

End of year report and priorities for 2022-23

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The paper provides an overview of the work of Fire Services Management Committee over the last year and provides members with an early opportunity to discuss the Committee's priorities for the next year.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the work of the FSMC over the last year and discuss proposals for next year's priorities.

Action

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

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Background

1. In October 2021 members agreed the FSMC's priorities under these overarching themes:
 - 1.1. People
 - 1.2. Professionalism
 - 1.3. Governance
2. This report outlines progress against those priorities, as well as proposals for next year's priorities for member's comments.

Progress against the priorities

People

3. The work of the **Diversity and Inclusion Member Champions** has continued over the last year with network meetings in October, March and June. Fiona Twycross as the FSMC's **Equalities Advocate** has continued to chair these sessions as well as drive our work in this area. The Champions have held sessions with the inspectorate to talk about their findings on the people pillar, and the member role in driving forwards cultural change.
4. We have also heard case studies from Alex Johnson on her experiences in the fire service, London Fire brigade on their cultural review, and from Cllr Lud Ramsey on his work on racial equality as a former firefighter and now councillor. Fiona also ran two sessions at the LGA's Fire Conference; one workshop on inspection, and one plenary on inclusive leadership. We are now considering how the network can be extended and what other resources would be helpful for the sector in driving a more equal, diverse and inclusive service.
5. Each year the LGA runs two **Fire Leadership Essentials** programmes to support Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) members with their responsibilities. The first was held in September 2021, virtually via Zoom. Over three days (14-16 September), FRA members heard from various speakers covering topics that aim to inform and support their statutory responsibilities, including: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections, Government's fire reform programme, building safety, diversity and inclusion, and fire governance and leadership. The programme was well received with 12 councillors participating. The next Fire Leadership Essentials programme will be delivered in person between the 12 and 13 July 2022.

6. The LGA, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and National Employers (England) published a new strategic version of **Fit for the Future (FfF)** which has now been shared with all FRAs. We undertook a series of engagement events to ensure that FfF was focussing on the key issues for the sector. We held three strategic engagement events in November and December and three with operational leads at the beginning of 2022. Following those events FfF has been restructured around three key themes which are: Service Delivery; Leadership, People and Culture; and National Infrastructure and Support. All the improvement objectives have also been reviewed and amended where appropriate in line with feedback. We have written to FRAs and services inviting them to consider FfF carefully when reflecting on their own plans for the future. An online version of FfF will be made available in early July. It will be periodically reviewed to ensure that it is still up to date and relevant.

Professionalism

7. As expected, the Fire Reform **White Paper** contains a number of proposals around the appointment, progression and development of staff in the fire and rescue service. The LGA will be responding to the White Paper on these proposals as well as the others set out. **Fit for the Future** also sets out our ambitions for leadership, culture and people within the sector.
8. Over the last year our focus has been on the passage of the **Building Safety Bill** through parliament and working to ensure it aligns with the LGA's [fundamental asks](#): that the construction industry, developers, and manufacturers should pay for the cladding crisis. We have continued to press the government to distinguish between local authorities and developers, and fund councils to deliver the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). We have supported a coordinated audit of risk within medium-rise residential buildings.
9. We have also lobbied for the commencement of the **Fire Safety Act**, which has now taken place with [secondary legislation](#) implementing most of the recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry. Following our lobbying with other bodies, the Home Office published the Fire Safety Assessment Prioritisation Tool alongside the Fire Safety Act and agreed to implement the LGA's working group on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) neighbour assistance. We will engage in the [new consultation on PEEPs](#) and the Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing (EEIS) proposal.
10. The LGA has published [case studies](#) and a document on [principles of effective regulation](#), and has run several webinars and **Leadership Essentials** events with more being planned currently. The Joint Inspection Team has secured funding for the next two years which will see it triple in capacity by the end of this financial year.
11. The LGA is a part of the **Fire Standards Board** (FSB), working with the other members to produce standards for the fire and rescue sector. Eleven Standards have now been

published with the latest one on Emergency Preparedness and Resilience the latest to be published. The FSB is currently consulting on Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People Fire Standards.

12. We have continued to represent Fire and Rescue Authorities on **HMICFRS's External Reference Group** for fire inspections. This work has included providing feedback on the State of Fire Report, Round 3 of HMICFRS's inspections, as well as engaging in the work of the inspectorate more generally. We held a session with Alex Hill at the LGA Fire Conference in March 2022, which was well attended and provided the opportunity for members to ask questions. The Fire Conference was structured around the key themes coming out of inspection with many of the plenaries focussing on the different inspection pillars.
13. Following our collaborative work on the **Spending Review** for 2021, Members agreed at the Fire Commission in June 2022 to continue to work with the NFCC to ensure that the pressures facing FRAs are understood going into the next financial settlement, following last year's three year spending review. The LGA's Lead Members, and PFCC Roger Hirst sit on the Home Office's Efficiency and Productivity Forum which is looking at these issues in more depth. This was set up following last year's Spending Review and the sector's offer to create efficiency and productivity plans. The Forum aims to ensure services meet the targets committed to at the time of the Spending Review.
14. We have continued to provide input into the **Emergency Services Mobile Communities Programme** through the Fire Customer Group.
15. The LGA is currently in discussions with the NFCC on developing a **sector-led improvement offer** for fire and rescue services. Based on feedback from services and authorities there is demand for such support, though a key consideration will be the funding of the offer, and proposals around this are still under consideration

Governance

16. Governance has continued to be one of the key issues for members as the year has progressed and is a key theme of the Fire Reform White Paper which sets out the Government's view there is a strong case for the transfer of governance.
17. Cllr Ian Stephens and Cllr Nick Chard are both a part of the Home Office's newly formed **Fire Reform Board**. This will be looking at the issues coming out of the responses to the white paper, alongside the Government's Reform proposals and act as a sounding board.
18. We have run three virtual **Governance and Leadership workshops** for FRA members which were held on 7 September, 12 October and 9 November 2021. There were 57 attendees from 29 different Fire and Rescue Authorities. 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, scrutiny and leadership. The 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.

19. The LGA published a [governance checklist](#) for Fire & Rescue Authorities (FRAs) which provides a high-level, quick reference guide that members can use to consider all aspects of their governance role. This was published at the LGA's Annual Fire Conference in March. It is based around a set of internationally recognised good governance principles developed by International Federation of Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and suggests how each might be addressed by FRA members. This builds on our previous document "[Leading the fire sector](#)" which we produced in November 2019.
20. A workshop session 'Governance Reform in the fire and rescue service' was held at the **LGA's Annual Conference 2022** in June. The focus of the session was exploring the implications of the Fire Reform and Levelling Up White Papers for fire and rescue authorities, mayoral combined authorities, and county and unitary authorities responsible for their local fire and rescue service. The session was well attended and highlighted the strength of feeling amongst FRAs on the proposals around governance within the White Paper.
21. The LGA responded to the Government's consultation on the **Policing Protocol**.
22. We held a workshop session on **climate change** the LGA Fire Conference and are continuing to work with the NFCC's Environment and Sustainability Group.

Horizon Scanning

23. In considering the priorities for next year members may wish to consider if there are any key reports, inquiries or reviews likely to be coming out that will influence the work of the FSMC going forwards. This could include:
 - 23.1. Government response to the Fire Reform White Paper consultation
 - 23.2. Manchester Arena Inquiry
 - 23.3. Grenfell Inquiry
 - 23.4. State of Fire
 - 23.5. London Fire Brigade's cultural review
 - 23.6. Civil contingencies review

Priorities for 2022/23

24. Members will wish to consider their priorities for 2022/23. The priorities for this 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.

Priority areas	Proposed activity
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion and diversity champions network: continue to provide training, information and support to FRA champions. • Provide support to members through the Fire Leadership Essentials programme. • Consider any further resources to support members in driving forwards cultural change within the sector.
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with HSE's programme to establish the new building safety regulator and raise awareness amongst Fire and Rescue Authorities of their responsibilities as regulators. As part of this, we will continue to lobby for the funding of new burdens and a proportionate approach to transition to the new regime and new FSO responsibilities. • Continue to support councils in taking enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004 through hosting the Joint Inspection Team. We will continue to support a coordinated approach to regulation between fire services and councils. • Continue our improvement programme to support FRSs in their enhanced regulatory role. • Consider any developments around the Grenfell Tower inquiry, including the recommendations of its Phase Two report and respond. • We will continue to lobby around Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and improved building regulations. • Working with the NFCC on making a joint case for the funding of the sector. • Continuing with our role on the Fire Standards Board.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent FRAs on HMICFRS's External Reference Group. • Continuing to develop the case for an LGA sector-led improvement offer. • Continue to engage with the NFCC on climate change.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage with the Home Office on their proposals around governance. • Support members in their leadership and governance role through appropriate resources and training.

Implications for Wales

25. 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 in Cardiff.

Financial Implications

26. 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

27. Officers will draft a work programme based on members discussions.