

APPENDIX A

MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM CONFERENCE/SEMINAR/FIRE RELATED EVENT

Attendees	Cllr Robinson, Cllr Laing, CFO Errington, DCFO Bage
Event	Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Conference: Gateshead
Date	13 - 14 March 2018
Overview of event	Annual LGA Fire conference with a range of keynote sessions covering a range of topics such as: trauma support; Grenfell, building safety, early reflections from HMICFRS pilot inspection authorities; recruitment and inclusion; future of fire finance.
TOPIC	Chairs welcome
Speaker	Organisation
Cllr Ian Stephens	Fire Service Management Committee
<p>He is new to the role of FSMC Chair. 2017 has been a significant and challenging year for the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). There is an opportunity to influence Hackett Review findings. HMICFRS appointed and Sussex speaking later about their experience of being a pilot FRS. Recruitment is an opportunity to increase diversity across all underrepresented groups not just gender. The LGA have an important role in ensuring there is a level playing field with PCCs who wish to take on responsibility for FRSs in their area.</p>	
Implications for Service	
N/A	
TOPIC	Trauma Support Team An Internal Peer Support Service
Speakers	Organisation
Dany Cotton Fiona Twycross Ian Hayton Laura Lawrence Steve Malley	Commissioner of London Fire Brigade Chair of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority Chief Fire Officer, Cleveland Fire Brigade Welfare Manager, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service Group Manager B Risk and Information, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
<p>Fiona Twycross - mental toll from Grenfell has impacted the entire Brigade. Leadership from Dany Cotton has been inspirational. A video of a poem written by a firefighter from the Grenfell Tower incident was played.</p> <p>Dany Cotton - there has been a huge impact on London Fire Brigade (LFB) and FRS in general, need to be vigilant in relation to mental health. Impact across organisation of Grenfell. Effect still being felt 9 months later. Whilst some were affected immediately and some of those are beginning to cope with the mental health issues other individuals are now only beginning to experience issues. Need to keep conversation going in relation to mental health and need to act quickly after Grenfell. Everyone had access to a counsellor at a debrief session before they left the incident ground, followed up with regular sessions. Pressure and stress of public enquiry will be immense for those individuals who will be required to give evidence. LFB have been encouraging all staff to check on their colleague's behaviour. The fact that Dany Cotton has been open with her challenges has</p>	

helped others. People want to tell their story and feel free to do so. Support from T&W FRS was excellent and work of the Firefighters Charity and Mind. It is clear that mental health impacts on vulnerability to fire. Hoarding is an issue and it impacts on wide range of people. Men more at risk of not talking about mental health issues. Promoting the phrase: *'Its OK not to be OK'*

Ian Hayton – Mental health is an FRS issue not just LFB issue. There is still a stigma attached to mental health. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is dealing with absence issues across the sector and mental health is a growing issue. 55,000 shifts lost every year to mental health. 20% of wholetime absence, 29% of control absence and 30% of green book staff absence is attributed to mental health. Statistics show that 1 in 4 people will suffer a mental health problem in their lifetime. He mentioned the Oscar Kilo assessment tool that is available to analyse the issues of mental health in blue light services. Services need to put action behind the words and pledges

Laura Lawrence and Steve Malley - The history of the Trauma Support Team in Tyne and Wear FRS was outlined. In 1996 a debriefing team established but there was disparity between the views of the Team and the views of staff in general. Over the years they have developed a professional process which and leads to a qualification for those members of staff taking part in the team. They use the Mitchel model which is a facilitated discussion that signposts additional support. Any fatalities trigger support from the Service, although anyone can also request support. There is a process in place to monitor station activity across the team to see if additional support is required. The team is made up of volunteers who all receive training up to level 3 certificate with some having gone on to degree qualification.

Implications for Service

The Service have a number of arrangements in place through the employee assistance programme to support staff with mental health issues. The involvement of T and W Trauma Support Team has also been considered following recent incidents in this Service. Options are currently being assessed on enhancing the internal resources for trauma support in the Service.

TOPIC	Grenfell, Building Safety
Speakers	Organisation
Dame Judith Hackitt	Chair, Independent review of building safety and fire safety regulations
Roy Wilshire	Chair, National Fire Chiefs Council

Dame Judith Hackitt - Explained the timeline. The review was announced on 28 July 2017. The review was tasked to look at if Grenfell Tower was a one off or if there were similar flaws in other buildings. It was clear from an early stage that this was a broad issue not a single building problem. The Review has looked at the issues from a system perspective and how we need to have a different approach going forward. The need for a radical overhaul of the current system was the common message passed to the review team. An Interim Report was published on 18 December 2017 with a final report expected to be published in May 2018. Judith Hackitt made it clear that she is looking at the overarching framework for Building Regulations and Fire Safety not the specifics details of the clauses/sections of the existing regulations. The framework, she believes, needs a

radical overhaul and the changes required are too big to be addressed by just 'tinkering' with the existing.

There was confusion and complexity about what is guidance and what is regulation at many levels in the system. Interpretation of the guidance is varied. There are many areas where specific responsibilities in regulations are unclear and therefore with any new system safety is paramount. There are a series of issues around competence e.g. what constitutes a competent Fire Engineer as the means of assessing and ensuring competence is weak. It is simply not good enough for anyone to undertake those roles in complex buildings. Compliance, enforcement and sanction processes are also weak. The privatisation of Building Control has added to the general confusion. It was clear that the voices of residents aren't often heard when there is an issue in a building. It was also evident that product testing is insufficient and not robust.

Judith Hackitt outlined the direction of travel. A new regulatory framework is needed, and it must be risk based, simple and clear in terms of roles and responsibilities. The building industry seems to be working in a way that a contractor can do what they want providing it isn't specifically prohibited. Significant culture change is needed to ensure ownership and accountability of safety of building. Need for stronger regulations and penalties for noncompliance. Structure of guidance documentation needs to be reviewed. There is a specific problem with desk top studies.

The Review Team are still working on the final detail and have six established working groups to cover the various areas in the review's scope:

- Procurement of building
- Occupancy and maintenance
- Record keeping of buildings
- Competence
- Testing of products
- Regulation and guidance

Roy Wilshire – Explained the NFCC work. Nobody thought Grenfell Tower could happen in UK as we believed the regulations were too tight. We have seen a 100% failure rate of ACM 3 cladding during the tests. The FRS nationally had undertaken 1200 visits to premises by October 2017. He talked about the Camden evacuations on 21 June and the issues related to fire safety in those premises. He reminded everyone that the cladding being used didn't comply with current regulations never mind reviewed regulations which might be introduced following the review. The NFCC had received immense support from West Midlands Fire Service, data cleansing has been a big issue. NFCC are represented on all of the working groups. Any future role for the FRS is important but we need additional resources funded by government. Inspection officers' competence is equally important. The systems are different in Wales and Scotland and England could learn from some of these aspects, particularly from Scotland.

Implications for Service

The Service is currently reviewing the level of qualifications required for its specialist fire safety officers who carry out the complex building inspections and also the qualifications for the operational crews who carry out the low-medium level audits of buildings.

TOPIC	Early reflections from HMICFRS pilot inspection authorities
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Speakers	Organisation
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Zoe Billingham Mark Hardingham Cllr Matthew Hicks	HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Chief Fire Officer, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Cabinet Member, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service
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Mark Hardingham – Provided insight where Suffolk FRS are with the first pilot inspection. Stated that although the inspection team arrived on site on 12 March to begin the formal inspection the process began several months before that. There had been two rounds of data collection and requests for documentation. A discovery week had taken place with three members of the inspection team; although there are eleven inspectors as part of the team in total. He acknowledged they had put a no insignificance amount of resources into the process but felt it was worthwhile.

Zoe Billingham – stated that they are not inspecting corporate governance but if they pick up a point that a Service is not delivering because of a governance issue then a separate inspection of governance will be carried out. Stated that grades will be given for the three areas of efficiency, effectiveness and people but they still hadn't decided whether an overall grade is given.

Her early reflections were:

- Develop a trusting relationship with the inspection team
- The role of the Service Liaison officer (SLO) is vital
- Be open and honest when writing the self-assessment
- Don't 'over engineer' any responses to information requests or preparation for the visit
- Talk to the pilot service and importantly talk to the inspectorate

Implications for Service

Extensive preparation work for the HMICFRS is already underway in the Service and feedback received from the pilot services will assist in this process.

TOPIC	Liberal Democrat View on Fire Sector
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Speaker	Organisation
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Baroness Pinnock	Liberal Democrat Spokesperson
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Baroness Pinnock – was previously leader of Kirklees Council but has never been involved with FRS before. Thanked LFB for heroic efforts at Grenfell. It was a clear failure of public policy and an example of a heavy price to pay for loosening regulations. BP believed that the appointment of a female CFO will set a good precedence for the future. It was clear that 40% cuts to budgets has impacted on the public and there was a need to increase funding for FRS. Code of corporate governance for private sector specifies the

make-up of boards and that should be adopted for the public sector as opposed to a single PCC. The Lib Dems are opposed to the PCC agenda unless there is local agreement for it. They support the LGA view that there should be support from the constituent authorities. Robust scrutiny arrangements need to be in place where a PCC takes on Fire. She admitted that she had much to learn and intends to make most of the opportunity as spokesperson.

When asked about the party's view on sprinklers she believed that there wasn't a clear view from FRS on the issue but suggested that they need to listen to experts.

Implications for Service

No specific implications for the Service

TOPIC	Recruitment and Inclusion
Speakers	Organisation
Micky Nicholas	Fire Brigade Union
Sam Rye	Fire Brigade Union
Lt Col Andy Black	SO1 Engagement NE, British Army

Micky Nicholas – joined LFB in 1990 and became an FBU rep in 1993. Black history is important and links to the FRS. There is still much to be done to encourage a more inclusive service, lack of recruitment has been an issue but there has still been a failure to raise awareness of the FRS as an employer with black people; positive action should be on-going not just in the run up to recruitment campaigns. Gregor Smith Review in 2017 stated that every person should be able to fulfil their potential but that hasn't become a reality. He listed various FRSs as a comparator against the local population. Clearly the FRSs don't reflect the BME population in some areas. Published targets, mandatory unconscious bias training, mentoring, ED&I policies and procedures should all be looked at. Apprenticeship offers an opportunity and in his opinion the Home Office (HO) need to act.

Sam Rye - represents women through the FBU National Women's Committee. 2018 was an important year for women as it was 100 years since they received the vote. HO needs to be more involved in the work of the FRS to encourage inclusion and Sam Rye saw the Inclusive Fire Service Working Group (IFSWG) as a key group. Austerity meant no recruitment but there was now an opportunity to do something positive. Stated how females are well represented in fire cadet schemes so Services need to work to get these to take the next step into employment. Positive action is contentious but necessary and there is a need to learn from good practice. Rep Bodies can help as they think outside the norm. Some key issues were: poor facilities, working through the menopause, language is important, and the fact that society still think it is a man's job. Leaders of change need to be bold and engage with all underrepresented groups.

Andy Black – discussed the structure of the Army which was built around 10 Brigades across UK. Engagement with the community was important but so are targets as, what gets measured gets done. The Army needed to be reflectively of the community and therefore they have been carrying out continuous and persistent engagement over the last 7 years which is increasing their 'in-flow' of BME and females into the army.

Implications for Service

The Service has representation on the IFSWG (CFO) and we have developed and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The Services workforce is not representative of the local population and the strategy sets out the positive action initiatives we need to undertake to try and address this.

TOPIC	Future of Fire Finance
Speakers	Organisation
Charles Kerr	Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Kent Fire and Rescue Service
Emma Laurence	Fire Funding Policy Team, Home Office
Nick Chard	Chairman of Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority

Charles Kerr - We are facing a perfect storm for the FRS sector from 2021. What is the climate going to be? It seems likely that austerity will be here to stay and we may possibly be facing a further 5-10% cut in funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period. FRS won't be protected so proportional cuts could be larger. Other key factors HMICFRS - unhelpful for our discussions. The debate around demand v risk may impact and it is clear that times are changing. In his view the tax payer is looking to challenge the view on demand. Fair funding review could move money around sector. The Home Office have said that transition onto a new funding formula will mean transition so impacts more significant than it has been where floors and ceiling protection has been in place. 75% Business Rate Retention scheme causes uncertainty, assumptions need to be made in age of uncertainty. CSR get it right.

Emma Laurence - Fire demand and risk across whole sector. Requirements going forward and need evidence for Treasury. Work will help with evidence. HO isn't protected so evidence is essential. Need to be transparent around reserves. How will drive efficiency in future. Fair funding review will result in HO receiving their allocation in October 2019.

Nick Chard - thanked Charles Kerr. He believed unlike Charles Kerr that it was an Amber rather than Red warning regarding funding. Light at end of tunnel for austerity from Chancellor. Productivity of FRS staff is important and broadening the role of the FF's is key. Agreement close through NJC with some local determination. Generally reserves have gone up but accepts they can't use for ongoing expenditure. Capital funding has changed significantly- no funding available. Need to use revenue budget to fund capital. Do we deliver and can we measure it. Clear return on investment for EMR through University of Hertfordshire and New Economy reports. What added value have we added as a sector?

Implications for Service

Authority's medium term financial plan (MTFP) takes account of uncertainties in funding beyond the current settlement period. The Service will need to continue to identify areas for future savings to ensure it is as prepared as it can be for any potential further government grant reductions.

TOPIC	Labour Party View of Fire Sector
Speakers	Organisation
Karen Lee MP	Shadow Fire Minister

Karen Lee – was elected in 2017 having previously been a nurse and councillor so states she understands public sector. She wants to build on the work of Chris Williams. She was

involved in the Lincolnshire campaign to stop closure of a fire station. Highlighted Government chose to go down the austerity route whilst at the same time cutting taxes. Government misunderstands the statistics and Labour will build the FRS not cut it. PCC agenda is also a threat. The FRS is not a law enforcement service and the PCC agenda undermines the trust from country in the fire service. Labour will focus on cost effectiveness, expansion of the role will only be introduced if it is fully funded. Pay cap will be scrapped. Structure and approach of pension schemes needs to be reviewed. They will celebrate diversity and inclusion. Labour have a duty to ensure Grenfell can't happen again.

Implications for Service

None at present; if the approach to the fire sector, as articulated in the speech, was to be adopted by a future labour government the Authority would need to lobby to ensure that additional government funding was available to cover the increased costs.