

5 September 2014

Note of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Title:	Fire Services Management Committee
Date:	Friday 18 July 2014
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Chairman's report Members of the Committee thanked the Chairman for these reports and congratulated her on her achievements over the past two years. Action: Chairman to write to Cllr Heaster to wish him well following an operation. Decision: Members noted the report.	Lucy Ellender
2	JESIP Legacy Roy Wilsher, Director of Operations Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) presented to the Board the work of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP). Members were informed that the original programme and grant will finish in September 2014. The strong Ministerial commitment to interoperability will see JESIP transform and continue the vision of embedding the aims of the programme into business as usual. In addition the Government had provisionally agreed to fund £500,000 for the project for the financial year 2015/16, however this was subject to the next spending review. The Committee was informed that there were four key areas central to sustaining interoperability namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The joint doctrine;• training;• testing and exercising; and• joint organisational learning.	

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Members thanked Roy for the presentation and asked a number of questions to which Roy responded including:

- Members were keen that the funding for JESIP would continue to come from central government. Members were concerned about the additional financial burdens to the sector if this funding was not forthcoming.
- The fire sector should be achieving level four standards (Optimal/Best Practice) by the end of the financial year 2015/16.
- Most areas had completed their training and all areas except London will be complete by September, with London completing by April 2015.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report and **thanked** Roy Wilsher for the presentation.
<http://tinyurl.com/pyjubos>

3 Independent Commission on Local Government Finance

Eamon Lally, LGA Senior Adviser, introduced the report. He informed Members that the LGA and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) had established an Independent Commission on Local Government Finance. Members were informed that this was an opportunity for Fire and Rescue Authorities to set out any issues they had in relation to financing the sector in the future.

The Independent Commission had published a call for evidence on 3 July 2014. The deadline for submissions was 15 August 2014. It was suggested that FSMC and CFOA work closely on responding to the call for evidence.

Members welcomed the report and raised a number of questions and comments including:

- Members suggested that going forward the Independent Commission should look at the funding formula as it was felt that was some disparity between different areas of the country.
- There was disappointment that Fire was not mentioned as a specific area that the Independent Commission would look at. In addition there was no mention of resilience, which members felt should have been included in light of the recent flooding crisis.
- A joint response from the LGA and CFOA would be preferable. Members were keen that the Commission was made aware of the financial difficulties facing the fire sector and their concerns that the fire sector would not be able to cope with further reductions to funding.
- The sector did a large amount of work across government departments and priorities, having a positive impact on outcomes. There was a discussion about the possibility of seeking financial support for the sector's work across a range of government departments.

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Members expressed concern that the membership of the Independent Commission did not include anyone currently working or serving in a local authority capacity. Eamon stressed the commission was independent of the Government and LGA. It was tasked to examine three areas:

- The current position of the local government finance system;
- A potential new system that enables better public service and economic growth; and
- Practical options that could be implemented by a new government.

Cllr Hammond welcomed the views of the FSMC and agreed that she would write to all chairs of Fire Authorities in England to emphasise the importance of FRAs responding to the Commission's call for evidence, showing their positive impact across a wide range of areas.

Action:

Cllr Hammond to write to all Fire Authority chairs regarding the Independent Commission's call for evidence.

**Lucy
Ellender**

LGA to circulate the joint response to the Commission from the LGA and CFOA.

Dan Kalley

Decision:

Members **noted** the report and **agreed** to a joint response with CFOA, cleared through Lead Members to the Independent Commission's call for evidence. LGA officers to circulate the response.

4 FSMC Industrial Relations update

Gill Gittins, Principal Negotiating Officer introduced the report and advised Members there was an update to the NJC Brigade Managers pay increase. The National Employers had now made an offer – 1% to those whose basic salary was £99,999 or less and £1000 to those whose basic salary was above that point. The Association of Principal Fire Officers (the employee representative body for this group) would now consult its members.

Members were informed the technical pensions post had been supported by all bar one fire authority who had yet to make a final decision. The move towards recruitment will now step up over the summer.

Members were directed to the written ministerial statement from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles MP in response to Knight. This statement included an announcement about an Independent Review into Terms and Conditions of operational staff in the fire and rescue service. Gill Gittins reminded Members that the NJC was already involved in constructive discussion on potential changes to meet the needs of the fire service of the future, which encompassed flexibility around roles and work undertaken etc. Correspondence to the

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Chair of the National Employers had suggested its remit may be wider than conditions but DCLG had been unable to provide clarity in respect of wider intent, rationale, and potential terms of reference.

Members contributed a number of different views in relation to the future independent review.

Some Members felt that it was the appropriate time to review conditions as the pace of change through the NJC can be slow.

Some Members felt the independent review could usefully look at the role of the modern firefighter alongside a broader look at the fire service and make proposals in the best interest of the sector. It was felt that any outcomes relating to contractual employment matters, if felt to be appropriate for the service, could then be negotiated through the NJC.

Some Members offered a different view. It was felt that conditions were a matter for the NJC, which had already moved forward in its review. A new review might stall the work that had already been done and hamper progress at this time. It was suggested that the Minister was written to, informing her that a review was already in place.

Gill Gittins advised members that she would ensure all their views were passed on to the National Employers, whom it was expected would wish to raise the matter of potential terms of reference with the Minister.

Cllr Hammond commented that the FSMC should wait for any new terms of reference to be drawn up before looking at the value of the Independent Review. It was agreed that the new Fire Minister be invited to the Fire Commission in October.

Action:

Chairman to write to the new Fire Minister and invite her to the Fire Commission meeting in October.

**Lucy
Ellender**

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

5 Fire Services Management Committee update paper

Cllr Les Byrom CBE commented that the fire statistics that had been published should be weaved into any publications or work that the FSMC do going forward. Members agreed that these figures showed how much the sector contributed both nationally and internationally. Members commented that the Prime Minister's Big Society Award was reward for all the work the Fire and Rescue Service had accomplished over the years.

Cllr Simon Spencer welcomed the report and commented that this was a good place to highlight all the work that the Fire and Rescue Service carries out.

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Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

6 End of year report

Cllr Hammond thanked the Committee for all their efforts over the past year and highlighted a number of achievements as detailed in the report. The Chairman commented that the Written Ministerial Statement in response to the Knight Review was welcome and that the only remaining parliamentary process outstanding was the Communities and Local Government Select Committee report.

Members made a number of suggestions for future items on the Committee including:

- The response to the flooding and highlighting the successes of the service during the response.
- Further reports and information on how the new pensions governance reform would affect local authorities. Members were keen that local authorities came together and created regional pension boards instead of each authority having their own. Members were informed that DCLG's view is that the starting position next April (when new governance arrangements are introduced) is that each service will have its own pension board. The LGA was arguing that this was not necessary and that authorities could join up, this was supported by the LGA's pension experts.

Cllr Hammond agreed that Fire and Rescue Authorities should look at priorities over the coming year and let officers at the LGA know their preferences.

Action:

To write to Mr Clive Betts MP, Chair of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee, asking if it now intends to make representations to the Government on the delay in responding to the Knight review.

**Public
Affairs Team**

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

7 Notes of the previous meeting

Members **agreed** the minutes from the previous meeting on 30 May 2014.

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Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr John Joyce	Cheshire Fire Authority
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Philip Howson	East Sussex Fire Authority
Members	Cllr Mark Healey	Devon and Somerset Fire Authority
	Cllr John Edwards	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr John Bell	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
	Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire Fire Authority
	Cllr Darrell Pulk	Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority
	Cllr Simon Spencer	Derbyshire Fire Authority
	Cllr David Topping	Cheshire Fire Authority
	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset Fire Authority
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire Authority
	Cllr Thomas Wright	Tyne and Wear Fire Authority
Apologies	Cllr Maurice Heaster OBE	London FEPA
	Cllr Julie Young	Essex Fire Authority
In Attendance		
LGA Officers	Helen Murray	
	Eamon Lally	
	Gill Gittins	
	Daniel Kalley	