.

### **Service Transformation Challenge Panel - Call for Evidence**

5. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government launched an independent Service Transformation Challenge Panel on 2 April 2014 to advise what needs to happen nationally and locally to increase the pace and scale of public service transformation. The Panel which is made up of independent representatives drawn from across the public, private and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors is designed to collect and promote examples of good practice across a wide range of areas.
6. The Panel has now published a call for evidence which is open from 1 May to 10 July 2014. The Panel is keen to hear from a wide range of partners including fire and rescue authorities. The call for evidence document can be found on the Public Service Transformation Network's website: <http://publicservicetransformation.org/service-transformation-challenge-panel>

### **Transformation Challenge Award for 2015/16 – VFM Workshops**

7. As well as the £75 million Fire Transformation Fund, fire and rescue authorities are also able to bid for Transformation Challenge Award funding for 2015/16. Details on the fund can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transformation-challenge-award-and-capital-receipt-flexibility-2014-to-2016-prospectus>
8. DCLG, in partnership with New Economy, are now organising a series of Cost Benefit Analysis workshops around the country over the summer as part of the support package for authorities interested in putting bids forward to the Transformation Challenge Award. Further information on the events can be found on the Public Service Transformation Network's website: <http://publicservicetransformation.org/events/year.listevents/2014/05/21/-?limitstart=0>
9. These workshops are open to fire and rescue authorities and their bidding partners, whether from health, education, the VCS or other sectors.

### **Fire Transformation Funds**

10. The bidding process for the £75 million fire and rescue transformation fund for 2015 - 16 is currently open. The first deadline for small, medium and large scale Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) bids closed on the 4 June. The deadline for bids with more than 2 FRAs is the 17 June. The projects will need to demonstrate value for money and be aligned with the transformational objectives of the Government, including:
  - 10.1 greater emergency services collaboration
  - 10.2 initiatives that support improving local delivery
  - 10.3 initiatives that increase on call arrangements
  - 10.4 innovations that prioritise prevention and protection
  - 10.5 promote asset transformation
11. The projects will also need to show sound project management. More information can be found on the Government's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-authority-transformation-funds-for-2015-to-2016-bids](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-authority-transformation-funds-for-2015-to-2016-bids)

### **LGA's Annual Conference**

12. This year's LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition is taking place in Bournemouth between 8 and 10 July. There are a number of sessions and workshops that may be of interest to FRA members, including a workshop into handling emergency situations, such as the recent flooding, as well as workshops on climate change and improving health outcomes. There is also a dedicated breakfast session on Fire and Rescue issues on Thursday 10 July. The British Sprinklers Alliance is exhibiting at this year's conference, along with many others.
13. More information on the Conference can be found on the dedicated website: <http://sites.idea.gov.uk/annual-conference-2014/>.

### **Future control services scheme**

14. The Government recently produced an update of the work being undertaken by the fire and rescue service to strengthen control room operations. It provides further information about the improvements being made, the timescales and the projected savings from each of the projects. The document reports that there has been a rise in the projected savings to £129 million; this is more than the savings originally predicted from the projects, and £2.5 million more than the September 2013 update projected.
15. The document is on the Government's website:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-control-room-services-scheme-summary-national-picture-of-fire-and-rescue-authority-improvement-plans-march-2014-update](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-control-room-services-scheme-summary-national-picture-of-fire-and-rescue-authority-improvement-plans-march-2014-update).  
The LGA responded to the publication, and our press release can be found on our website: [www.local.gov.uk/fire-and-rescue-services](http://www.local.gov.uk/fire-and-rescue-services).

### **Operational Guidance**

16. The Government have recently added to their series of generic risk assessments for FRAs to include incidents involving acetylene. The aim of the risk assessments is to help FRAs in drawing up their own risk assessments to meet the criteria of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
17. The generic risk assessments can be found on the Government's website:  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/operational-guidance-for-the-fire-and-rescue-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/operational-guidance-for-the-fire-and-rescue-service)

### **Primary Authority**

18. Since the extension of 'Primary Authority' on 6 April to include Fire Safety, a number of Fire and Rescue Services have now entered into partnerships with companies. These include Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service with B&Q, Majestic Wine and several others; Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service with TJX (owners of TK Maxx) and Tesco Stores Ltd and Kent Fire and Rescue Service with Shepherd Neame Limited.
19. Further fire partnerships have been nominated and will be added to the Primary Authority Register once they've been approved. The full list of partnerships is available online: <https://primaryauthorityregister.info/>.

### **Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme**

20. The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme is currently entering its next phase. The Government has issued guidance to FRAs in dealing with any potential commercial interests from their regular suppliers in the programme.
21. The Official Journal of the European Union Contract Notice and Pre-Qualification Questionnaire were published on Monday 14 April 2014. Suppliers have until mid-May to return the questionnaire, which will then be evaluated. Those who are successful will then be asked to respond to the invitation to tender.

22. More information on the programme is available in the Government's most recent Fire and Rescue Bulletin: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-bulletin-452014](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-bulletin-452014)

#### **Public Service Transformation Network**

23. The Public Service Transformation Network, has worked with a number of Government departments and New Economy (a Greater Manchester Combined Authority owned company) to produce a cost benefit analysis guide for local partnerships. The guidance can be used to assess and evaluate service transformation proposals to better understand financial, economic and public benefits, and how these are allocated across local and national organisations and communities.
24. The document is available on the Public Service Transformation Network's website: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/300214/cost\\_benefit\\_analysis\\_guidance\\_for\\_local\\_partnerships.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300214/cost_benefit_analysis_guidance_for_local_partnerships.pdf)

#### **Highlighting Political Leadership: The LGA development offer**

25. Supporting leadership is a key part of our wider package of sector led improvement. Our new Highlighting Political Leadership Programme provides support for politicians, from council leaders through to newly elected councillors. Each programme provides councillors with the opportunity to develop their skills and network. There are a number of different programmes tailored to the different needs of members,
26. The Leadership Essentials: Fire and Rescue Programme (previously known as the Fire Leadership Academy) will provide members from fire and rescue authorities with a chance to share ideas and network with leading members from other FRAs as well as develop their skills to ensure they are better able to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities in their authorities.
27. Further information on the new programmes can be found on the LGA's website: [www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development](http://www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development)

## Outside Bodies

### **Fire Strategic Resilience Board**

28. Councillor Mark Healey attended the Fire Strategic Resilience Board which took place in April. Members discussed the implications of the recent flooding as well as receiving an update on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme, JESIP and the National Resilience Board.

### **Fire Service College - Customer Advisory Board – Mr David Cartwright**

#### **Financial Investment**

29. At the meeting on 7 May the Customer Advisory Board received a number of updates from the College. To date, Capita have invested some £6.5 million into the College and there is a commitment to a further spend of £12.5 million in the future. In the year 2013/14, the College broke even and this financial year's forecast is for a modest profit, however a viable business has been demonstrated.
30. The meeting was informed that the UK fire service had not taken up the amount of business that the College had hoped for and the College felt that there was a "disconnect" between CFOs and their learning & development managers (L&DM). It was noted that in the past CFOs had seemed keen to support the College, but the College felt there was a reluctance from the L&DMs to change their existing arrangements. The College would be looking into this issue further.

#### **JESIP**

31. It was noted that the JESIP training had not been taking place at the College and had instead been developed and carried out locally by the College of Policing (CoP) and the National Ambulance Resilience Unit (NARU). The College were concerned that this had been a missed opportunity.

#### **Firefighter Development Course**

32. This course is designed to take a potential firefighter recruit and train them to a demonstrably acceptable level to apply as a firefighter to any FRS. It can also be used for "on-call firefighter" initial training. It can either be paid for by the Brigade or by individuals seeking a career in the FRS. A formal accredited qualification is envisaged at the successful completion of the course.
33. The College noted that this meant the transfer of risk and costs associated with candidate failure from the FRS to the College. They felt that this made the process worth consideration by all FRS's and they were looking at how this idea could be extended to include the actual recruitment process. In essence, an FRS could simply ask the College to provide X number of fully trained recruits.

**Incident Command**

34. The meeting was informed that the new, fully interactive command suite is nearing completion, and members of the Customer Advisory Board felt it was most impressive. There has been significant financial investment into this project and I recommend all Members and CFOs view this development.

**Conclusion**

35. There have been numerous developments and improvements at the College over its first year in the private sector and Members may wish to consider if a future Fire Commission meeting, or a joint LGA/CFOA seminar should take place here, similar to the Fire Commission held at the College in December last year.