

## Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

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**Title:** Fire Services Management Committee  
**Date:** Friday 30 May 2014  
**Venue:** Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p><b>Chairman's report</b></p> <p>Cllr Hammond commented that this was Cllr Navin Shah's last meeting following the local elections on 22 May. She thanked him for all his work on the Committee over the past years and wished him well for the future. This was echoed by all members of the Committee.</p> <p>Cllr Healey informed the Committee that he had attended the Reforming Blue Light Services Conference and commented that the event showcased how blue light services were working together.</p> <p><b>Decision</b></p> <p>Members <b>noted</b> the report.</p>	
2	<p><b>Fire and Rescue Service: An overview</b></p> <p>Eamon Lally, Senior Adviser, introduced the report outlining that the Improvement and Innovation Board at the LGA oversaw all LGA improvement activity, but that each themed board also has an important role to play in considering improvement in its service areas. The report produced for the FSMC was intended to be the first annual stock take of the Fire and Rescue Service drawing on the outcomes of peer challenges and a range of other information. Eamon Lally also explained that the overview paper had been drawn up in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA)</p> <p>Ann Millington, Chief Executive, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, and CFOA Director, explained to the Committee that one significant area for improvement across the sector was procurement. She reported that the CFOA National Procurement Group had developed a new draft Procurement Strategy, which was intended to identify better working arrangements between the sector in identifying future procurement opportunities.</p> <p>Members welcomed the report and the work carried out by CFOA in</p>	

pulling together a Procurement Strategy. Members agreed that this Committee should be presented with an annual report.

A number of further comments were raised including:

- There was an opportunity for this report to be circulated amongst party leaders, so that they were aware of the needs for the fire service and have an overview of the direction of travel for the fire service.
- It was now the right time to look at addressing issues within the fire service, for example most of the work now carried out was preventative, which was in contrast to how the fire service used to work.
- It was clear that fire services were engaged in transformation which included collaborating further or merging with other services.

Cllr Hammond commented that it was important that the Improvement and Innovation Board was kept informed on the work of the fire service.

**Actions:**

To circulate the report more widely including to the Improvement and Innovation Board.

**Eamon Lally**

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the report and **agreed** that officers should take this work forward.

**3 Pensions update**

Eamon Lally, Senior Adviser, introduced the report and explained that the response to the statutory consultation in regards to the implementation of the Retained Firefighters Pensions' Settlement was published on 6 March. The response to the consultation by the Government was that the existing policy for unfunded public service pension schemes should be paid by employers and employees, and therefore any costs in relation to the Retained Firefighters Pensions' Settlement did not constitute a 'new burden'.

Cllr Heaster informed the Committee that following the previous FSMC a Fire Pensions Working Group had been formed and had met twice between the FSMC meetings. This group considered the retained pensions' issue and agreed that, following legal advice, it was not possible to know how the government will address the burden of costs placed on fire authorities until the next spending review. It was therefore agreed unanimously by the working group that the FSMC should continue to discuss the allocation of costs with government.

Cllr Pulk commented that he believed the 15 year timescale to recover the scheme deficit was unrealistic and that a 30 year period was a more viable option. In addition Cllr Pulk argued that it was important for all fire authorities to share the burden, even though authorities such as London

had never employed retained firefighters.

**Actions:**

Officers to draft a letter from FSMC to government requesting further negotiations and to request a meeting with the Minister.

**Eamon Lally**

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the report and agreed actions.

**4 Pensions reform: new governance arrangements**

Eamon Lally, Senior Adviser, explained that under the new government arrangements, which were due to come into force on 1 April 2015, a Scheme Advisory Board, would act as an Advisory Committee at a national level. At a local level each fire authority was required to operate a Pensions Board. Members were informed that the arrangements for the Local Pensions Board were a matter for each fire authority.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments including:

- There was a possibility that a number of local authorities could get together and form a pensions board rather than having to have their own.
- Existing pensions committees at local authorities could potentially oversee Fire Pensions as part of their remit.

Cllr Heaster explained that the new Scheme Advisory Board will provide policy advice to the Secretary of State, at his request, on the desirability of changes to the scheme. It would replace the current Fire Pensions Committee, on which the LGA was represented by Cllr Heaster.

It was noted that the Scheme Advisory Board would have more employer representatives and that following the Government's consultation on governance arrangements, FSMC would need to receive and agree nominations in September 2014.

Gill Gittins, Principal Negotiating Officer, explained to Members that there was to be a new post created and funded by LGA which would enable authorities to seek advice on pensions, rather than having to seek their own legal advice.

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the report.

**5 LGA Fire Conference and Exhibition 2014 - conference feedback and venue options for 2015**

Amanda Spicer, Events Officer, introduced the report and informed Members that attendance was high and all but one fire authority attended the conference. Feedback suggested that the event was better served when accommodation and conference facilities were on one site, and that on this occasion there was too much distance between venues.

In addition feedback showed that delegates felt the most important factors were content, cost and location.

With regards to next year's conference delegates wanted:

- to hear more speakers from the other sectors;
- have a venue that catered for the conference and overnight accommodation on one site; and
- more time for delegate interaction.

Members welcomed the report and feedback and expressed the view that the facilities at the Hilton, Gateshead would be an excellent choice of venue for the 2015 Fire Conference.

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the report and agreed that **Gateshead** should be the venue for the 2015 Fire Conference.

**6 FSMC Industrial Relations Report**

Gill Gittins, Principal Negotiating Officer, updated Members on the latest known position on the pension reform dispute between the FBU and the Government. Since the last meeting of the FSMC in March the FBU advised DCLG that it expected to see revised proposals when it met on 24 April. The Government had informed the FBU shortly before that date that it required further time to seek the views of the wider government. The FBU announced further strike action and action short of a strike.

With regards to the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, there had been positive discussions on working jointly to ensure there was a pay framework alongside terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service which reflected the responsibilities of, and current and future demands on, the service and the profession. This was to be considered further at the next NJC meeting on 4 June.

In addition there were to be further discussions on the potential for any uplift in pay when the NJC met. FSMC Members noted the offer that had been made to local authority employees covered by the NJC for Local Government Services, which would provide those employees with an increase of 1.0% (higher at the bottom of the pay range).

**7 FSMC update paper**

Cllr Bell informed Members that the largest control scheme in the country was now up and running. This scheme was capable of controlling up to 150 fire stations. Cllr Bell pointed out that this had brought together a number of fire authorities and enabled them to work together.

Members agreed that they were in the best position to understand what each local authority needed with regards to the transformation fund. There was concern that this process went against the idea of localism by top-slicing money from the fire sector funding and redistributing it through a competitive bidding process.

Cllr Healey commented that more work was needed in relation to acquiring high volume pumps and making sure these were strategically placed around the country, following the need to ship them over from Holland during the recent flooding.

Cllr Healey also updated Members on the Fire College which was running a taster weekend for young adults to gain further insight into becoming a fire fighter and joining the service.

**Decision:**

Members **noted** the report.

**8 Notes from the previous meeting**

Cllr Hammond commented that she had spoken to Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at the LGA Annual Parliamentary Reception and not Brandon Lewis MP.

The Committee **noted** minutes of the meeting on 10 March 2014.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Jeremy Hilton Cllr Philip Howson	Gloucestershire County Council East Sussex FA
Members	Cllr Maurice Heaster OBE Cllr Mark Healey Cllr John Edwards Cllr John Bell  Cllr Roger Price Cllr Darrell Pulk Cllr Navin Shah Cllr Simon Spencer Cllr David Topping Cllr Les Byrom CBE	London FEPA Devon and Somerset FRA West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority  Hampshire FA Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham FA London FEPA Derbyshire FA Cheshire FA Merseyside FRA

Cllr Thomas Wright

Tyne and Wear FRA

Apologies

Cllr John Joyce  
Cllr Julie Young

Cheshire FA  
Essex FA

In Attendance

Cllr Rebecca Knox

Dorset FA

LGA Officers

Helen Murray  
Daniel Kalley  
Eamon Lally  
Gill Gittins  
Amanda Spicer