

MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM CONFERENCE/SEMINAR/FIRE RELATED EVENT

Attendees	Cllr Robinson, CFO Errington and Katherine Metcalfe: Workforce Development Manager
Event	CFA Conference: Wyboston
Date	2 October 2017
Overview of event	
TOPIC	Election of Chair and Vice Chair
Speaker	Organisation
CFA Secretariat	Buckinghamshire FRS
Mark Healy (Vice Chair of Devon and Somerset FRA) was elected Chair Jan Brunton (Chair of Cleveland FRA) was elected as Vice Chair	
Implications for the Authority	
To note.	
TOPIC	Collaboration and the next steps
Speakers	Organisation
David Lamberti (DL)	Director of Policing and the Fire Service, the Home Office.
DL gave an update on the progress that had been made against the Policing and Crime Act in terms of governance changes. Essex FRS had moved under the PCC on 01 October 2017. There are various other business cases that have been submitted to the Home Secretary for consideration. Only Northamptonshire has the support of the constituent authority and therefore the independent assessment process would be implemented. There was very strong cross-party opposition to the approach from government and a call for the Home Office to reject business cases that didn't have support. It was made clear that local authorities would challenge the credibility of the Home Office if they simply rubberstamped weak business cases.	
Implications for the Authority	
It will be interesting to see how the Government react to the various business cases that have been submitted for consideration and how the independent assessment process is implemented.	
TOPIC	Inspection Process
Speakers	Organisation
Zoe Billingham (ZB)	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
This session was undertaken as a question and answer approach as a presentation had been delivered earlier that week to most Fire Authority Chairs and Chief Fire Officers	

(CFOs) at an engagement event. It was asked how the relative weighting of each are of inspection would be considered. It was clear that HMICFRS are heavily reliant on the sector to feed in to this debate. Various task and finish groups are to be established and questionnaires sent round to FRSs.

A question was also asked about the link between Inspection and Peer Review. The view was expressed that these were two very different processes and that Authorities should not use Peer Review as a pre-inspection tool. It might be useful as an improvement tool but each authority would need to think carefully about how Peer Review linked to their preparations for an inspection.

There was also discussion about resourcing to risk rather than demand. HMICFRS understand the argument but were clear that where an Authority took this decision they should be able to justify that those resources are being used effectively when they are not required to respond to emergency incidents.

ZB also stated that although a comment had been made at the national conference around inspecting Authorities if necessary this was not part of the inspection regime. It was clear that members would be interviewed as part of the process though.

Implications for the Authority

There is a significant amount of preparation work going on in the Service to prepare for the inspection process. Members will be kept fully informed as more information is available.

TOPIC	Fire Funding
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Speakers	Organisation
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Emma Laurence (EL)	Home Office
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EL explained the latest position in relation to FRS funding. She acknowledged the sector's concern in relation to a lack of transformational funding. She talked through the Fair Funding Review process and the potential implications for authorities. Previous attempts to undertake this kind of change to funding has always resulted in some significant issues for some authorities and therefore large amounts of damping have been needed to avoid funding problems arising. EL stated if this was the case at the conclusion of this review any damping would be for a short transitional period only. The government were keen to simplify the formula and base it on cost drivers but these can also be difficult to identify.

Implications for the Authority

The Authority will need to monitor the situation carefully and respond to the various consultation documents that will be released over the next few years. An outcome from the review is not expected until after the current four year funding settlement has concluded (2019/20).

TOPIC	Apprenticeships
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Speaker	Organisation
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Cllr John Robinson (JR) Stuart Errington (SE) Katherine Metcalfe (KM)	CDDFRS
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We presented our approach to introducing the firefighter apprenticeship scheme. JR gave the members views on how we should approach the scheme; SE covered the strategic principles and KM covered how we had implemented these principles and the learning we have identified already from the approach.

Implications for the Authority

The presentation helped raise the profile of CDDFRS and the Authority nationally. There was a great deal of interest in the approach taken and numerous requests for further discussion from various other services.

TOPIC	Employers Responsibilities Around Mental Health
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Speakers	Organisation
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Ashley Norman (AN)	Bevan Britten LLP
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AN gave an analogy that employers should view mental health in the same way as they view traditional health and safety. The same legal implications apply to mental health and some additional legal requirements apply through the Equality Act 2010. Employers need to consider how they can protect employees and also the organisation by ensuring a sound approach to the management of mental health. There is various guidance available to employers from organisations such as ACAS, MIND etc.

Implications for the Authority

The Service has already got established procedures in place for supporting employees. We work closely with the trade unions on this approach, however, we should not be complacent and continue to look for innovative practice from other organisations and from across the sector.

TOPIC	FRS of the Future
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Speakers	Organisation
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Roger Reed (RR) Jason Thelwell (JT)	Chair of Buckinghamshire FRA CFO Buckinghamshire FRS
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RR explained that Buckinghamshire had taken a proactive approach to change as they preferred to be at the forefront of change rather than have it imposed on them. JT talked through some of their change initiatives. He listed these as: they no longer employed new firefighters on Grey Book terms and conditions; they had a ridership factor of 0.8 underpinned from a bank system that was heavily supported by operational staff; they had staff who weren't assigned to stations or watches and used them as floaters to fill gaps in the establishment; they allowed RDS to respond up to 3 hours away from a station and only used them for very large incidents.

Implications for the Authority

Most of the initiatives discussed have already been implement internally. CDDFRS have been able to introduce flexible terms and conditions through working with the trade unions and staff under Grey Book terms and conditions. Buckinghamshire's approach to response times is different and something we will seek further information, but it seems to significantly reduce appliance availability for immediate deployment. If additional resources are required for major incidents there is already a facility within the Grey Book known as 'Re-call to Duty'. CDDFRS have used this effectively on numerous occasions to deploy national assets such as the High Volume Pump and our Water Rescue Team to other Service areas. As this facility is within the Grey Book it does not require any local negotiation for contract amendments with the trade unions.

TOPIC	Blue Light Collaboration and FRICS
Speaker	Organisation
Gavin Chambers	Bedfordshire FRS
<p>The Fire and Rescue Service Indemnity Company (FRIC) has been set up as a mutual to offer risk protection services rather than traditional insurance arrangements. The FRIC has had a successful first year trading and the 9 FRSs which have joined together to form it are seeing some benefits. These benefits were explained in some detail. The FRIC is also linked to the Fire and Rescue Risk Group (FARRG) which identifies opportunities to reduce risk across its members.</p>	
<p>Implications for the Authority</p>	
<p>The Service currently purchase insurance collaboratively but at the time of contract renewal we will examine if the FRIC presents any financial or operational benefits to our current approach. The NFCC have endorsed the principles of the FRIC but it is for each FRS to assess the benefits or disadvantages of joining this particular collaboration.</p>	