

Fire Services Management Committee Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Committee not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members to note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Fire Services Management Committee Update Paper

Councillor Jeremy Hilton

1. Following discussions at the Board in December and approval by lead members, the LGA published *The Fire and Rescue Service: Making our Nation Safer* as a part of our 100 days campaign for the next Government. Councillor Jeremy Hilton wrote to a number of parliamentarians about the joint LGA and CFOA document, including Penny Mordaunt MP, Lyn Brown MP and Baroness Cathy Bakewell. Cllr Hilton also wrote to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Fire and Rescue and a number of other APPGs who would have an interest in some of the specific proposals.
2. Cllr Hilton provided a quote for the LGA press release calling for all private landlords to install smoke alarms. There are 3.5 million smaller private rental homes which legally do not have to have smoke alarms installed. The Government passed a law in 2013 which would require all private landlords to provide smoke alarms. However, this has gone out to consultation and has not yet been brought into force. CFOA also provided a quote for the press release.
3. The LGA's Fire Leadership Essentials Programme took place on 3 – 4 February. Cllr Hilton introduced the two day course with a presentation on the LGA's strategic priorities for the year. The programme also contained presentations on collaboration, personal leadership styles, and transformation of the sector.
4. Cllr Hilton also attended the Strategic Resilience Board alongside Cllr Les Byrom CBE, and heard updates on flooding, JESIP and other issues.

Roundtable discussion on diversity in the fire and rescue service

5. On 4 February the LGA held a roundtable discussion on diversity in the fire and rescue service. Peter Dartford, Paul Hancock and Ann Millington attended from CFOA, alongside a number of other HR professionals, senior managers and chief fire officers within the service. The discussion focussed around why diversity was important and what actions could be taken to improve diversity within the sector.
6. The group discussed how the sector was changing as the numbers of fires decreased and further collaboration with other parts of the public sector increased. Both these changes would require new skills and behaviours from firefighters, and attendees discussed what the role of diversity in meeting the challenges these changes posed.
7. There was also discussion on what the perceived barriers to recruitment for female firefighters might be, including a lack of family friendly or flexible working practices or policies across the service.
8. The LGA and CFOA have agreed to take forward a number of actions on this agenda and we plan to hold another meeting on this in 6 months' time to look again at the progress that has been made.

“Remodelling Public Protection”

9. The LGA has launched a new discussion paper on the future of trading standards, environmental health and licensing. The paper looks at some of the thinking, both locally and nationally, about how we can ensure a sustainable future for public protection services over the next decade. The document sets out some of the key issues, challenges and possible solutions. The LGA is inviting all those with an interest in these services – from councils, businesses, local communities and the professions themselves – to share their views. You can contact Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser (ellie.greenwood@local.gov.uk) with your views. The report is available on the LGA's website: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/7061800/PUBLICATION

National Operational Guidance

10. The Minister has agreed the funding for the National Operational Guidance Programme. £1 million for 2015/16 will come from the Government to match fund FRAs' contributions. A letter from Roy Wilsher, Chairman of the Operational Guidance Strategy Board, has gone out to Chief Fire Officers confirming the arrangements for funding in 2015/16.

Fire Statistics: Great Britain April 2013 to March 2014

11. The latest set of Fire Statistics, for the period April 2013 to March 2014, were released in January 2015. The key findings in the report were:
 - 11.1 Fire and Rescue Services attended 212,500 fires in 2013-14, continuing the generally downward trend of the last 10 years. There was a 10% increase on 2012-13, but this previous year had been unusually low due to wet weather conditions.
 - 11.2 The most common time for fires to be reported is in the hour of 8pm-9pm (9% of all fires). While only 11% of fires occurred between midnight and early morning (5am), these fires caused one fifth of all deaths in Great Britain in 2013-14.
 - 11.3 Over two thirds of fire-related deaths occurred in accidental dwelling fires and more than half of the victims were aged 65 years or older.
 - 11.4 The risk of dying in a fire for people aged 80 and over is more than four times higher than average. People aged between 65 and 79 also have a higher than average rate.
 - 11.5 Dwellings with no smoke alarm accounted for 38% of deaths in home fires in Great Britain, and nearly one fifth of deaths occurred where no smoke alarm worked.

- 11.6 Smokers' materials (e.g. cigarettes, cigars or pipe tobacco) caused the largest share of deaths in accidental dwelling fires (37%), while cooking appliances are the source of ignition in more than half of accidental fires in dwellings.
- 11.7 More than a third of fire deaths in non-domestic buildings were caused by smokers' materials or cigarette lighters.
- 11.8 Scotland continued to have a higher rate of fire deaths compared to both England and Wales, but death rate in Scotland declined by about a third in 2013-14 compared to the previous year.

European Union Procurement Regulations

12. Fire and rescue authorities are required to follow the requirements as set out in the new European Union Procurement Regulations. It is expected that by following the new regulations the information needed for the development of procurement plans is made available and transparent. The changes are aimed at encouraging increased quality and value for money in the procurement of goods and services from small businesses. Further information can be found on the Government's website:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-bulletin-542015

Firefighter Fatalities at fires in the UK: 2004-2013

13. The Fire Brigades Union has produced *Firefighter Fatalities at fires in the UK: 2004-2013: voices from the fireground* on fatalities in the fire and rescue service. The full report can be found on the FBU's website: www.fbu.org.uk/resources/firefighter-fatalities-fires-uk-2004-2013-voices-fireground

Fire Sprinklers Week

14. The next Fire Sprinklers Week will be taking place between 16 – 22 March 2015. The theme of Sprinkler Week 2015 is Business Continuity, focusing on the support that fitting automatic fire sprinkler systems can provide to businesses and to social continuity. The week will focus on promoting sprinklers to businesses as well as educational establishments such as schools and colleges.
15. This is the second Fire Sprinklers Week, and will be another chance to promote the benefits that fitting sprinklers can have in protecting people, property and the environment from fire. The objectives of the week are:
 - 15.1 To encourage businesses to consider how fitting sprinklers can help to protect their valuable assets (people, buildings, machinery and supplies) from fire, or can mitigate the effects that a fire has upon their assets, helping them to achieve business continuity.
 - 15.2 To encourage schools and other educational establishments to fit sprinklers, allowing them to potentially minimize the major impact that a fire can cause their students, staff and community.

- 15.3 To promote the economic, social and business benefits of having sprinklers to business owners and leaders, and to dispel some of the myths about sprinklers.