

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 18 FEBRUARY 2013

SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EFFICIENCIES REVIEW

Item No. 06

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Members on a recently announced national review of Fire and Rescue Service efficiencies.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In December 2012, the Department for Communities and local Government (CLG) announced a national review of efficiencies and operational improvements in the delivery of Fire and Rescue services in England.
- 2.2 Sir Ken Knight, who has recently stepped down from his role as Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser to government, has been commissioned to undertake the review, which will run for approximately three months and report in the Spring.
- 2.3 In announcing the review, the Fire Minister acknowledges that there is good evidence of sensible efficiencies being driven by FRAs. The review seeks to explore the detail behind these, understand the thinking behind the efficiencies and explore options to go further. The stated purpose of the review is *"to provide all FRAs with sight of the range of opportunities being considered, with the aim of promoting greater transparency"*.
- 2.4 Give the tight timescale, the review will take place in a cross section of FRAs announced by Government as:

Mets	Combined	County
London Greater Manchester Merseyside West Yorkshire	Bedfordshire Cleveland Devon and Somerset Essex Hampshire Humberside Shropshire	Cornwall Cumbria Oxfordshire Suffolk

2.5 The areas to be covered by the review include:

- Firefighter training
- Flexible staffing and crewing arrangements
- Use of Retained firefighters
- Procurement
- Shared services
- Collaboration with emergency services and other organisations
- Sickness management
- Sharing of senior staff
- Locally led mergers and operational collaborations
- New firefighting technology
- Preventative approaches
- Working with local businesses

- 2.6 The methodology for the review has not been published; however a number of FRAs engaged in the review are publishing accounts of their efficiency related activities to date which will undoubtedly form much of the material used in the reviews.
- 2.7 Submissions from other FRAs are not currently being sought; however if this should be required, the service prepares an updated account of efficiency activities every year linked to financial audit, and this can be collated easily if required..
- 2.8 As with the Audit Commission's 2008 report Rising to the Challenge which covered similar themes, it is expected that the review will provide useful learning for TWFRS, since we are always open to, and indeed already seek, ideas from colleagues to make our activities more efficient and effective.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This report has no direct financial implications. It may be the case, however, that the generic review findings may be used to inform the Spending Review planned by Government for the Spring.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications to this report.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has no impact on community risk.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Members are recommended to note the content of the report. The outcome of the review will be reported to Authority in due course.

Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority

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