

Report of the Fire Authority Chairman

12. Local Government Association Fire Commission

Purpose of report

1. To update the Authority on issues raised at the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission.
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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Authority notes the following issues that were considered at the recent LGA Fire Commission meeting:

- ***Fire Commission Priorities for 2014/15;***
- ***the LGA Response to the Independent Review of Terms and Conditions of Service for Operational Staff;***
- ***the Fire and Rescue Services' Proposition to the Next Government; and***
- ***Fire Commission Industrial Relations***

Introduction and Background

2. The Local Government Association (LGA) works with local authorities to ensure local government has a voice with national government. It aims to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to local authorities and the people they serve. In total, 415 authorities, including this Authority are members of the LGA for 2014/15.
3. All Fire and Rescue Authorities are entitled to a place and a vote on the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission. The Authority has appointed the Chairman to the Commission and exercises the vote on behalf of this Authority.
4. The purpose of the Commission is to provide a forum in which fire authorities can discuss matters of common concern and exchange good practice and experience. The Commission helps to promote the interests of fire authorities and provides feedback to the Fire Services Management Committee.

Update from the Fire Commission meeting on 17 October 2014

2014/15 Priorities

5. The following priorities for 2014/15 were discussed and agreed:
 - Press for a fair finance settlement for fire authorities
 - Work to assist resolution to current industrial action

- Independent Review of Terms and Conditions of Firefighters
- Political engagement
- Transformation: blue light operability
- Communications

Fire Minister

6. The Fire Minister, Penny Mordant MP attended the meeting to provide Commission Members with an opportunity to raise current issues and challenges facing fire authorities across the country.

Independent Review of Terms and Conditions of Service for Operational Staff

7. The Commission also received a paper on the recent Independent Review of Terms and Conditions of Service for Operational Staff which updated Members on the LGA's response to the review. The work was undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in response to Sir Ken Knight's review of the fire and rescue service and is expected to conclude in February 2015.
8. The general view of the Fire Service Management Committee was that national employers should have been engaged directly at the earliest opportunity and that the questionnaire sent to fire authorities was too simplistic. It was recognised that fire authorities should choose the nature of their own response and not be tied to the questionnaire structure. A single response was submitted by the LGA on 29 September 2014. Members will recall that this Authority also approved its response to the review at the meeting on 1 October 2014.

Fire and Rescue Services' Proposition to the Next Government

9. Commission Members received the outline plan for the production of a fire specific document for the next incoming government. The document set out the "asks" and offers of the fire service sector to the next Government and Commission Members were requested for any further advice and ideas for inclusion in the document.
10. It was clear that the core document would not simply ask for more funding or to ask for services to be protected due to the projected reduction in public spending over the 2015-2020 parliament. However, the document set out that the work of any new Government should be underpinned by a number of principles if transformation of public services is to take place. It was proposed that the fire specific document would carry through the following:
 - more devolution of power to elected councillors;
 - community budgets as the preferred delivery mechanism; and
 - financial settlements tied to the lifetime of Parliament for all the public sector.

Fire Commission Industrial Relations

11. A paper was presented for information that briefly described the main industrial relations issues at present:
- DCLG/Fire Brigades Union Pension Scheme Reform Dispute
 - National Joint Committee (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services:
 - Joint Working Party (Fitness)
 - Commitment to joint work
 - Conciliation work
 - NJC Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services
 - Working Time Regulations
12. Commission Members were asked to discuss and share local issues relevant to the national positions.

Conclusion/Summary

13. The Authority has appointed the Chairman as its representative on the LGA Fire Commission and to exercise the vote on behalf of this Authority. This report updates the Authority on issues raised at the recent meeting of Fire Commission.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The Authority reimburses the Chairman for travel and subsistence to attend Fire Commission meetings.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The LGA Fire Commission helps to promote the interests of fire authorities and provides feedback to the Fire Services Management Committee.

Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	None

Supporting Information

Background papers – LGA Fire Commission Agenda Papers – 17 October 2014

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