

MEMBER FEEDBACK FROM CONFERENCE/SEMINAR/FIRE RELATED EVENT

Attendees	Cllr Robinson, DCFO Bage
Event	Combined Fire Authority Conference: Wyboston
Date	27 October 2016
Overview of event	
The aim of the conference is to provide an update on the key political and operational issues that are impacting on FRA's now or will do in the future.	
TOPIC	Fire Reform – Ministerial Update
Speaker	Organisation
Brandon Lewis (BL) MP	Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service
<p>BL set the scene on fire reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants reform to be sector led; • Wants fire sector to be under no illusion that reform has to happen; • HO will support FRAs in delivering reform and will harness the skills within FRAs to ensure it is delivered. <p>He talked of the good work of FRS' in areas such as prevention and the work to target the most vulnerable. However he talked about his concerns over the diversity of the FRS workforce with only 5% being female, and 4% from BEM, highlighting that the Police statistics were 5 times better than Fires.</p> <p>He stated the areas he felt was preventing the fire sector being world leaders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working practices and patterns; • Management and leadership; • Governance and transparency; • Culture. <p>He then talked in detail about the pillars of reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency & collaboration – wide scale adoption of co-responding (EMR), he viewed this as a positive and he wants to bring the ambulance service around the table to see how this can progress beyond the trial. He wants to remove the national barriers that prevent EMR but did not make reference to what these were. <p>He believed the basket of goods exercise was worthwhile and it will be repeated. He is pleased with the drive for national procurement in the fire sector.</p> <p>He thought the new standards body would complement the inspectorate and he viewed the national operational guidance programme (NOG) as a good example of standards with a sector. He stated more information would come out from his department on the standards body and inspectorate by the end of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability and transparency – with regard to PCC's he believes they have improved the police service providing more accountability and driving up performance as a result. However, the Home Office (HO) are not mandating PCCs to take on fire and business cases will not be 'rubber stamped'. If a local authority does not agree with the PCC business case there will be an independent review but he would not be specific as to who would chair this 	

review and he intends to set up a working group to see how and by who a review will be conducted.

He stated that the inspectorate must be proportionate and whilst there is no decision on who the new inspectorate will be, he has asked HMIC to propose a model. His aim is to have it fully operational in 2018 following a series of pilots in 2017.

- **Workforce reform** – stated it was up to the sector to reform the NJC. Reiterated that Service MUST increase diversity by making the service more attractive for underrepresented group to join and stay.

He applauded Buckinghamshire FRS decision to employ apprentice firefighters and the use of alternative employment contracts.

He did state that he expected the Adrian Thomas review to be published the week following the conference and that the government would consider the recommendations specific to government and respond in due course.

During questioning he made comment that he thought it was surprising that Services were complaining about how funding reductions were affecting the front line yet a number of Services have just recently appointed new Chief Fire Officers without any apparent consideration of sharing the resource with a neighbouring service.

He was also questioned about legislating for sprinklers to be fitted in new buildings and schools specifically – his reply was that he didn't feel it was the government role to do this; instead it was up to the sector to make it attractive to the occupiers so that they are demanding they are put in.

Implications for Service

There was no surprises in what the Minister said. The Service is already doing some early preparation work in relation to the Inspectorate and the Adrian Thomas recommendations.

TOPIC	CFOA Change Programme
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Speakers	Organisation
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John Buckley (JB)	Nottinghamshire FRS
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JB began by outlining the guiding principles of CFOA reform:

- Fire and Rescue Authorities are sovereign, responsible for policy decisions and delivering services;
- Chief Officers are responsible for operational implementation of those policies;
- LGA co-ordinates and supports political activity nationally;
- CFOA co-ordinates and supports operational activity nationally;
- FRAs and CFOs work collectively locally, and the LGA and CFOA are able to do so nationally.

The benefits of the CFOA change programme were highlighted; these included:

- Replacing CFOA Board with a National Fire Chiefs' Council where every CFO has a voice (more inclusive and stronger consensus)
- Replacing part-time President with full-time Chair of NFCC (greater capacity, continuity, and impartiality)
- Replacing directorates with Co-ordinating Committees (more inclusive)
- Strengthening complementary relationship with LGA:
 - Bi-monthly meetings between NFCC Chair and FSMC
 - FSMC representative as CFOA trustee.

A summary of the time scales was given:

- Sept 16 - AGM: Changes approved, installed new President for transition;
- Sept – Nov 16 - Election of NFCC Chair;
- Sept - Dec 16 - CFOA HQ restructured;
- Jan 17 - Work to define the NFCC progressed;

- Jan – Mar 17 - New shadow CFOA Trustees;
- April 17 - Model goes live: Chair in role and NFCC fully operational.

When questioned on the funding of CFOA going forward and the full time role of the Chair of the NFCC, who will be a serving Chief Fire Officer, JB stated that CFOA out of its existing reserves and subscriptions would pay for this role for the first year as CFOA were confident that fire authorities would realise the benefit of the change and funding would then come from a review and redistribution of the funding FRAs currently pay to CFOA.

Implications for Service

If the model works as anticipated there should be a more consistent approach on operational policy. The issue of funding is still not clear; further information will be brought to this Authority when it becomes available.

TOPIC	The Retained Duty System (RDS)
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Speakers	Organisation
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Terry McDermott (TM)	Derbyshire FRS
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TM provided an overview of the RDS system and how Derbyshire had moved a number of their stations from being wholetime to RDS crewing. Whilst the financial savings were easy to demonstrate TM highlighted the difficulties in operating an RDS system, these included:

- Recruitment;
- Retention;
- Availability (particularly in the day);
- Training;
- Lack of primary employers;
- Culture;
- Appetite;

TM talked about the importance of leadership and support for the RDS. There was a lot of evidence of where the system worked well so CFOA, through the RDS working group, needs to share good practice, particularly in key areas such as engaging with local employers and increased flexibility in RDS contracts.

The advantages of a national advertising campaign using recognisable and attractive branding such as those used by the RLNI or Army Reservists was highlighted.

Implications for Service

CDDFRS is acutely aware of the difficulties around the recruitment and retention of RDS and a review of contracts, flexible working etc is planned. CDDFRS are the regional representative on the CFOA RDS working group and this will ensure we are fully aware of good practice from across the country.

TOPIC	Apprenticeships
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Speakers	Organisation
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Lyn Swift (LS)	Buckinghamshire FRS
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The government agenda for apprentices was detailed covering areas such as the levy and the target for number of apprenticeship starts. An impact for FRS's was the need to develop and implement apprentice firefighter trailblazer standards to replace existing frameworks which are going to be withdrawn. The opportunities apprentices will bring were highlighted, these include:

- Refresh ageing workforce and improve diversity;
- Use government reform agenda to drive culture change;
- Standardisation –training , assessment, recruitment;
- Optimising levy draw down;
- New career pathways and qualifications.

Alongside the opportunities a number of key challenges were discussed, these included:

- Extending the sector frameworks until Trailblazers developed;
- Targets based on FTE or numbers employed – (impact of RDS numbers?);

- Pace of Trailblazer development;
- Levy draw down arrangements;
- Collaboration options to meet targets;
- Capacity and resources.

The actions currently being undertaken to ensure the opportunities are maximised include:

- Guidance is being produced for FRS's on policy templates, Trailblazer development to support consistent or standardisation of training, assessment and recruitment;
- Business trailblazer being led by Greater Manchester;
- Emergency Fire Services operations EFSO – (firefighter) Trailblazer being led by Staffordshire;
- Police ,Health, Ambulance, Fire developing a joint Emergency Call handling trailblazer – launch event 25 October 2016;
- Health ,Fire developing a Community Health Improvement trailblazer – from September 2016;
- Fire Community Safety Advisor Trailblazer – potential for wider emergency services involvement – to commence November 2016.

Implications for Service

CDDFRS through the HR team has signed up to support the development of these Trailblazers to ensure we maximise the opportunities that the new schemes will provide. Members will be also aware that CDDFRS is currently in the recruitment process for Business Safety apprentices.

TOPIC	Inspection Regime Update
Speaker	Organisation
Rebecca Knox (RK)	Dorset and Wiltshire FRA and Deputy Chairman Fire Service Management Committee (has a seat on external reference group with HMIC)

RK gave an overview of the government's position on the inspectorate (covered in Brandon Lewis presentation) and provided further detail on what Effective, Efficient and Legitimate would mean:

- Effective – in prevention; in protection and enforcement; responding to fire and other emergencies including national risks;
- Efficient – demand led (current and future); management of that demand and impact on workforce models; affordable solutions for now and future; financial planning to support efficiency;
- Legitimate – likely focus on leadership; development of future leadership; fairness and diversity (culture); trained and skilled workforce (standards).

Presentation did not progress much further and ended with a series of questions with answers expected by a show of hands on areas such as how often do you want to be inspected? Do you want to keep peer assessment? Responses indicated that this was not the format or forum to gather this information.

Implications for Service

The Service has already began early preparation work for the Inspectorate to ensure it has the right structural framework in place and the review of the organisations key strategies cover off the key areas highlighted under Effective, Efficient and Legitimate.