

Fire Commission Update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

That members of the Commission note the report.

Actions

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

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HMICFRS Covid-19 inspection

1. HMICFRS have been commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect the response to the Covid-19 pandemic of the fire and rescue sector in England. The inspectorate will be considering what is working well and what is being learnt; how the sector responded; how services are managing the challenges they encounter; and what changes are likely to result from the pandemic.
2. HMICFRS held a Chiefs and Chairs event on the 20 August to discuss their plans for the commissioned inspection. HMICFRS will be interviewing Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) chairs and portfolio-holders as part of the inspection and intend to publish their final report in January 2021.

Home Office review of Police and Crime Commissioners

3. The Government has launched a [review into the Police & Crime Commissioner model](#) including fire governance. Launching the review, Home Office Minister Kit Malthouse said: *“the Government is clear that further reform of fire and rescue services is required in order to respond to the recommendations from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and to build on the findings from Sir Tom Winsor’s State of Fire and Rescue Report, both of which demonstrate the clear challenges and improvements required in professionalism, people and governance. The review will consider further options and opportunities to strengthen fire governance and accountability, drawing on the lessons from the first cycle of fire governance transfers to PCCs.”*
4. The LGA has submitted a response to the Review having contacted all FRA Chairs for their views.

Fire member development offer – governance and oversight video resources

5. The LGA has also commissioned a series of instructive videos from Andy Fry, ex-Chief Fire Officer and former HM Inspector of Fire Services in Wales, which will cover various topics associated with the governance role of FRA members.
6. The videos follow the publication of our [Leading the fire sector: Oversight of performance](#) guide last year and five successful workshops led by Andy. The videos are intended to support the induction of those who are new to FRAs, as well as the development of existing members, including drawing on recent experiences of governing in times of crisis.
7. The videos will be available on our [Leading the fire sector: member development support webpage](#).

LGA Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network

8. The Network met in July to hold its first virtual meeting on the theme of positive action. The session was led by experience speakers Jagtar Sing, National Adviser for the Asian

Fire Service Association, and Nicola Green, Legal Director at Capsticks Solicitors. A video of the presentation is now available the [Champions Network website](#).

Fire statistics

9. Fire and rescue [incident statistics](#) have recently been published for the year ending March 2020. FRSs attended 557,299 incidents in 2019/20. This was a three per cent decrease compared with the previous year (576,391). Of these incidents, there were 153,957 fires. This was a 16 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (182,915) with falls in all types of fires but particularly driven by a 23 per cent fall in secondary fires now that the hot, dry 2018 summer is in the comparator year. There were 243 fire-related fatalities in 2019/20 (the lowest number of fire-related fatalities in the annual series) compared with 253 in the previous year.

Fire Standards Board

10. The Fire Standards Board has now been running for just over a year and is coming to the stage of publishing the first standard. A consultation is currently running on the Operational Response Fire Standard which can be viewed on the [Fire Standards Board Consultations webpage](#).

LGA fire press work

11. Latest government figures show that attacks on firefighters in England have surged by 66 per cent in four years, from 578 in 2014/15 to 961 in 2018/19. The number of firefighters injured following attacks during this period have soared by 175 per cent, from 24 to 66. The LGA issued a [strongly-worded press release](#) calling for tougher sentences for perpetrators.

LGA Events

12. The LGA Annual Fire Conference will now take place as a virtual conference in March 2021. More details on topics and speakers will follow in due course.

Outside bodies update

13. [LGA Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network](#): Fiona Twycross chaired a meeting of the Network on the 24 July. The session focused on positive action. The next meeting of the Network is on the 9 October 2020.
14. [Fire Lawyers' Network](#): Officers attended the Network on 26 June where the focus of the meeting was on the tripartite agreements and the work of the fire sector during the pandemic.
15. [Fire Standards Board](#). The Board met on 4 June and 3 September and was attended by Cllr Nick Chard. The Board discussed the impact of the pandemic on the standards programme, the updated delivery plan and specific standards coming forward in this financial year.

16. Executive Leadership Programme Board: Cllr Rebecca Knox attended this meeting on 21 July. The Programme ran its 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 resumed in July using online platforms and 1-1 coaching.
17. 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.
18. 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 and the 8 July. 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.
19. Senior Sector Group: Lead members of FSMC attended the Home Office meeting on the 29 June and 28 July, where members discussed the upcoming spending review and the key aspects for inclusion of the joint NFCC/LGA submission into the Home Office.