

## **Report of the Fire Authority Chairman**

### **17. Local Government Association Fire Conference and Exhibition 2015**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To update the Authority on issues raised at the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition 2015 (10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March).
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#### **Recommendations**

***It is recommended that the Authority notes the content of this report.***

#### **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. The LGA Fire Conference is an opportunity to discuss how this can be done and consider the future direction of the Fire and Rescue sector.
3. This year's conference was hosted by Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service and was attended by the previous Vice-Chairman Brigadier Jones, Group Commander Jordan, Group Commander Wills, the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman Derek Prodger MBE.
4. The Conference had a number of speakers as well as some specific sessions.

#### **The introduction of new regulations requiring private sector landlords to fit smoke and carbon monoxide detectors**

5. The Minister announced that following the responses to the public discussion paper on property conditions in the private rented sector, regulations would be introduced to require smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to be fitted. The regulations would also require that the alarms are in working order at the beginning of each tenancy.
6. The Fire Minister, Penny Mordaunt MP confirmed that one-off funding would be made available to the Fire and Rescue Service to support landlords in the transition to complying with the new regulations.
7. It is estimated that these new regulations will result in 36 fewer fatalities and 1529 fewer injuries in England over a ten year period. Members will recall that it was noted at the Authority meeting on 18 February 2015 that the Chief Fire

Officer would write to all local MPs to recommend the immediate enactment of the legislation and it is apparent that this type of lobbying has had a positive affect.

### **Outline findings of the Thomas Review into Fire and Rescue Conditions of Service**

8. The review undertaken by former Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor Sir Ken Knight, published in May 2013 recommended various reforms for the Fire and Rescue Service. One area that was highlighted by the Knight Review was that the conditions of service for firefighters may act as a barrier or perceived barrier to potential reforms. In response to the Knight Review, the Fire Minister Penny Morduant MP launched an independent review designed to ensure conditions of service continue to support frontline work.
9. The review was led by Adrian Thomas, an expert in the field of personnel management and staff resourcing who undertook consultation with fire authorities, firefighters and representative bodies to inform his review. Members may recall that this Authority approved its response to the consultation on 1 October 2014.
10. Adrian Thomas gave a presentation to the conference to outline his findings whilst emphasising the report had not yet been released but was now complete and with the Fire Minister. At the time of writing this paper this report has still not been released.
11. Mr Thomas explained that the report contained 45 recommendations and these were based on the themes of:
  - The working environment
  - Documented Conditions of Service
  - Industrial relations
  - Duty systems
  - Management of the Fire and Rescue Service
12. Exact details were not given on the recommendations but Mr Thomas explained that change should not have to happen in 46 separate FRSs, rather that where change is common sense, it should become common practice.

### **Conclusion/Summary**

13. This report updates the Authority on the key themes from the LGA Fire Conference 2015. Members are requested to note the introduction of new regulations requiring private sector landlords to fit smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and to note the update on the Thomas Review into Conditions of Service.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The cost of attending the conference is charged at the LGA member rate of £360 per delegate and is met within the existing budget for Members' seminar and conference expenses.
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The LGA Fire Conference provides the Authority with the opportunity to contribute to discussions regarding the future direction of the sector.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	None

## Supporting Information

Background papers:

Chief Fire Officer's letter to all Local MPs 23 February 2015

Fire Authority Report "Conditions of Service" and consultation response to the Thomas Review considered on 1 October 2014

## Contact Officer

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