

Fire Services Management Committee Update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

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.

Actions

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

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LGA Annual Fire Conference 2021

1. The LGA Annual Fire Conference is held each year in early March. At the January 2020 Fire Services Management Committee meeting, members agreed that the 2021 conference would take place from 1-3 March at the Hilton in Gateshead. Due to COVID-19, physical conference activity has now been cancelled for the foreseeable future, due to the public health risk posed by gathering in large numbers.
2. As a result, the LGA Annual Fire Conference 2021 will now be conducted as a virtual conference. It is not possible to predict whether in-person conference events will resume by March 2021, given Government guidance and local area restrictions change relative to the level of risk posed by COVID-19. Further, even if it is possible to hold a physical conference, the required safety precautions - including wearing of protective equipment such as face masks, social distancing and reducing numbers of attendees – render the event financially unviable.
3. LGA Officers are progressing with planning processes to determine the format, structure and dates of plenary sessions. It is proposed that the Fire Conference 2021 replicates the delivery model used during the LGA Annual Conference 2020. This includes individual plenaries and 'spotlight' sessions held on different days, with members and non-members registered individually for each session and attend via Zoom.
4. Subject to Lead Member approval, a final proposed Conference schedule will be provided to Members in December 2020. Proposed topics to cover in the plenary sessions currently include:
 - 4.1. Ministerial address
 - 4.2. Building safety
 - 4.3. Finance/Comprehensive Spending Review
 - 4.4. Diversity and inclusion
 - 4.5. HMICFRS – 2nd State of Fire report
 - 4.6. Governance – PFCCs
 - 4.7. COVID-19 – What we have learned
 - 4.8. Climate change.

Fire member development offer

5. The LGA has commissioned Andy Fry, ex-Chief Fire Officer and former HM Inspector of Fire Services in Wales, to deliver a series of instructive videos covering various topics associated with the governance role of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) members. The first video, "*The Role of Fire and Rescue Authority Members*," will be available on the [Leading the fire sector: member development support webpage](#) in late October 2020.
6. The videos follow the publication of the [Leading the fire sector: Oversight of performance guide](#) in November 2019 and five successful workshops led by Andy. The videos intend

to support the induction of those who are new to FRAs, as well as the development of existing members. This work will also cover governance in times of crisis, which is informed by recent experiences of FRAs responding to COVID-19.

Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network

7. The LGA's Fire Diversity and Inclusion Champions Network is designed to bring together elected representatives who are responsible for diversity and inclusion issues in their fire and rescue authorities, to develop skills to challenge their services to improve in this area. This includes hearing from experts about key equality and diversity issues for the fire sector, to identify barriers to greater diversity and inclusion in fire and rescue services and to share best practice from across the country
8. The Network held its first virtual meeting in July, which focused on the theme of positive action. The session was led by experienced 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 available on the [Champions Network webpage](#).
9. The Network is scheduled to meet on Friday 9 October, where the meeting will focus on the benefits of staff networks. Members will hear presentations from a panel of speakers, including: Anna James, Watch Manager, and Zoe Baker-Powell, PMO Manager (Service Transformation Team) from Avon Fire and Rescue Service, to discuss their staff engagement network; and Serena Simon, Westminster City Council, to discuss the Council's BAME Network.
10. The presentations and subsequent question and answer session will be recorded and transcribed, then made available on the Champions Network webpage.

Consultation - Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England)

11. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and LGA commenced their [consultation on the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services \(England\) \(Core Code\)](#), open until 2 November 2020. The Core Code was written in response to the recommendation in the State of Fire 2019. It is designed to guide all Fire and Rescue Service employees in their day-to-day conduct, providing professional standards of practice and behaviour to carry out business honestly and with integrity, and to underpin organisational culture. It provides the expectations for how employees should behave in any given situation, to assist with decision-making.
12. The Fire Standards Board (FSB) commenced its [consultation on the draft Code of Ethics Fire Standard](#), open until 2 November 2020. The draft Standard is underpinned by the Core Code.

Outside bodies update

13. Strategic Resilience Board (SRB): On 14 July, Cllr Cleo Lake and Cllr Les Byrom attended the SRB meeting, where the impact of COVID-19 on the fire sector was discussed alongside other resilience issues.
14. Senior Sector Group (SSG): On 28 July, the Fire Minister chaired an SSG meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Spending Review, which was attended by Lead Members, PFCC Roger Hirst, and representatives from HMICFRS, the NFCC and the Home Office.
15. Fire Standard Boards: On 3 September, Cllr Nick Chard attended the FSB meeting where Members discussed progress on the development of future fire standards.
16. *HM Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS)*:
 - HMISCFRS External Reference Group: On 8 July, Cllr Ian Stephens and Cllr Rebecca Knox attended this meeting, at which Members were updated on current COVID-19 activity in their local areas and discussed proposed inspection activity ahead of the COVID-19 inspection.
 - Meeting with HM Chief Inspector Sir Tom Windsor: On 30 July, Cllr Ian Stephens, Cllr Nick Chard (in his capacity as Chair of the Employers Side of the NJC), representatives from the Home Office and NFCC, and LGA Officers attended a meeting with Sir Tom Windsor to discuss the timing of the recommendations provided in State of Fire 2020.
 - (HMISCFRS) Online Event: On 20 August, HMICFRS ran a Chiefs and Chairs online event to look at their proposed COVID-19 Inspection. Members and Officers had the chance to provide feedback on the themes that the inspection would be looking at.
 - Lead Members provided feedback on the draft State of Fire 2021.