

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.

Recommendation

That members of the Committee note the report.

Actions

Officers to continue to provide updates to members.

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Member development and support

1. Throughout September to November 2021, the LGA successfully delivered three half-day Governance and Leadership workshops for Fire and Rescue Authority members. In the virtual workshops, experienced facilitators delivered a range of interactive learning and development activities focusing on key issues and best practice related to fire governance and leadership. These workshops aimed to strengthen knowledge and understanding of various leadership approaches, including a focus on the practical scrutiny skills required to support effective executive decision-making.

Fit for the Future

2. Fit for the Future (FfF) is an initiative developed in a partnership between the National Employers (England), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) (the Partners). Originating from the joint need to have an evidence-based view of the role of the service going forward, this [initiative outlines a proposal for establishing a common picture for the future of fire and rescue services in England](#). Its purpose is to identify what needs to change, and then determine how that change could be delivered by supporting its implementation across all services. The Partners completed a consultation on FfF in late 2020, and outcomes of this process were shared with Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) and Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) Chairs in August 2021.
3. In late October and November 2021, the Partners convened a series of workshops – two in-person (22 and 27 October) and one virtual (29 November) – to further refine the content of Fit for the Future and inform the approach to delivering the improvement objectives. The purpose of this subsequent engagement process was to ensure that there is consensus amongst all who have responsibility for leading the fire and rescue service at a strategic level. Reaching common agreement about what needs to improve and how the benefits of that improvement can be realised is imperative to the success of Fit for the Future.
4. Officers within the partner organisations are now analysing the valuable information gathered during the three workshops and updating Fit for the Future accordingly. A revised version will be available for member consideration in early 2022, with the intention to publishing the next iteration in Spring 2022.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme

5. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has now published the responses to its [Consultation on the proposal to make a market investigation reference into the mobile radio network for emergency services](#). The LGA alongside the NFCC submitted a response to the consultation. As a result of the consultation, the CMA decided it will launch a market investigation reference looking at the supply of the Airwave systems.

They have identified three potential remedies for the market, including a form of price control, open book accounting or divestiture of the Airwave Network.

Planning Reform

6. At the last FSMC members raised issues around planning reform and the role of the Fire and Rescue Sector. The LGA has contacted the NFCC lead on this issue and officers will be holding a meeting to discuss it further.

General Powers of Competence for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)

7. The LGA responded to the consultation on extending the General Powers of Competence to Police and Crime Commissioners. In this submission, the LGA outlined its support for extending the General Powers of Competence for PCCs and suggested a number of safeguards through Police and Crime Panels.

Outside bodies update

8. HMICFRS External Reference Group (ERG): The ERG met on 8 November 2021, where the principal messages from the forthcoming State of Fire 2021 report were discussed, including an outline of the key causes for concern from the current round of inspections.