Fire Services Management Committee Update paper

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Fire Services Management Committee not covered under other items on the agenda, including the LGA member improvement offer.

Recommendation

That members of the Committee note the report, and endorse the proposal in paragraph 7 to bring a further paper to the Committee in the autumn about the use of the resources available to support the sector’s Spending Review work.

Actions

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

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Fire Services Management Committee Update paper

New Fire Minister

1. In February 2020 James Brokenshire was appointed Minister for Security at the Home Office with responsibility for fire. However, on the 18 March this responsibility was transferred to Lord Greenhalgh who is now an unpaid Minister of State jointly at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office. His portfolio spans both fire and building safety. He is also Communities Minister. We assume James Brokenshire will answer fire questions in the House of Commons.
2. Lord Greenhalgh attended the last Fire Commission on the 15 May where he outlined his experience in local government and his priorities for fire: Professionalism, People and Governance. The minister requested regular meetings with FSMC lead members, the first of which took place on the 8 June.

FRS COVID-19 activity

1. The fire service National Employers, Fire Brigades Union and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) reached an agreement on 26 March which, together with National Joint Council agreement, has meant that to date 14 additional areas of work have become available to the fire and rescue service to deliver additional activities.
2. This [Tripartite](https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/COVID-19/Tripartite%20agreements/tri_9_renewal_-_final.pdf) agreement has enabled all fire services to “step up” in supporting the effort to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on our communities. The table below demonstrates both the range and quantity of additional activities that have already been carried out by fire services.

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| Additional Fire Service Activities  24th March – 31st May  |
| Vulnerable persons - delivery of essential items  | 58519  |
| Movement of bodies | 2001 |
| Face fitting for masks to be used by frontline NHS and clinical care staff  | 3259 |
| Delivery of PPE and other medical supplies  | 15075 |
| Assisting in taking samples for Antigen testing  | 720 |
| Assembly of single use face masks  | 66100 |
| Packaging of food supplies  | 14158 |
| Driving instruction by FRS driver to deliver training for non-FS personnel to drive ambulances  | 253  |
| Ambulance service assistance - ambulance driving and ambulance personnel support  | 30494  |
| Driving ambulance transport not on blue lights - excluding COVID-19 patients  | 716 |
| Known COVID-19 patients transfer to and from hospital  | 1438 |
| Non COVID-19 patients transfer to and from hospital  | 3337  |

1. At Fire Commission on the 15 May members were asked to provide examples of activities of their local services have been undertaking during this period; their submissions and other reports can be seen in Appendix A.

Comprehensive Spending Review Team

1. Since being appointed in March, the Sector Spending Review lead (Amy Webb) has also been acting as sector finance lead for Coronavirus, supporting the Home Office and MHCLG with securing a significant increase for fire in the second tranche of funding at £48 million. This success has been thanks to FRA colleagues who have provided the information to evidence the funding bid which was put forward.
2. Latest intelligence from central government is that the Spending Review (SR) is likely to be undertaken over the summer and cover one year, although this is subject to confirmation from the Treasury. In light of the changing landscape and likely move away from a longer-term SR, recruitment of a wider team has been deferred. With recruitment on hold and no travel expenses, the £200,000 funding will stretch further and provides an opportunity to maintain capability to support this SR using the lead only, with an intention to revisit team requirements later in the year. Committee members are asked to endorse this approach in the short term, with options on how to best utilise the remaining funds to be proposed in the autumn.
3. Work is now underway to evidence spending pressures and emerging funding challenges in light of the Coronavirus pandemic as well as ensuring that bids for improvement activity are aligned to the Fit for the Future framework. The Senior Sector Group comprising of members of the FSMC, NFCC and Home Office will be reinvigorated in late June/ early July to consider the case for funding going forward.

LGA Fire Commission

1. LGA Fire Commission was held virtually on the 15 May via Zoom. Speakers for the Commission included Lord Greenhalgh as mentioned above, Peter Baker from the Health and Safety Executive on the building safety programme, and Roy Wilsher from the National Fire Chiefs Council, who updated on COVID-19 related work.
2. The Commission was attended by around 80 attendees, which is the highest number of attendees we have ever had for the Commission.
3. Following Roy Wilsher’s update on COVID-19 related activity, Cllr Ian Stephens requested that members update us with information on what their service have been doing during the crisis. Several members have supplied this already, but if you would like to contribute please do email your submissions to Jonathan.Bryant@local.gov.uk.

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Cycle 2

1. The inspection programme for cycle two has now been approved and the Inspectorate is commencing the second cycle of inspection in April. On the 13 March HMICFRS suspended all inspection work which requires appreciable input from FRSs to enable them to focus on responding to COVID-19. Cycle two is not expected to recommence until next year.

Outside bodies update

1. LGA Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network: Cllr Rebecca Knox chaired a lunchtime meeting of the Network on the 10 March at LGA Fire Conference where the Networks Terms of Reference were agreed and an approach to future work was agreed.
2. Strategic Resilience Board: Cllr Cleo Lake attended this meeting on the 27 April where the impact of COVID 19 on the fire sector of discussed. Members updated that availability remained high with a low level of absenteeism.
3. National Fire Chiefs Council: Strategic Engagement Forum: Cllr Cleo Lake attended the most recent meeting of the NFCC Strategic Engagement Forum on 27 May. Members of the Forum received an update on the work of the NFCC, including that in respect of the COVID-19 response phase. In addition, it was agreed that the next meeting would consider a review of the terms of reference of the Forum to ensure it continued to meet the expectations of all stakeholders.
4. Fire Standard Boards: Cllr Nick Chard attended the meeting on the 4 June where the impact of the current pandemic on the standards development programme and possible mitigations were discussed.
5. Executive Leadership Programme Board: Cllr Rebecca Knox attended this meeting. The Programme ran it’s 14th cohort this year and the number of applicants continue to increase. Content is reassessed every year to ensure the programme remains up-to-date and guest speakers are tailored to the needs of cohort and work is underway to secure a session with LGA/FSMC representatives. The work of the programme has understandably been affected by COVID-19, but the current cohort will resume in July using online platforms and 1-1 coaching.
6. NFCC People Engagement Forum: Cllr Roger Price attended this meeting on the 9 June where the forward programme was discussed and the NFCC presented a series of new policies and the new Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Strategy to the Forum for comment.
7. Her Majesties Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service External Reference Group: Cllr Ian Stephens, Roger Hirst, Cllr Rebecca Knox attended this meeting on the 10 June. Members of the Group updated on current COVID-19 activity in their local areas and discussed proposed inspection activity ahead of the second cycle of inspections.

**Appendix A**

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| FRS/Area | Activities/link to reports |
| Avon | Supporting ambulance services |
| Bedfordshire | Stay Home, Save Lives, [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/News/Article.aspx?id=65a8312f-290a-40dd-b73b-4c698f1c0c59) |
| Buckinghamshire | [Working with our partners in response to COVID-19](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/working-with-our-partners-in-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19/)V |
| Cambridgeshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/news-and-incidents/news/2020-04-16-fire-service-supports-nhs-blue-light-colleagues-on-the-frontline) |
| Cheshire | Supporting vulnerable people |
| Cleveland | [Supporting care homes](https://www.clevelandfire.gov.uk/2020/05/cleveland-fire-brigade-supporting-care-homes-in-covid-19-fight/) |
| Cornwall | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news-room/media-releases/news-from-2020/news-from-april-2020/firefighters-now-trained-to-crew-ambulances-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/) |
| Cumbria | [Supporting vulnerable people](https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/18417892.cumbrian-fire-service-praised-going-beyond-call-duty-lockdown/) |
| Devon & Somerset | Supporting ambulance services |
| Dorset & Wiltshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/18443328.dorset-firefighters-join-south-western-ambulance-service-covid-19-pandemic/)  |
| Durham & Darlington | Supporting vulnerable people |
| East Midlands | [Providing support to EMAS (Humberside, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire](https://westbridgfordwire.com/east-midlands-fire-service-personnel-support-emas-with-coronavirus-response/)) |
| East Sussex | [Voluntary activities](https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/community-volunteers-and-staff-reach-out-during-covid/), [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.esfrs.org/news/2020-news/east-sussex-firefighters-ready-to-offer-secamb-support/) |
| Essex | [Voluntary activities](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/news/Essex_County_Fire_and_Rescue_Service_staff_volunteer_their_time_during_pandemic/), [Supporting ambulance services](Firefighters_continue_to_work_with_Ambulance_Service_giving_4700_hours) |
| Gloucestershire | Delivering PPE and medical supplies to NHS and care partners |
| Greater London | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/london-firefighters-support-ambulance-service-coronavirus-a4403901.html) |
| Greater Manchester | [Movement of bodies](https://www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/18384699.firefighters-begin-moving-bodies-coronavirus-patients-trafford-park-mortuary/) |
| Hampshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/incidents-news-and-events/news-releases/firefighters-drive-ambulances-to-support-coronavirus-response/) |
| Herefordshire & Worcester | Face fitting for mask to be used by frontline NHS and clinical staff |
| Hertfordshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/hertfordshire-news/hertfordshire-firefighters-could-drafted-help-4052078) |
| Humberside | PPE deliveries to partner agencies; [supporting ambulance services](https://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/news/yorkshire-ambulance-service-welcomes-additional-covid-19-support-from-fire-and-rescue-colleagues/); supporting vulnerable people |
| Kent & Medway | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/news/news-releases/april-2020/kfrs-to-support-ambulance-service-during-covid-19/), [Supporting vulnerable people](https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/news/news-releases/march-2020/kfrs-supports-age-uk-delivering-hot-meals-during-covid-19-pandemic/) |
| Lancashire | [Distribution of PPE to social care services, supporting NHS Nightingale Hospital and temporary mortuary arrangements, and face mask training for hospital and social care staff](https://www.lancsfirerescue.org.uk/were-ready-willing-and-able/) |
| Lincolnshire | Community Safety team supporting LRF Communities and Volunteers Cell and the Mortality Planning Cell and supporting Trading Standards Team to protect communities from new unsafe PPE and related products |
| Merseyside | Supporting vulnerable people |
| Norfolk | Supporting ambulance services |
| Northumberland | Supporting vulnerable people |
| North Yorkshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/news/yorkshire-ambulance-service-welcomes-additional-covid-19-support-from-fire-and-rescue-colleagues/) |
| Nottinghamshire | [Supporting vulnerable people and care homes,](https://www.notts-fire.gov.uk/nfrs-news/Pages/Our-response-to-the-Coronavirus-pandemic.aspx) [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.notts-fire.gov.uk/nfrs-news/Pages/We-are-Ready-Willing-and-Able-to-support-our-communities-in-Nottinghamshire.aspx), [Distributing PPE](https://www.notts-fire.gov.uk/nfrs-news/Pages/Nottinghamshire-Fire-and-Rescue-Service-open-stations-for-PPE-donations.aspx) |
| Oxfordshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/18393221.oxfordshire-firefighters-drive-ambulances-coronavirus/) |
| Shropshire & Wrekin | [Transportation and delivery of PPE](https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/telford/2020/04/15/shropshire-fire-service-ready-willing-and-able-to-help-in-any-way-possible/) |
| South Yorkshire | [Delivering PPE](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/22/fire-crews-tackling-covid-19), [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/news/yorkshire-ambulance-service-welcomes-additional-covid-19-support-from-fire-and-rescue-colleagues/) |
| Staffordshire | Delivery of PPE and other medical supplies to NHS and care partners |
| Suffolk | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/fire-service-training-to-drive-ambulances-during-coronavirus-1-6615611) |
| Surrey | [Supporting ambulance services](https://news.surreycc.gov.uk/2020/05/07/surrey-fire-and-rescue-service-to-support-ambulance-service-amid-covid-19-response/) |
| Tyne and Wear | Supporting vulnerable people |
| Warwickshire | Packing food supplies for vulnerable people |
| West Midlands | [Transportation of bodies](https://lgadigital.sharepoint.com/sites/SaferCommunities/Fire%20and%20resilience/Admin/Board%20and%20other%20papers/FSMC/2019-20/19%20June%202020/End%20of%20year%20report%20FSMC%20-%2019%20June%202020.dotx) |
| West Sussex | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.spiritfm.net/news/sussex-news/3085803/coronavirus-west-sussex-fire-team-to-support-ambulance-service/) |
| West Yorkshire | [Supporting ambulance services](https://www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/news/yorkshire-ambulance-service-welcomes-additional-covid-19-support-from-fire-and-rescue-colleagues/) |