

Priorities for 2021-22

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The Paper provides members with the opportunity to discuss potential priorities for the next year.

Recommendation

Members are asked to discuss proposals for this year's priorities.

Action

Based on members discussions officers will draft priorities and a workplan for discussion at the October FSMC.

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Priorities for 2021-22

Background

1. At the first meeting of the Fire Commission members are asked to consider the policy priorities for the forthcoming year. This paper provides an overview of the proposed priorities, based on discussions at the July Fire Services Management Committee.
2. The key theme for the forthcoming year will be the proposals set out within the Fire Reform White paper which are likely to be wide ranging, bringing together a range of different proposals across the key themes of people, professionalism and governance. The proposed priorities within this paper follow those key themes.

LGA's Business plan

3. The LGA's business plan for 2019-2022 sets out a range of cross-cutting LGA priorities which the work programmes of individual Boards should contribute to:
 - 3.1. Funding for local government
 - 3.2. Adult social care, health and wellbeing
 - 3.3. Narrowing inequalities and protecting communities
 - 3.4. Children, education and schools
 - 3.5. Places to live and work
 - 3.6. Strong local democracy
 - 3.7. Sustainability and climate action
 - 3.8. Supporting councils.
4. The LGA's business plan is currently being updated for the current year, but as last year, the FSMC and Fire Commission's activities will fall within the objectives under the headings of narrowing inequalities and protecting communities and the places for people to live and work.

Proposed priorities

5. Given the importance of the forthcoming White Paper for the sector the proposed priorities for the next year fit under the same broad headings as the Government's Fire Reform Programme:
 - 5.1. People
 - 5.2. Professionalism
 - 5.3. Governance
6. The impact of the Spending Review on the sector and the next steps outlined in Item 5 will also have a bearing on the work of the LGA going forwards as will the findings of the Inspectorate. The sector's ongoing transformation and improvement work will continue to be a key theme.

Priorities for 2021/22

7. Members will wish to consider their priorities for 2021/22. The priorities for last year were centred around the Government's key themes of people, professionalism and governance and it is likely that these will continue to be of key importance going forward, especially with the publication of the Fire Reform White Paper. Therefore, members may wish to consider if the FSMC's key themes should remain consistent.
8. **People**
 - 8.1. The Fire Reform programme is expected to outline a number of reforms in terms of the training and development of staff as well as looking at inclusion, diversity and equality. The LGA will seek to respond to these proposals once we have further detail of what will be included.
 - 8.2. We will seek to continue to provide equality, diversity and inclusion support to members through the Inclusion and Diversity Member Champions Network. In the last State of Fire Report the Inspectorate highlighted that diversity and equality within the sector must be improved.
 - 8.3. We will provide support to the FSMC's Equalities Advocate in their role.
 - 8.4. The LGA will continue to provide support to new and leading members of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) through the Fire Leadership Essentials Programme.
 - 8.5. Working with the National Employers (England) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) we will engage with the sector on Fit for the Future and the implementation of the improvement objectives.
9. **Professionalism**
 - 9.1. The LGA will continue to undertake work on building safety as the Building Safety Bill continues its progress through Parliament and the Fire Safety Act is implemented.
 - 9.2. The LGA will work on the Building Risk Review next steps which are to be determined by the Fire Protection Board this Autumn.
 - 9.3. Following the submission of the LGA and NFCC's sector Spending Review submission, there will be ongoing work with the Home Office and NFCC on the financial position of the sector. We will be working with the Home Office on creating a new Fire Efficiencies and Productivity Forum to look at these issues in the fire service.
 - 9.4. The LGA will continue to form a part of the Fire Standards Board, providing feedback as standards are developed.
 - 9.5. Continue to provide input into HMICFRS's External Reference Group and State of Fire.
10. **Governance**
 - 10.1. The Fire Reform White Paper will contain proposals regarding the future of governance of the fire and rescue sector. The LGA will be looking to provide a response to the White Paper.

- 10.2. The LGA will continue to provide training and support for members on governance and leadership issues, through training events and online resources.
- 10.3. The LGA will be providing into Part 2 of the PCC Review where it touches on the role of Police and Crime Panels.

Implications for Wales

11. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee's work will focus on changes for FRAs in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Financial Implications

12. The programme of work to deliver FSMC's priorities will be delivered within existing budgets. Additional supporting projects maybe commissioned subject to funds being available from a small team budget.

Next steps

13. Officers will draft a work programme based on members discussions to take to FSMC.