

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



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| MEETING | Fire Authority |
| DATE OF MEETING | 10 June 2020 |
| OFFICER | Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance |
| LEAD MEMBER | Chairman |
| SUBJECT OF THE REPORT | Consultation by Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>The purpose of this report is to apprise the Authority, in its role as the governance body for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, of recent correspondence received by its Chairman and Chief Fire Officer from Lord Greenhalgh.</p> <p>Lord Greenhalgh was appointed as Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities jointly at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office on 18 March 2020.</p> <p>His letter dated 14 May 2020 (Annex A) seeks views from the consultees listed in his letter on the recommendations made in the 'State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019', the report published on 15 January 2020 by Sir Tom Winsor - Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for (Constabulary and) Fire and Rescue Services.</p> <p>The letter seeks collective contributions from the addressees in the letter and also invites views on Sir Tom Winsor's recommendations from individual fire and rescue services before the end of June 2020.</p> <p>The recommendations within the State of Fire and Rescue Report were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By June 2020, the Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should review and with precision determine the roles of: (a) fire and rescue services; and (b) those who work in them; 2. By June 2020, the Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council and trade unions should consider whether the current pay negotiation machinery requires fundamental reform. If so, this should include the need for an independent pay review body and the future of the 'grey book' [i.e. the national collective agreement which is incorporated into the contracts of employment |

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| | <p>of firefighters employed by fire and rescue authorities];</p> <p>3. By September 2020, the Home Office should consider the case for legislating to give chief fire officers operational independence. In the meantime, it should issue clear guidance, possibly through an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, on the demarcation between those responsible for governance and operational decision making by the chief fire officer; and</p> <p>4. By December 2020, the National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Local Government Association, should produce a code of ethics for fire and rescue services. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.</p> |
| ACTION | Decision |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | <p>It is recommended that:</p> <p>1. the content of the letter from Lord Greenhalgh dated 14 May 2020 (Annex A) be noted; and</p> <p>2. the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to submit a response after consultation with the Group Leaders and Vice Chairman.</p> |
| RISK MANAGEMENT | <p>No risks arise to the delivery of the Authority's functions from the recommendations. The issues arising from Sir Tom Winsor's four recommendations themselves, such as the reform of the current pay negotiation machinery, or changes to the roles of its employees, would have impacts on the Authority depending on if, how, and when, any of them were implemented.</p> |
| FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | None arising from the recommendations and the proposed course of action. |
| LEGAL IMPLICATIONS | None arising from the recommendations. |
| CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE | <p>The Policing and Crime Act 2017 requires the Authority to keep opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services under review. The consultation is aimed at the fire and rescue sector. Any response finalised could include examples of collaboration and best practice within it, and any feedback and views received from partner services.</p> |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY | None arising from the recommendations. |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | No implications arising from the recommendations. |

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| <p>USE OF RESOURCES</p> | <p>While the formulation of any response to the consultation can be accommodated within existing resources, the outcome of any reviews or reforms arising from Sir Tom Winsor’s four recommendations, are not quantifiable at this stage.</p> |
| <p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p> | <p>‘State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019’</p> |
| <p>APPENDICES</p> | <p>Annex A: Letter dated 14 May 2020 from Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office.</p> |
| <p>TIME REQUIRED</p> | <p>15 Minutes</p> |
| <p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p> | <p>Graham Britten gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744441</p> |