

Fire Commission Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Commission 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 Commission Update Paper

Councillor Jeremy Hilton

1. In March Cllr Jeremy Hilton chaired the LGA's Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition. The event was well received and there were nearly 300 attendees and exhibitors from across the fire sector. Delegates heard from a range of speakers, including the former Fire Minister, Penny Mordaunt MP, as well as Lyn Brown MP, the Shadow Fire Minister, and Baroness Cathy Bakewell, the Liberal Democrat spokesperson on fire. Delegates also heard from Clive Betts MP on fire service reform, Peter Dartford, President of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and Kieran Timmins, Chair of the Fire Finance Network on the next Spending Review as well as Adrian Thomas and Matt Wrack on Thomas' Review into firefighters terms and conditions. The next conference will take place between 8 – 9 March 2016 in Bristol.
2. Following discussions at the FSMC in December and approval by lead members, the LGA, jointly with CFOA, 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.
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.

The Fire and Rescue Service: Making the Nation Safer

5. The LGA, jointly with CFOA, 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 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.
6. The Government has already taken forward one of our proposals by introducing regulations to make it mandatory for all private sector landlords to ensure working smoke alarms and, in some circumstances, carbon monoxide alarms are installed in their rented properties at the start of each tenancy.
7. The Regulations made under section 150(1) of the Energy Act 2013 will, subject to Parliamentary approval, come into force on 1 October 2015:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2015/9780111133439/contents>

LGA Leadership Essentials Programme for the Fire and Rescue Service

8. The LGA's next Leadership Essentials Programme for members from FRAs is taking place between 13 – 14 October at the Warwick Business Centre. These provide opportunities for networking with other senior FRA members, and also the chance to learn more about your own leadership style and hear from a range of interesting speakers.
9. You can register to attend or ask for more information from grace.collins@local.gov.uk

Fire Statistics: Great Britain April 2013 to March 2014

10. 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:
 - 10.1. 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.
 - 10.2. 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.
 - 10.3. 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.
 - 10.4. 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.
 - 10.5. 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.
 - 10.6. 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.
 - 10.7. More than a third of fire deaths in non-domestic buildings were caused by smokers' materials or cigarette lighters.
 - 10.8. 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

11. 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

Combined Fire and Rescue Authority for Dorset and Wiltshire

12. In March 2015 the former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles MP, approved the request from Dorset and Wiltshire FRAs to combine into one authority. In the Government's response to the consultation from the two authorities, the Government said that it was "a good example of collaboration at the local level which will protect and strengthen frontline services - the merger will save the authorities £4.5million a year."
13. Further information can be found on the Government's website:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416717/Govt_response_to_dorset_and_wiltshire_final.pdf

Shared Services Map

14. The LGA has re-launched the national shared services map for 2015 which now shows that there are 416 shared service arrangements occurring between local authorities across the country resulting in £462 million of efficiency savings. We are keen to include examples from the fire and rescue sector and would like to hear from you if you have shared services with another FRS, the police or the ambulance service. In order to add projects to the map we need information about the project, the partners involved and the savings made from the shared service as well as contact details.
15. The map can be found on the LGA's website: <http://www.local.gov.uk/shared-services-map>. If you would like more information or to submit your example to the map, please contact lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk

Future control room services scheme and ex-fire regional control centres (March 2015 update)

16. DCLG released its latest update on the future control room projects, delivery dates, resilience benefits, projected savings, and additional benefits the project partnerships have identified. The LGA responded to the update:
http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/7141073/NEWS

Public Sector Audit Appointments

17. In April 2015 the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) took over responsibility for appointing and monitoring audit appointments following closure of the Audit

Commission. PSAA was set up as an independent company by the LGA and is now responsible for appointing external auditors to Fire and Rescue Authorities, NHS bodies, the police and councils. These arrangements will continue until at least 2017 and may be extended by a further three years. The LGA view is that this would offer on-going savings to local public bodies, including fire and rescue authorities, in the region of £24m a year in total.

18. We are surveying all local authority Chief Finance officers to establish whether there is support for the extension of the current contracts and whether authorities generally would prefer to opt in to collective procurement arrangements.
19. For further information please contact Fiona Daley, Head of Implementation fiona.daley@local.gov.uk.

English devolution: Local solutions for a successful nation

20. The LGA has published a fully-costed white paper detailing proposals for a devolved solution for England in partnership with central government. The paper's publication builds upon the evidence of three independent commissions that all conclude devolution must reach non-metropolitan England, and sets out a roadmap to achieve this.
21. It asks for local areas to be provided with the flexibility to merge the Police, fire and rescue and ambulance services and create combined governance arrangements based on local needs. The report can be found here: www.local.gov.uk/devonext-publication

LG Challenge at Hereford and Worcester FRS

22. At the beginning of June Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue (HWFRS) hosted the final task of the Local Government Challenge. LG Challenge is a competition which seeks out the best and brightest local government officers with the drive and determination to reach the top.
23. Competitors take part in a series of real-life challenges in host authorities around the country, which test their individual and team working skills. The winner can look forward to a career-enhancing scholarship worth up to £10,000 from the Bruce Lockhart Leadership Programme, to be used to promote localism and local government through the exchange of ideas between the UK, the USA and Europe – and to put into practice successful ideas.
24. In Hereford and Worcester FRS teams were challenged to develop a campaign for the recruitment of on-call firefighters, which they then had to present to the judging panel. The finalists will now attend LGA's Annual Conference, where they will pitch a project plan that they have developed to benefit local communities.