

Climate change

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The report outlines the work underway in the LGA on climate change and provides background information for the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to talk about their own work on this issue.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the work already underway in the LGA and NFCC and how the FSMC can best contribute towards furthering this work.

Actions

The LGA to work with the NFCC to identify case studies from the fire and rescue service.

The LGA to continue to engage with the NFCC as their work progresses and explore opportunities for further work.

Contact officer: Lucy Ellender
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3321
Email: lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk

Climate change

Background

1. In March 2020, the LGA published a report, [Climate emergency: Fire and rescue services](#), to help start local conversations in fire and rescue services around the issue of climate change. At the FSMC in October members discussed the opportunity to build on that work.
2. This is also an area of focus for the NFCC and Ben Brook, Chief Fire Officer at Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), will be attending the meeting to introduce the work of the NFCC on this area. Ben is one of the new leads on “Environment, climate change and sustainability” following the retirement of Nathan Travis, and works alongside Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer at Shropshire FRS and Mark Rist, Director of Resilience and Operations at Kent FRS.
3. Members may wish to consider what work the FSMC can do in this area, in the context of the wider work already underway in the LGA.

Issues

LGA work on Climate Change

4. The LGA’s work on this issue is primarily led by the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board. “Sustainability and climate action” is also included within the LGA’s overarching business plan. The LGA has declared a climate emergency as have many councils and there are extensive resources on the LGA’s website to support local government in working on this issue.
5. Climate change requires urgent and significant international, national, local and sector leadership. But the LGA has argued only local government leadership can mobilise and join-up the collective action in the real-world cities, towns, and rural areas that people live their lives. Only local government holds the wide range of important delivery powers and assets to decarbonise transport, buildings, waste, energy, nature, growth and more.
6. In the build-up and during COP26 the LGA launched a range of communications, research and events, as well as sending a delegation to Glasgow to highlight the role that local government can play in tackling these issues. The contribution of local government was recognised in the final COP26 Agreement following extensive lobbying from the LGA, supported by other local government organisations from around the world.
7. Within the UK, the LGA has been working with the Government, councils, and partners to promote the essential role of local government in delivering the ambitions for achieving net zero and supporting adaptation – including calling for greater certainty, collaboration, support and funding.

8. We were therefore pleased that the [Government's Net Zero Strategy](#) included a specific chapter on supporting Local Net Zero, and proposed models for greater partnership working between local and central government through the Local Net Zero Forum. The LGA will continue to push for local authorities to have the powers, funding, and support to build the capacity and capability in fulfilling their full role in achieving net zero and supporting adaptation.
9. As a key part of the LGA's work the EEHT Board has developed an extensive sector-led support offer around climate issues, primarily accessed through the LGA's [climate change hub](#) with resources for councillors. The climate change hub includes a wide range of links and resources including:
 - 9.1. the LGA's Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool, developed collaboratively with Local Partnerships, to provide a consistent approach for all councils seeking to calculate their own greenhouse gas baseline.
 - 9.2. the [Net Zero Innovation Programme](#), which the LGA runs in collaboration with UCL and other universities, to support councils to achieve their carbon reduction goals, and delivering further training through a train the trainer model.
 - 9.3. an E-learning on biodiversity
 - 9.4. an LGA podcast: 'Local Action for our Environment' which focusses on local community engagement and climate action Promote
 - 9.5. Resources on behaviour change, communications, transport, climate justice and health and social care, data and digital work etc. This is supported by a number of case studies on these themes.
 - 9.6. The LGA has also developed a [Sustainable Procurement toolkit](#).
10. The LGA will also be looking to deliver a series of webinars, action learning sets, and leadership essentials on climate change.

NFCC

11. In February 2021, the NFCC updated their [climate change position statement](#). It outlines that the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the potential that services have to make an important contribution to tackling climate change and sets out a number of activities that the NFCC will undertake to support this ambition, including raising awareness, lobbying, sharing best practice, etc.
12. The NFCC are now considering their next steps in the development of this work.

Fit for the Future

13. Fit for the Future is a joint piece of work owned by the LGA, the NFCC and the National Employers (England). It sets out a number of improvement objectives for the sector and climate change is currently mentioned within the document.

14. The three partners recently held a series of strategic workshops for the leadership of the sector to discuss the improvement objectives and the future of the sector. During those discussions the issue of climate change was further highlighted. As a part of our future work on Fit for the Future will be collating all the issues that were discussed at the workshops and considering how we will take that forward in the next iteration of Fit for the Future. This may present an opportunity to further embed these issues.

Implications for Wales

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

Financial Implications

16. None.

Next steps

17. Members are asked to consider the work already underway in the LGA and NFCC and how the FSMC can best contribute towards furthering this work.