

Report of Chief Fire Officer

8. Review of Conditions of Service – Operational Staff

Purpose of report

1. To inform Members that the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) has initiated a review of conditions of service for operational fire staff at all grades, including Brigade Commanders and has published two questionnaires to gather views from Fire and Rescue Authorities. There is a further questionnaire available for completion by individual firefighters.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the draft responses to the questionnaires published in connection with the review of conditions of service be approved.

Introduction and Background

2. A report by former Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor Sir Ken Knight 'Facing the Future', published last year, outlined how improvements might be made to frontline services if firefighters' conditions of service, which were seen as a barrier to changes, were reviewed. The Fire Minister Penny Mordaunt MP subsequently launched an independent review on 7 August 2014 that is designed to ensure the conditions of service continue to support their frontline work of preventing fire and protecting the public for years to come. The review is to consider where there may be constraints or barriers with the current terms and conditions of employment (Grey and Gold books) to which the Knight review referred and what can be done to solve them. A copy of the terms of reference for the review is attached at Appendix 1.
3. The review will be led by Adrian Thomas, an expert in the field of personnel management and staff resourcing. Mr Thomas has now commenced his consultation with fire and rescue authorities, firefighters and representative bodies. A final report will be submitted to DCLG by February 2015.
4. The review is designed to consider whether the current terms and conditions are conducive to building the fire and rescue service of the future. It will look at national arrangements for agreeing conditions:
 - management practices and crewing arrangements
 - collaboration and integration with other emergency services
 - the use of on call firefighters

- clarity of process in the fair recruitment and remuneration of chief fire officers and fire officers

Conditions of Service Questionnaires

- Two questionnaires have been sent to the Fire Authority and the deadline for completion has been extended to 17 October 2014. One questionnaire relates to statistical information and the second questionnaire relates to general information. This second questionnaire calls for expressions of opinion and following clarification from DCLG, it has been confirmed that the Review is seeking a response from the Fire Authority itself. Any changes to national conditions of service, depending upon the nature and scope of such changes, could have significant implications for this Authority. It is important therefore that the responses should be considered by Members. Draft responses have been prepared at Appendix 2 and 3 for Members' consideration..
- A separate questionnaire has made been made available to firefighters directly.

Conclusion/Summary

- Members are asked to note the review of conditions of service for operational staff being undertaken by DCLG and to approve the prepared responses.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Human Resources to gather data required for the questionnaires. Finance for the potential outcomes from the review of the conditions of service.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Improved conditions of service could bring about increased recruitment and retention of operational firefighters.
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)	DCLG are also consulting with firefighters and representative bodies.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	None

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference
Appendix 2 – General Questionnaire
Appendix 3 – Statistical Questionnaire

Background papers – Former Fire Chief Sir Ken Knight ‘Facing the Future’, published in 2013.

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Terms of Reference

To review the conditions of service of chief fire officers and firefighters and the processes by which they are determined to consider whether they present barriers to the reform, improvement and efficiency of fire and rescue services.

In particular, the review should consider barriers to:

- the flexibility and responsiveness of workforce management practices, staffing and crewing arrangements
- people working longer, and ensuring they achieve, or if desired, exceed their normal pension age
- collaboration and integration with other emergency services
- the increased use of on call firefighters
- clarity of process in the fair recruitment and remuneration of chief fire officers and fire officers

The review should also consider the national arrangements for agreeing conditions of service, in particular:

- whether a UK-wide process remains appropriate
- whether there is sufficient independent advice and expertise in the process
- whether there are sufficient mechanisms to ensure that conditions of service keep pace with the rest of the public sector
- consider the current usefulness of the Grey and Gold Books, and the present arrangements for dispute resolution within the Grey Book
- consider the arrangements for agreeing remuneration of senior officers in fire and rescue authorities
- identify any barriers in moving between the Grey and Green Books
- the impact on services by the undertaking of activity, by firefighters, outside of normal working hours/shift systems

In conducting this review, the review team should consult with fire and rescue authorities, firefighters, representative bodies, and others they deem relevant. It will be an independent report to government but may make recommendations to others, including fire and rescue authorities and representative bodies. Where possible, recommendations should be costed and of sufficient detail to enable effective implementation.

The [‘Gold Book’](#) or National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services constitution and scheme of conditions of service, fifth edition 2006 covers conditions that apply to principal managers in the fire service and includes pay scale recommendations for local negotiations based around population bands and job role.

The [‘Grey Book’](#) or the scheme of conditions of service of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services covers remuneration levels for wholetime and retained duty staff and also control room uniformed staff are subject to national negotiation.

The [‘Green Book’](#) or National Joint Council for Local Government Services covers conditions of service for non-uniformed staff who support operational service.