

MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM CONFERENCE/SEMINAR/FIRE RELATED EVENT

Attendees	Cllr Robinson, DCFO Bage
Event	Westminster Briefing: London
Date	06 October 2016
Overview of event	Westminster Briefing aimed at providing an insight from the government perspective on reform to the fire and rescue service and case studies of how fire and rescue services around the country were redefining their role in the community through the diversification of the firefighters role.
TOPIC	Understanding Current & Future Reform to the FRS
Speaker	Organisation
Dan Greaves (DG)	Home Office
<p>DG provided the governments perspective. He believed the fire and rescue service has developed a powerful brand and has forged strong partnerships to deliver a vital public service. The service is also changing, for example the significant expansion of prevention which has now been embedded as core business in every service. However he believed there are challenges which are preventing the service from becoming truly world leading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is currently no mechanism to capture how well a service is performing; • services' have poor governance with political leadership unknown to the public; • lack of transparency making it impossible to compare the performance of fire and rescue services; and • issues around the workforce including: resource outstrips demand, questions over leadership, lack of diversity and culture of bullying in some services. <p>The 3 pillars of reform were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency & collaboration – good examples around the country – co-responding, sharing of estates and back offices but government view is that it is still patchy. Believed smarter procurement – national or regional would generate significant savings. • Accountability and transparency – he believes PCCs deliver visible political leadership to policing and we are legislating in the Policing and Crime Bill to enable PCCs to become the fire and rescue authority where there is a strong local business case as the Government believes a direct mandate will enable more transformational reform. The legislation is genuinely enabling – the Government will not mandate take up – but it is about local choice. The Policing & Crime Bill is likely to receive Royal Assent by the turn of the year and government are working with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and others to develop guidance for PCCs on developing business cases. <p>The HO view is that the current peer review system provides little if any assurance of services hence the commitment to create a rigorous and independent inspection regime. HO are looking to push this with pace – we want the Inspectorate to be fully operational by April 2018. HO have commissioned HMIC to develop a proposal, but they are also considering other options. The chosen provider will need to engage closely with the sector to determine, amongst other things, indicators and criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce reform - want to see services take steps to improve the diversity of their workforce which is seen as right in principle but also makes business sense, not least to assist engaging with hard to reach communities. HO are also 	

working with the sector to create a comprehensive professional framework for the service. This is not about operational guidance – that helps – but about professionalising the sector to ensure it is equipped to respond to changing needs and demands

In conclusion, DG believes the proposed reforms have the potential to transform the service. The new standards body will determine what good looks like; the new National Fire Chiefs’ Council will put them into operation and the independent inspectorate will drive assurance. HO want to work with the sector to make this vision a reality and support Services to become self-transforming going forward.

Implications for Service

There is a paper on the CFA regarding an action plan following the publication of the Adrian Thomas review. Initial analysis is that the Service is already doing much of the actions discussed in the review and covered by DG. DG will be visiting CDDFRS in December so further insight into his thoughts should be gained then. The Service is aware of areas that could be improved – diversity of workforce being an example and the forthcoming recruitment campaigns and initiation of the apprenticeship scheme provide an opportunity for the Service to improve in this area.

TOPIC	Understanding Current & Future Reform to the FRS
Speakers	Organisation
Jason Thelwell (JT)	Buckinghamshire FRS (BFRS)

JT provided an overview of the reforms introduced in BFRS. He covered falling demand ageing workforce, reduced funding and the need to diversify their service delivery into areas such as:

- Prevention work;
- Health;
- Co-responding.

With this diversity comes workforce reform, different contracts to attract a different demographic. Aim is for all new staff coming into the organisation to be on non-grey book terms and conditions. BFRS have recruited 22 apprentices who will staff appliances as operational firefighters on this new flexible contract but are employed by a third party.

Implications for Service

Much of the change JT talked about regarding diversity of role is already taking place in CDDFRS, particularly in the areas diversifying service delivery into the medical response and prevention agenda. How the implementation of their apprenticeship programme will be interesting to follow as it is taking a different approach to that proposed in CDDFRS. CDDFRS’s Chief Fire Officer (CFO) has been contact by the NJC to discuss our approach to apprentices and members will be kept informed of how this work progresses.

TOPIC	Understanding Current & Future Reform to the FRS
Speakers	Organisation
Andy Dark (AD)	Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

Stated that FBU want change and whilst they respond and listen to Ministers and CFOs, change should also be bottom up so he urged CFOs and government to listen to practitioners via their representatives. FBU want positive outcomes from change not hope. They want to serve the interests of public safety, but firefighters must intervene safely. They believe the rush towards innovation poses difficulties.

The FBU believe PCCs offer an opportunity and a threat. AD stated that the FBU have had change driven by the government since the Fire Futures Programme under Bob Neil – the need for collaboration with the emphasis on fire and ambulance services. This has translated into collaboration with police – a public order and crime investigation role – that’s different work. This doesn’t bode well for the fire reform agenda. In the FBU’s opinion PCCs are not very popular – FBU want sector competence and questioned whether PCCs have that in respect of Fire? FBU’s view is that problems should be fixed but don’t destroy a successful FRS that is rated by the public.

FBU believe that risk should be the basis of decision making; he stated because of the cuts FBU believe the focus is on demand. FBU believe there are cases where fires have not been extinguished – not brought under control because of lack of resource. FBU accept there is too much resource at times; they acknowledge calls have reduced; but there is an aging population and a gap FRS's can fill. The FBU believe the ambulance services are not improving. So as emergency calls have fallen for FRS's, the FBU are in favour of supporting the ambulance service. Crews undertaking EMR makes sense so long as there are not cuts to ambulance services to pay for this. On workforce issues the FBU want to talk about pay, promotion, training and pensions and believe that the FRS in the future will not be seen as a 30/40 year career.

Implications for Service

Largely reiterated the views of the FBU on fire reform that they have already expressed on number of occasions. The acknowledgment that co-responding / EMR is a worthwhile activity to undertake is encouraging although no details were given as to what recognition/reward they would expect their members to receive for carrying it out.

TOPIC	Understanding Current & Future Reform to the FRS
Speakers	Organisation
Peter O'Reilly (PO)	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

PO talked about the reform for the public services in greater Manchester. If fire comes under the combined authority (at this moment PO was not 100% certain it would) greater Manchester would, in his view, have in effect one public sector all working together under an elected mayor leaving no citizen behind which can only be of benefit to the most vulnerable in the community. PO highlighted the collaboration work they are doing with partners such as the police and ambulance service but he reminded everyone that whilst collaboration is great don't forget about the day job of tackling fires, dealing with special service calls and delivering prevention and protection advice. He finished by using a quote from Philip Hammond who said 'Lean management only goes so far'. Therefore FRS's should not lose sight of their core purpose to 'save, protect and improve lives'.

Implications for Service

No specific implications for the Service.

TOPIC	Good Practice seminar – Introduction of a falls response team in support of the NHS
Speaker	Organisation
Matthew Sutcliffe (MS)	Humberside FRS

Main points covered:

- Introduction of 'Hull First' - a project with 10 firefighters working 'off shift' (not responding to fire calls) helping people with falls. Team is 24/7 and responds to falls and EMR incidents. With the falls rapid response system firefighters get to a person within an hour, get them back on their feet and help them get their confidence back. The team are trained to assess homes to reduce the chance of the (elderly) person falling again. So far they have had 82 callouts in the first month. Seen as a success so aim is to establish a second falls team with the aim for these teams to be funded through CCG's. Big issue is that although firefighters are good, they are expensive.

Implications for Service

Falls teams are an area of health prevention work that a number of Services are exploring and North East Ambulance Service have talked about the issues caused to the health sector by falls in the home. It could be an area that has the potential to be explored but the staffing model in Humberside does seem very expensive.