

## **The Future of the Fire and Rescue Service: Report from the New Local Government Network**

### **Purpose of report**

For discussion.

### **Summary**

The New Local Government Network (NLGN) is publishing a report looking at the future of the fire and rescue service. Claire Mansfield, Head of Research at NLGN, will attend the meeting to discuss the research before it is published on 16 July.

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to discuss the research and consider how this discussion could feed into the wider discussion on priorities for 2015/16.

### **Action**

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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### **Introduction**

1. The New Local Government Network (NLGN) is an independent think tank that seeks to transform public services, revitalise local political leadership and empower local communities. The NLGN works with councils, private businesses and third sector organisations.
2. The NLGN has been working with the Chief Fire Officers Association on a new report looking at the future of the fire and rescue service. The research included interviews and workshops with a number of officers and councillors from the fire and rescue service, local authorities, other blue-light services and social workers to examine how the Fire and Rescue Service can reform to ensure future success and sustainability.
3. The research was focussed on three key themes:
  - 3.1. Widening the prevention agenda
  - 3.2. Collaboration with other emergency services
  - 3.3. Achieving greater efficiency
4. The report outlines the key issues facing the fire and rescue sector in the coming years, including the difficulties presented by a continued reduction in revenue support grant and council tax, and the potential effect that this could have on the sector's capacity to provide services. The research explores the viability of the fire and rescue service in its current form into the future and will make a series of recommendations for the future shape of the sector and its role in making communities safer. It poses the question what should the future of the fire and rescue service be, should it keep to its current remit or explore how it could shape a new role for itself.
5. A lot of these issues have been touched on in the papers discussed at the Fire Commission, particularly around the role of the fire and rescue service in improving the public's health and the potential for the sector to expand this role.

### **Claire Mansfield**

6. Claire is Head of Research at the NLGN. Previously, she worked as a Support Officer for a Local Involvement Network (LINK) in London. Prior to that Claire studied for her PhD in Social Geography in University College Cork, carrying out extensive qualitative and quantitative research in two diverse communities. During this time, she wrote reports for the Social Inclusion Unit of Cork City Council. Her speciality areas are:
  - 5.1. Fire and rescue service
  - 5.2. Arts and culture
  - 5.3. Public health
  - 5.4. Budgeting

- 5.5. Two tier local government
- 5.6. Young people

**Next Steps**

- 6. Members may wish to take into consideration the debate on this item, and the wider discussion on expanding the role prevention from of the sector at the Fire Commission, when discussing their priorities for 2015/16.