

Note of last Fire Commission meeting

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Title: | Fire Commission |
| Date: | Friday 13 June 2014 |
| Venue: | Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ |

| Item | Decisions and actions | Action |
|------|-----------------------|--------|
|------|-----------------------|--------|

1 Chairman's report

Cllr Hammond introduced the report and updated Members on her visit to the Fire Services College to open a new block of accommodation, which was attended by Princess Anne. She also informed Members that she had attended the D-Day celebrations and memorial.

Cllr Healey thanked Cllr Hammond for her chairmanship at the Blue Light Services day on 25 March and welcomed the topics discussed at the event.

Cllr Hammond informed Members that Russell Pearson, Chief Fire Officer, Surrey, was unable to attend the meeting due to the ongoing industrial action.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

2 National Resilience

Jennifer Cole, Senior Research Fellow in Resilience and Emergency Management at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) presented to the Fire Commission on emerging threats to national resilience. Threats to national resilience had previously been understood as incidents such as terrorist attacks, however the country was now moving towards a broader interpretation of emergencies to reflect the serious threats from incidents such as flooding, swine flu, foot and mouth disease and extreme weather. This change has helped to create a different response to emergencies through local agencies cooperating to respond to the issue, rather than a response being driven by central government.

Members noted that as climate change continued, these sorts of issues could become more prevalent. The impact on the work of the Fire and Rescue Service would therefore be significant.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments including:

- There was a need to educate members of the public further so that in certain situations they were able to respond effectively to natural emergencies such as flooding. Fire and Rescue Services needed to be at the forefront of educating residents on what they could do to help themselves during flooding and other incidents.
- Members discussed the potential for further work across the blue light services to address potential future emergencies and ensure a joined-up response.
- With the reduction in funding for fire and rescue services it was important to ensure that other services were engaged in learning the lessons from previous incidents. This would help to ensure greater resilience in the future.

Members were informed that at RUSI's annual conference further detail on national resilience would be discussed.

Decision:

Members noted the report and the presentation.

3 Fire and Rescue Service Procurement

Ann Millington, Chief Executive, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, updated Members on CFOA's response to DCLG's Fire and Rescue report on procurement aggregation and collaboration, which had highlighted the need for further work on how the sector procured goods and services. Ann outlined that there had been numerous attempts in the past to procure services and products collectively, but that these had been driven by central government, CFOA was proposing a sector-led approach towards better procurement practices.

The report recommended that the Fire and Rescue Service should agree a common classification of goods and services and develop a dashboard showing the price of goods, how they perform and in what conditions certain goods are most effective. One of the next steps suggested by the report was to work more collaboratively across the sector; to aid this CFOA had produced a draft procurement strategy. It was essential that Chairs of Fire Authorities worked with their Chief Fire Officers to drive joint procurement forward.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments in discussion including:

- Procurement was a key issue for all Fire and Rescue Authorities however it was important that each authority retained a sense of identity.
- The sector could follow the examples from the Building Research Establishment (BRE) in getting the sector to work more collaboratively.
- Outsourcing was a good way to get certain expertise to help with certain issues, however it would be better to keep as much in-house as possible.
- It was important to make joint procurement attractive to those who used it.

- Members were keen that Firebuy was not simply recreated and that this was a sector-led initiative, though members did state that Firebuy had been useful in working towards standardising the sector.
- Joint procurement was already being trialled in the North-West, for example all local fire authorities wore the same uniform.

Members sought assurances that the best price for products and services would be secured following this model. Ann clarified that the guide would allow each authority to purchase the equipment that suited them best.

Decision:

Members noted the report and presentation from Ann Millington.

4 Fire Commission Industrial Relations Report

Gill Gittins, Principal Negotiating Officer, updated Members on the latest known position on the pension reform dispute between the FBU and government.

With regards to the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, there had been positive discussions on working jointly to ensure there was a pay framework alongside terms and conditions in the fire and rescue service which reflected the responsibilities of, and current and future demands on, the service and the profession.

In addition, following receipt of a pay claim, an across the board offer to increase pay by 1.0% had been made. A response would not be received until such time as the Employees' Side had completed a consultation process.

A claim, seeking an uplift in pay of 1.9%, had also been received in the NJC for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. The NJC would consider the claim at its meeting later that day.

Members noted the offer that had been made to local authority employees covered by the NJC for Local Government Services, which would provide those employees with an increase of 1.0% (higher at the bottom of the pay range). A consultation of members of the unions on that body was underway. It was already known that UNISON members had rejected the offer.

Members were reminded that all Fire Authorities in England and Wales had been written to with a proposal to put in place a post at the LGA that could advise fire authorities on pension scheme matters. This proposal had arisen from concerns raised by fire authorities.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

5 Fire Commission Update Paper

Pascoe Sawyer, informed Members of the updated Political Leadership Programme and the new offer for Councillors wanting to expand their leadership skills and network. There were a number of different programmes tailored to the different needs of members.

Cllr Hammond reminded Members that the LGA also offered a Leadership Essentials Programme particularly for the Fire and Rescue Service which provide Members from the sector a chance to share ideas, hear good practice and network with leading Members from other Fire Authorities.

Members were also informed that the Fire College was to run a taster weekend for anyone interested in joining the fire and rescue service. The aim of the day was to try and encourage more young people to join the service.

Cllr Hammond informed the Commission that this was to be her last meeting as Chairman and thanked all Members for their continued support over the past two years.

Decision:

Members **noted** the report.

6 Notes from the previous meeting

Members **agreed** the notes of the previous meeting on 10 March 2014.