

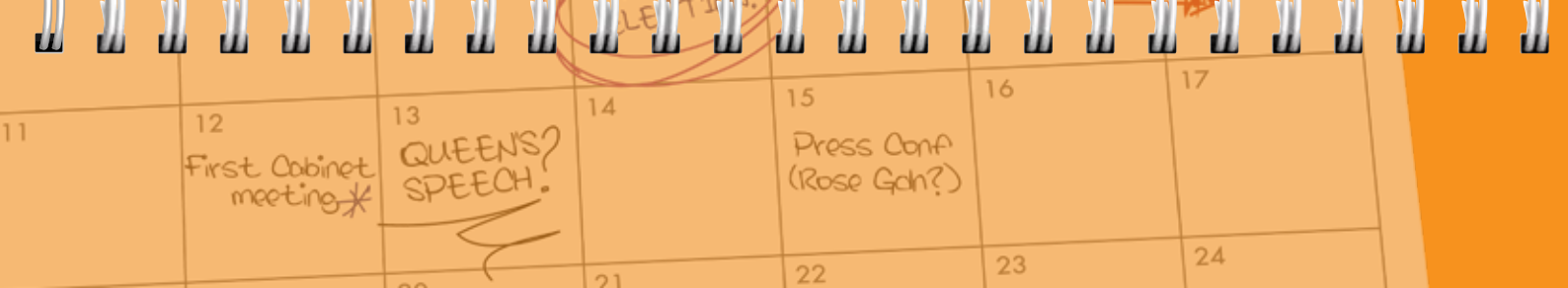
**INVESTING IN  
OUR NATION'S  
FUTURE**  
THE **FIRST 100** DAYS  
OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT



**CFOA**  
Chief Fire Officers  
Association

**THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE:  
MAKING OUR NATION SAFER**





## FOREWORD

'Investing in our nation's future: The first 100 days of the next government' was launched last year by the Local Government Association (LGA). It set out the challenges any new government will face in May 2015 and provided a local government offer that will help them deal with the most pressing issues.

Through their work to build healthy, safe and resilient communities, Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and their services make a major contribution to the country's shared prosperity, protecting people and places from harm and creating the conditions for economic prosperity. Although many of the proposals in the 100 days publication would be beneficial to FRAs as part of the wider local government family, this document presents specific asks and offers directly relevant to the fire and rescue sector.

This document sets out from an LGA and Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) perspective what the service offers to a new government. The main focus of the new policy ideas is to broaden and deepen prevention work – from reducing road traffic collisions, to legislation for the installation of sprinklers, to preventing unnecessary deaths and injuries, which in turn mean less demand and reduced costs for public services. But there are also proposals to cement the fire and rescue service as a key partner within other blue light services and to guarantee it receives the recognition it deserves, whether it be from ensuring the service has the legislation it needs, to a share in the proceeds of crime, to helping to look after our ageing population and improve its well-being.

The LGA and CFOA have worked together to develop this set of costed proposals which will make a real impact on the ability of fire and rescue services to prevent, protect and respond more effectively and play an important part in delivering public service efficiency and improvement. This set of proposals will enable the fire and rescue service to continue its good work, take fire prevention and community safety to the next level, and provide additional tools in our armoury to keep communities healthy, safe and resilient, while also saving over £500 million.



**Cllr Jeremy Hilton**  
Chair, LGA Fire Services  
Management Committee



**Peter Dartford**  
President,  
Chief Fire Officers Association

## INTRODUCTION

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) play a key role in building safe and resilient communities, protecting people and places from harm and creating the conditions for economic prosperity. Fire deaths are at an all-time low and the number of fires continues to fall, thanks to prevention and safety work by services across the country and regulation from central government where it is needed. Other public services see the value of prevention in order to reduce demand on services, but rarely do we see a service which can demonstrate the benefits of prevention in such a visible and cost effective way. But there is more that can be done.

As part of the wider local government family, many of the considerations and issues for debate about wider local government are relevant to the fire and rescue service. FRAs are grappling with a number of issues – from funding cuts, to industrial action, to ageing vehicles. Yet there are important differences too, most notably their resilience responsibilities as defined in the National Framework<sup>1</sup> and the legal context which means they have to provide minimum levels of community resilience and safety. This means that alongside delivering a first class local response, FRAs need to be prepared to respond to wider incidents which demand a multi-service response, across geographical boundaries. A wider debate is needed to avoid further cuts compromising the service's capacity and capability.

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/5904/nationalframework.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5904/nationalframework.pdf)

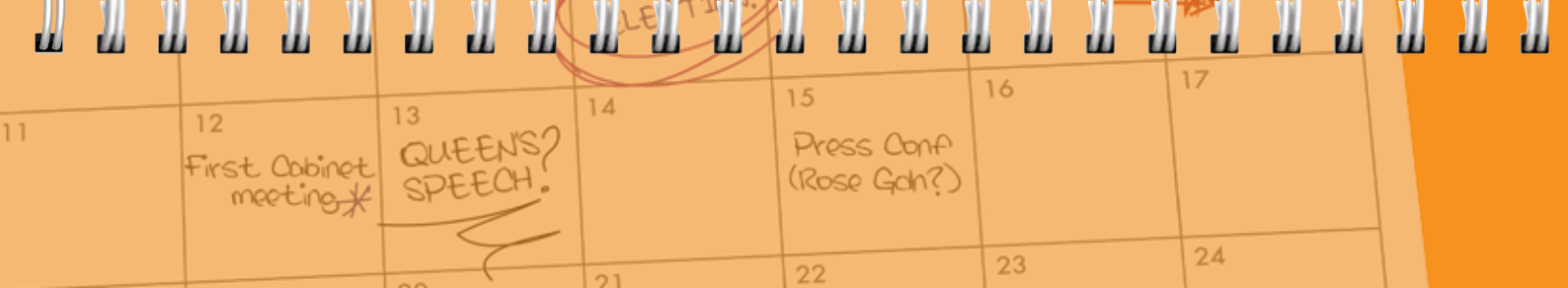
The 49 FRAs in England and Wales spend approximately £2.1 billion<sup>2</sup> protecting the communities that they serve, with more than 80 per cent of staffing costs being spent on frontline operational firefighters. In his review, Sir Ken Knight<sup>3</sup> concluded that the service 'spends to budget'. The LGA has demonstrated<sup>4</sup> that there is a clear link between numbers of incidents and costs which means that if incidents continue to reduce, and demands on emergency response reduce, there will be some scope for savings.



<sup>2</sup> £2.123 billion budgeted 2014/15 spend on fire and rescue services in England [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/365581/RA\\_Budget\\_2014-15\\_Statistical\\_Release.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365581/RA_Budget_2014-15_Statistical_Release.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/200092/FINAL\\_Facing\\_the\\_Future\\_3\\_md.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200092/FINAL_Facing_the_Future_3_md.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11601/Fire+Services+Management+Committee+Agenda+-+30+May+2014/c99c6c5b-0818-41ff-8fda-c9fe55741d22>



However, the service is uniquely placed to actively contribute to some of society's most difficult issues, particularly around health and wellbeing. The workforce is now multi-disciplinary with a wide range of skills and expertise which communities can rely on. The service now provides education work with young people; works with older people in their homes to keep them safe; acts as a role model for young people on the edge of crime; delivers first aid support; works with community safety partners to prevent and tackle crime; and helps to build business and community resilience. As it transforms itself, there is no doubt that the fire and rescue service has a central role in public services.

As local government funding declines further, the service has stepped up to the challenge of working across the blue light services, through sharing buildings and control facilities, co-responding with police and ambulance services and procurement arrangements. There is still more to do and the Transformation Fund projects will accelerate this work. However, central government is lagging behind – Whitehall needs to catch up and break down its silos to better reflect local activity, join-up policy nationally and ensure we can involve all partners in this work.

FRAs are democratically accountable and a vital part of local government. Rather than a national fire service, which would be unresponsive to local circumstances, and be contrary to the emerging devolution agenda, this is a service anchored in local communities, with services and resources designed around local risks and responses. As democratically elected representatives, councillors on FRAs directly engage with communities and are accountable to them. Some areas are now developing different

structural and governance arrangements and we support this incremental, locally-led approach. The LGA is clear: now is not the time for a wholesale structural reform which would take up huge amounts of time and resource, diverting resources from frontline operations when our priority should be providing assurance and confidence to our communities.

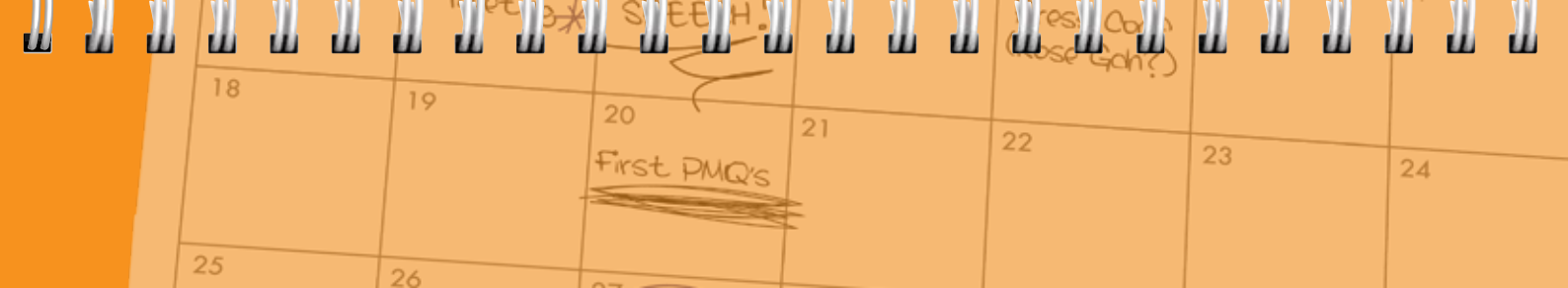
The recommendations from the Thomas Review of terms and conditions<sup>5</sup> of service for firefighters, although resource neutral, will provide further analysis and impetus for reform of the workforce. The professional and political leaders of the service, the representative bodies and each individual employee, will have a responsibility to listen and act on these recommendations. We are committed to providing the best possible service to our communities, demonstrating the best public sector values and we want to ensure that the terms and conditions enable and positively support this.

## OUR MISSION: PREVENT, PROTECT AND RESPOND

FRAs continue to work hard to reduce the number of fires and road traffic collisions. There has been a 17 per cent reduction in fires or false alarms in Britain since 2011/12 and FRAs attended a total of 192,600 fires in 2012/13, 29 per cent fewer than in the previous year. Importantly, fire-related deaths in Britain are also reducing; in 2012/13 there were 47 fewer deaths than in the previous year and lower than in any year in the last fifty years<sup>6</sup>.

5 [www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-opens-independent-review-of-firefighter-conditions](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-opens-independent-review-of-firefighter-conditions)

6 [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/313590/Fire\\_statistics\\_Great\\_Britain\\_2012-13\\_final\\_version\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version_.pdf)



Beyond the devastating effect fire deaths can have to families and communities, fire deaths are estimated to cost £1.65 million each<sup>7</sup>. In 2004, the total economic cost of fire in the UK was estimated at £7.03 billion, equivalent to almost one per cent of the gross value added of the economy.<sup>8</sup> Of that cost, £2.5 billion can be attributed to the consequential costs of fire such as property damage, lost business and the loss to the economy from injuries and deaths. By 2008, this estimated cost had increased to £8.3 billion<sup>9</sup>.

The service needs to continue to focus on prevention. There is a moral and economic case for doing so. Through a wide range of fire safety activity, FRAs are determined to hold on to and increase these gains.

Prevention work is not just related to fire safety. Due to their trusted reputation, officers provide bespoke fire advice and support through home safety fire checks in over 700,000 homes. Furthermore, the service already uses visits to deliver other public safety messages and provide help or support, particularly to the elderly population. The service has a unique brand, with high levels of public satisfaction<sup>10</sup> and confidence and this allows the service to target activity on vulnerable people, providing advice

<sup>7</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121108165934/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1838338.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/fire/fireandresiliencestatisticsandrefirestatistics/economiccost/](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/fire/fireandresiliencestatisticsandrefirestatistics/economiccost/)

<sup>9</sup> [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1838338.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919132719/www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1838338.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11601/Fire+Services+Management+Committee+Agenda+-+30+May+2014/c99c6c5b-0818-41ff-8fda-c9fe55741d22>

and support across the breadth of public services to help keep them healthy and safe.

## What does this mean for the fire and rescue service?

Successive governments have been keen to recognise and value the work of the fire and rescue service. However, the role of a firefighter has changed considerably over the years and we need clarity and understanding about a broader social mission for the fire and rescue service.

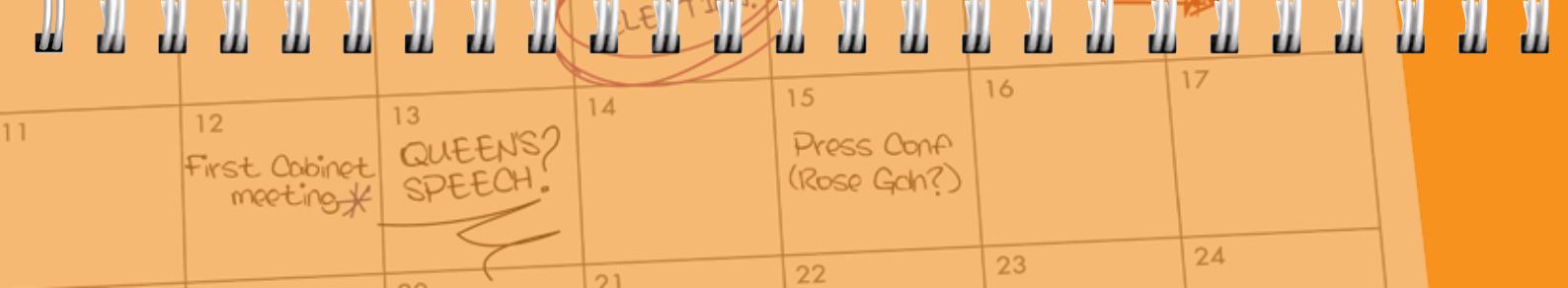
## The new Secretary of State for Local Government's public statement, May 2015

In May 2015, the new Secretary of State for Local Government and Communities will deliver their first public statement following the General Election.

The statement should announce the bringing in to force of existing legislation which makes it mandatory to install and maintain smoke alarms in private rented properties, helping to ensure the safety of four million households.

The statement will also provide the new government with an immediate opportunity to outline the expectations of the fire and rescue service as well as commitments the government will undertake to ensure that those expectations are met.

In order to meet the pressing and essential needs of the fire and rescue service, as well as recognise the professionalism and commitment of firefighters in providing a first class service for our communities, the statement will need to:



- Recognise that, in a context of reduced resources, changing customer demands and evolving technology, the re-design and delivery of public services must continue apace in all public sector organisations, including smaller services such as fire and rescue.
- Acknowledge that the world of firefighting has changed significantly over the past 30 years and will continue to do so.
- Emphasise that fire prevention is vital for the safety of our communities, particularly as rescues from floods and road traffic collisions are more prevalent than from fires, with firefighters becoming increasingly more engaged in collaborative working with other public service colleagues in activities that stretch well beyond firefighting. The statement should recognise the positive work of the fire and rescue service but challenge the service to go even further.
- Address the future of the workforce, including a comment highlighting the need for a diverse workforce with the skills and ambition to work flexibly, efficiently and creatively to keep local communities safe.
- Emphasise the importance of providing opportunities for rewarding careers whilst ensuring a positive environment for industrial relations.
- Include a call to action from all partners as a shared responsibility between FRAs, the workforce, the trade unions and local communities and provide a government commitment to supporting effective and productive relationships between them.

## The first Queen's speech

To ensure that FRAs can continue to meet their responsibilities and the expectations of the communities that they serve, the new government must announce the following new bills:

A **Public Service Bill** that will:

- Help to ensure four million households in private rented properties are safer by making it mandatory for all electrical systems in these properties to be maintained annually in line with gas certification requirements.
- Lower the drink-drive limit to bring it into line with those in Northern Ireland and Scotland, reducing fatalities and providing savings of as much as £285 million a year; and introduce a graduated licensing scheme for young drivers up to 19 years old. These combined measures would lead to a reduction of up to 9,434 casualties, with associated savings of £509 million.
- Make 500,000 sheltered housing properties safer by extending the Regulatory Reform Order to ensure there are regular audits and inspections of the entire premises, preventing hundreds of fires a year, and ensure that these vulnerable residents have the same protection as care homes.

A **Data Sharing Bill** (rather than data protection) that will:

- Streamline existing rules and require all public bodies, such as the NHS, to share data in order to protect vulnerable people.



A **Fiscal Devolution Bill** that will:

- Ensure that future local tax regimes give more flexibility (including the removal of de facto capping of council tax) for FRAs to determine with their communities the balance between service levels and local taxation.
- Allow FRAs to set locally appropriate fees, charges and subsidies, enabling them to support those who need it most and driving down the number of false call outs.
- Introduce new flexibilities around capital receipts so that FRAs can recycle this into prevention work.
- Establish an independent body for the distribution of funding to local government, including FRAs, acknowledging the commitment in the Autumn Statement to introduce indicative multi-year budgets to provide stability.

## The first Budget

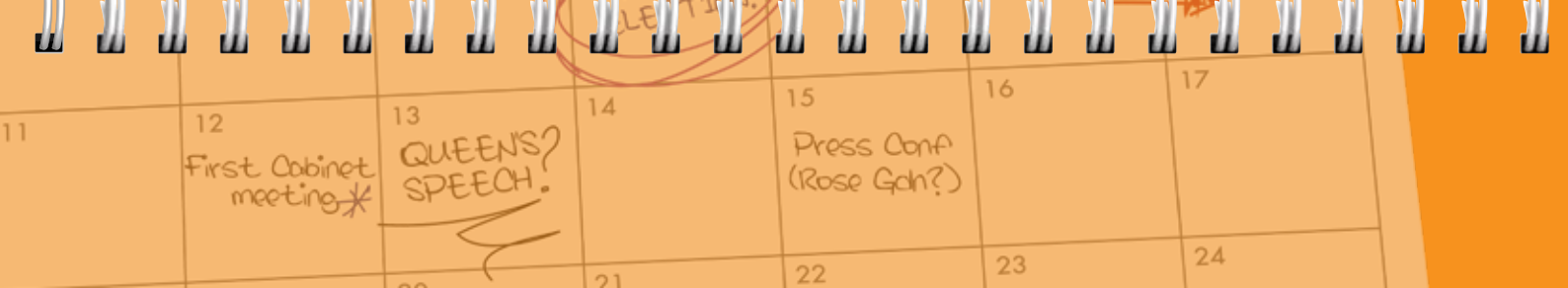
The new government's **first Budget** should:

- Recognise that further cuts to FRAs' resourcing needs to be based on a clearly understood assessment of local and national risks.
- Make a commitment to provide £200 million to fund all national resilience assets (such as high volume pumps) when they come to end of their life in 2016/17.
- Inject £114 million a year into a much needed programme of capital investment to ensure equipment and appliances remain fit for purpose as part of the government's responsibility for securing national resilience arrangements.

- Provide an incentive for businesses to install sprinklers by implementing a reduction in stamp duty in new or renovated properties that are fitted with sprinklers, reducing the £1.29 billion a year cost of these fires. Returning just 1.5 per cent of the £2.9 billion in stamp duty collected on commercial properties annually would meet the cost of installing sprinklers in the 8,000 commercial premises that caught fire in 2012/13<sup>11</sup>.
- Give FRAs access to a share of the assets recovered from criminals who have been prosecuted for cannabis farms offences (as well as a range of other crimes including arson) under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
- Through private sponsorship, extend the £1 million Fire Kills campaign around smoke alarms to include core messages around the three most frequent causes of fires: cooking, cigarettes and alcohol.

**Introducing these measures will ensure that English FRAs, working alongside other public sector organisations, could ensure their communities are safe and save over £500 million to the public purse.**

<sup>11</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/313590/Fire\\_statistics\\_Great\\_Britain\\_2012-13\\_final\\_version\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313590/Fire_statistics_Great_Britain_2012-13_final_version_.pdf)



## ANNEX

Proposal	Cost to the public purse	Transfers from central to local government	Savings to the public purse	Better outcome made possible
Mandatory smoke alarms in private rented properties	£0	£0	£6,531,300	This will reduce the risk of fire and associated deaths and injuries for 4 million households
Lower drink-drive limit	£0	£0	£285,000,000	77-168 deaths avoided each year, plus a reduction of 4,963 crashes
Graduated driver licensing	£0	£0	£224,000,000	A reduction of at least 4,471 casualties
Extension of RRO to sheltered housing	£0	£0	£2,106,300	This will reduce the risk of fire and associated deaths and injuries for people in sheltered accommodation
Data Sharing Bill	negligible	£0	£0	Better tailored public services; vulnerable people could be targeted for Home Safety Assessments and other assistance; a further focus on prevention and protection
Flexibility in future local tax regimes (council tax)	£0	£0	£0	FRAs can better respond to local circumstances
Removal of council tax referendum rules	£0	£0	£0	FRAs can better respond to local circumstances
Flexibility in setting fees, charges and subsidies	£0	£0	£0	FRAs can support those who need it most
New flexibilities around capital receipts	£0	£0	£0	FRAs can recycle this money into prevention work
Establishment of an independent body for the distribution of funding to FRAs	£0	£0	£0	Ensure funding is distributed to FRAs in a fair and transparent way



Proposal	Cost to the public purse	Transfers from central to local government	Savings to the public purse	Better outcome made possible
Future FRA cuts are based on a full risk assessment	£0	£0	£0	Resourcing for FRAs is more closely matched to, and responsive to, the basis on which the service is delivered
National resilience assets are centrally funded	£0	£0	£0	Continued national funding beyond 2017
Ongoing annual capital injection to keep FRAs at "stand still" rates	£0	£114,000,000	£0	A minimum of £315 million return on investment
A reduction in SDLT for properties with sprinklers	£43,500,000	£0	£32,000,000	£59-211 million boost to the economy
Some of the proceeds of crime passed to FRAs	£0	£400,000	£0	The cost of fighting cannabis factory fires would no longer fall on the taxpayer as it would be covered by criminals themselves
Shift of focus in £1 million Fire Kills campaign	£0	£0	£0	Better return on investment as the work targets a larger proportion of the population
	<b>£43,500,000</b>	<b>£114,400,000</b>	<b>£549,637,600</b>	
NET SAVING TO PUBLIC PURSE OFFERED			<b>£506,137,600</b>	
TRANSFER FROM CENTRAL TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT REQUESTED i.e. OPPORTUNITY COST TO TREASURY			<b>£114,400,000</b>	



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