Supplemental Agenda

Fire Commission

Friday 10 June 2022

11.00 am

Bevin Hall, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Date of Next Meeting: Friday, 23 September 2022, 11.00 am

Government white paper: "Reforming our fire and rescue service"

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The paper summarises the government's White Paper on fire reform. It seeks members' views on some of the key elements in the White Paper to inform the LGA's draft response, which will be considered by Fire Services Management Committee in July.

Is this report confidential? Yes ☐   No ☒

Recommendation/s

Members are asked to comment on the White Paper, and in particular respond to the questions posed in the paper on key elements of the reform package set out in the White Paper.

Action/s

Members views and comments will inform a draft response from the LGA to the White Paper.

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Government white paper: "Reforming our fire and rescue service"

Background

1. On 18 May the Home Office published their White Paper: "Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service: Building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance".

2. The White Paper covers a range of issues, including building safety as well as the Government's priorities of People, Professionalism and Governance. The elements of the Government's proposals on building safety will be dealt with separately within the LGA and this paper will concentrate on the people, professionalism, and governance proposals.

Issues

3. The White Paper follows the Government's three priorities of people, professionalism and governance.

People

4. Under the people priority the Government outlined the role of the fire and recuse service in keeping the public safe through prevention, protection and response, as well as their broader role in responding to emergencies as Category 1 responders.

5. The paper states that there are barriers to firefighters being deployed as the public might expect, suggesting cumbersome industrial relations for limiting chief fire officers' ability to use resources flexibly to meet changing risk. They suggest the Covid related tripartite agreements are an example of this and they highlight the need for the service, and its employees, to respond to terrorism in all its forms. The Paper states that chief fire officers should be "empowered to safely make decisions on the basis of risk and resources". They ask to what extent do respondents "agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should have the flexibility to deploy resources to help address current and future threats faced by the public beyond core fire and rescue duties?".

6. On public safety the Government has asked if fire services should play an activity role in supporting the wider health and public safety agenda.

7. The White Paper states that the Government is not looking to remove the right to strike. It sets out the specific civil protection duties conferred on fire and rescue services through the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and the requirement in the National Framework to produce business continuity plans. It states that operational independence of chief fire officers will play a crucial role in managing risk within their services. The Government are currently reviewing the Civil Contingencies Act and will consider as a

part of the review how to strengthen the basis on which all responders, including the FRS, cooperate and support local resilience structures. The Government ask if the business continuity requirements set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 provide sufficient oversight to keep the public safe in the event of a strike.

8. The paper asks if the current pay negotiation arrangements are appropriate. The paper cites previous reports that have questioned the effectiveness of the National Joint Council by Adrian Thomas and Sir Thomas Winsor. The Government state that they will consider how to take forward an independent review of the NJC, and whether the current negotiation process is dynamic enough to respond to change priorities as well as consider evidence from other employment models and sectors.

9. The White Paper queries whether there is a need for consistent entry requirements to be explored. It states that HMICFRS has found that services need to do more to support future leaders, and that diversity in senior leadership positions is more limited than in the wider workforce. The Government notes that there are no standardised national progression routes or consistent levels of education or experience required for entry into roles. There is also a question on the benefit that a direct entry and talent management scheme would have on the service.

Professionalism

10. The paper states that several reports and inspections have found leadership to be "problematical", outlining that out of 45 inspections by HMICFRS in 2019, only 12 services were good at developing leadership and capability. The paper proposes a new statutory leadership programme for the fire and rescue service, reflecting the challenges of the 21st Century, and giving a standardised approach in how services identify and prepare leaders. The paper asks for views on whether completing the programme should be mandatory before becoming an assistant chief fire officer or above. They state that the police strategic command course provides a model for the development of this new programme. The consultation asks for views on this proposal.

11. The paper outlines the importance of clear expectations as well as ethics and culture. In discussing the Core Code of Ethics, produced by the LGA, APCC and NFCC, the paper questions whether a new statutory code of ethics should be created. The aim would be to ensure its application in every service, with a duty placed on services to follow it, specifically a duty would be placed on chief fire officers who, if operational independent, could be best placed to ensure their service is complying.

12. The paper asks about the introduction of a fire service oath. A mandatory duty would be placed on all FRA employees to take the Oath, with the need for all employees to consciously affirm ethical principles. It would not apply to members. The Oath would be specified and provided for in legislation. Any breach of the Oath would be an employment matter.

13. The introduction of a new College of Fire and Rescue is also outlined. The proposed College could have the following remit:

    13.1. on Leadership, developing and maintaining courses such as Leadership Programmes and direct entry schemes

    13.2. on Data, providing a home for a strategic centre of data excellence

    13.3. on Research, housing a central research function to ensure that research is prioritised, conducted effectively, and shared

    13.4. on Clear Expectations, taking on responsibility for the creation of fire standards, building on the work of the Fire Standards Board

    13.5. on Ethics, the proposed independent body could be provided with powers to create and maintain the proposed statutory code of ethics and fire and rescue service Oath, and also keep practical implementation of the code and Oath under review

14. The paper asks if the proposed college should be given legislative powers to effect further improvement in the fire and rescue service. These could mirror the powers held by the College of Policing and could include, as an example, the power to issue statutory codes of practice. It would have some cross over with the NFCC and as such the paper states there would need to be a strong relationship between the two.

15. Other questions are also asked on how the sector might use data better, as well as undertake research more effectively.

Governance

16. On Governance the White Paper says that the committee structure in place in the majority of areas can "slow decision making and impair accountability". The Government's view is therefore that there is a strong case for the transfer of governance. The paper states that the Government's preferred governance model is one that:

    16.1. has a single, elected – ideally directly elected – individual who is accountable for the service rather than governance by committee

    16.2. has a clear demarcation between the political and strategic oversight by this individual, and the operationally independent running of the service by the chief fire officer

    16.3. the person with oversight has control of necessary funding and estates

    16.4. decision-making, including budgets and spending, is transparent and linked to local public priorities.

17. They have said that this could be a mayor, a council leader or a police, fire and crime commissioner. A mayor or council leader could delegate functions to a deputy mayor (for mayors) for cabinet member (for council leaders). The paper asks to what extent do respondents agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility to a single, elected individual and they ask what factors should be considered when transferring

governance to a single, elected individual. They then ask about transfer to the Mayoral Combined Authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners.

18. The paper also asks if there is anyone else, apart from combined authority mayors and police and crime commissioners, who the Government could transfer fire governance to that aligns with the principles set out in paragraph 16.

19. The paper states that it could take the opportunity as a part of governance changes to "strengthen and clarify the legal basis against which fire and rescue authorities operate", putting good governance principles in statute. It gives examples of oversight and scrutiny functions, transparency targets and clarifying the relationship between political oversight and operational decision making. The paper discusses options for scrutiny, to ensure that the expertise in current committee FRAs is not lost.

20. The issues potentially posed by boundaries are highlighted, saying that boundaries of the fire service and the police force or combined authority must align. Where there is more than one fire service in a police force area the proposal is that a transfer of functions is still possible as the PCC can take responsibility for each fire and rescue service that falls within their area. The Government states it does not seek to combine services unless there is a local appetite to do so. The paper states that the Government will look to discuss options with areas in the South West where there is no coterminosity.

21. In counties the Government are proposing that, subject to the results of the consultation, operational fire budgets are ring fenced.

22. The Government also propose a possible demarcation of responsibility between the political leadership and the chief fire officer. The paper states that chief fire officers are required to engage in prolonged negotiation at a national and local level on issues that should be within their operational responsibility, they state that HMICFRS found that chiefs were prevented by their authorities from implementing operational changes.

23. The table on page 31 of the white paper sets out the possible demarcation in more depth:

Task	Responsible
Setting priorities	Executive leader
Budget setting	Executive leader
Setting precept	Executive leader
Setting response standards	Executive leader
Opening and closing fire stations	Executive leader*
Appointment and dismissal of the chief fire officer	Executive leader
Appointment and dismissal of other fire service staff	Chief fire officer
Allocation of staff to meet strategic priorities	Chief fire officer
Configuration and organisation of resources	Chief fire officer

Deployment of resources to meet operational requirements	Chief fire officer
Balancing of competing operational needs	Chief fire officer
Expenditure up to certain (delegated levels)	Chief fire officer

*Opening and closing of fire stations could be a joint decision; operationally fire chiefs could be responsible for decisions on moving teams, whilst ultimate political and executive responsibility lies with the executive leader.

24. The paper states that the intention is for there to be a "bright, clear line demarcating the nature and extent of the chief fire officer's operational independence against the role of the executive leader". The paper outlines that they could produce a document like the Policing Protocol to provide clarity on roles.

25. The paper sets out that the Government are considering whether to make chief fire officers corporations sole, however it does recognise that further consideration would be needed on how this could be done with county run fire and rescue services.

26. The Government is also seeking views on how to clarify the distinction between strategic and operational planning. Their suggestion is the introduction of a new strategic plan, which would be owned by the FRA, whilst the IRMP (renamed to Community Risk Management Plan) would be the operational plan owned by the chief fire officer.

People and Professionalism

27. Members are asked to consider whether there are any particular points under the people and professionalism priorities that the LGA should consider making in our response to the White Paper.

28. In particular we are interested in members views on issues such as:

   28.1. Entry and promotion requirements: Would it be beneficial to introduce consistent entry and promotion requirements? Would there be unintended consequences of such a move? What would the impact be on equality and diversity within the sector?

   28.2. Statutory Code of ethics: Would members wish to see a new code of ethics introduced on a statutory footing? The Core Code of Ethics was produced in May 2021, supported by the Home Office, and FRA/FRSs are currently working hard on embedding the principles of the core Code to ensure improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion.

   28.3. Fire Service Oath: Do members feel that the proposed Fire Service Oath would drive improvements in ethics within the sector?

   28.4. Operational independence: Are there any barriers to chief fire officers deploying resources, if given operational independence?

   28.5. Ring fencing of budgets for fire in county fire services: would this pose particular difficulties for a county service?

28.6. NJC Review: The current collective bargaining approach to management of national level pay and terms and conditions has achieved industrial relations stability and ultimately affordable pay awards over many years. Would you support a view that an independent review could be beneficial in suggesting improvements to its operation, however consideration of any alternative arrangement would need to ensure industrial relations, pay and terms and conditions arrangements at least as good as those achievable through the current mechanism?

28.7. NJC Review: Given the high density of trade union membership in the fire sector are there alternative mechanisms that would also deliver reasonable pay awards in agreement with employee representatives and provide industrial relations stability?

29. We would also welcome members comments on any other issues that are of interest within the paper under these headings.

Governance

30. The LGA's view on governance is that it is best determined at a local level, with local circumstances, authorities and priorities deciding what governance structure would work best locally. The delivery of a good service to the public is at the heart of the fire and rescue service and we recognise that both the political and operational leadership of the sector have distinct and complementary roles to play in delivering that service.

31. The White Paper outlines the criteria that the Government see as necessary for good governance (see paragraph 16). As previously stated the White Paper also asks if there are any alternative governance systems that would follow that criteria that they have not considered.

32. An option for the LGA would be to suggest alternative models of governance that move towards the criteria set out by the Government in the White Paper, but which retain a committee structure. The most obvious model would be one based on the division of functions in councils where an executive is held to account by a scrutiny committee or committees. Having taken initial legal advice officers understand there are two options which would achieve a greater separation between executive and scrutiny functions in committee-based fire and rescue authorities:

32.1. **Option 1**: the LGA could propose that primary legislation is introduced to create a cabinet/scrutiny model for governance on both metropolitan authorities and combined authorities. Primary legislation would be necessary as the provisions that apply to councils do not currently apply to fire and metropolitan and combined fire and rescue authorities. Introducing this option would enable authorities to organise themselves along the principles set out within the White Paper but would not involve a transfer of governance if that was not what the local area supported.

32.2.　　**Option 2**: alongside or as an alternative to Option 1 the LGA could propose that metropolitan and combined authorities reorganise themselves to create a small management committee to exercise an authority's executive functions, which would then be scrutinised and supported by/accountable to the full authority. Officers' understanding is that current legislation permits this for metropolitan authorities and for combined authorities whose combination orders allow the appointment of committees or sub-committees. As this option could be achieved without the introduction of primary legislation it may have some attractions for Government as a model, especially as the earliest we might expect a Bill to implement the White Paper is 2023, and that may not come into effect until 2024 or later.

33. We would welcome members views:

33.1. On whether the LGA's response to the White Paper should suggest any alternative models of governance that move towards meeting the criteria laid out in it; and

33.2. If it's agreed the LGA should suggest alternative models whether one or both of the options set out in paragraph 32 should be included in the LGA's response. these options, and whether or not we should develop these proposals further.

34. Other questions are also posed in the governance section which members may wish to consider further include:

34.1. Balanced Leadership Model: the paper outlines a possible demarcation of responsibility between the FRA and the chief fire officer, set out in the table under paragraph 23. Do members feel that this demarcation is appropriate? Is there anything that members feel that there will be need to be further governance oversight on?

34.2. Legal entity of Chief Fire Officers: What impact would corporation sole for chief fire officers have on the sector, in particular for county services?

34.3. Strategic/operational planning: Do members agree with the demarcation of strategic and operational planning, with the proposed introduction of a new strategic plan, separate from the Community Risk Management Plan?

Fit for the Future

35. Members will also be aware of the work done by the LGA, the NFCC and the National Employers England on Fit for the Future, which will help to inform how we respond to the White Paper. Following the strategic engagement sessions undertaken in November and December last year and the operational engagement sessions undertaken in February this year, discussions at the Fire Services Management Committee, and the other partner's governance meetings, Fit for the Future has been revised.

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36. The revised final version of Fit for the Future is attached at **Appendix A.** This will become an online document supported by an evidence base providing the background for each of the 12 improvement objectives contained within Fit for the Future.

Implications for Wales

37. The White Paper is applicable in England only.

Financial Implications

38. None**.**

Next steps

39. Members are asked for their initial comments on the white paper to inform the LGA's next steps. The deadline for responding to the consultation is **26 July**. The FSMC will have a further chance to discuss the submission on 8 July

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES
National Employers
(England)

Appendix A

Fit for the Future

Revised May 2022

Contents

Foreword

This updated version of Fit for the Future is the product of more than three further years of close partnership working between the National Employers (England), the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA). Fit for the Future was the first time that we came together to consider what we all want the fire and rescue service to look like in the future and to acknowledge the challenges we face in getting there.

We have brought together evidence from past experience, information about future global issues and trends and the views of strategic leaders at both political and officer levels to set out the future role of the fire and rescue service in England.

We recognise that, although we have come a long way over the last 20 years, there are still areas where we can do more. The recent pandemic as well as other key issues, such as climate change, all demonstrate a need for us to adapt for the future.

The role of the fire and rescue service and the improvements we will need to make in the next five years are all set out here in the latest version of Fit for the Future. The details contained within will be used to describe our ambition for the future role of the fire and rescue service to all interested parties, including central government.

Fit for the Future will inform how the roles of employees will be developed and be the basis for how we prioritise our work to deliver what we intend. Fit for the Future therefore sits at the highest level of policy for our organisations and is a basis for an ongoing partnership between us to deliver change.

To support the future of the service we are proposing twelve areas of improvement that span the breadth of fire and rescue business, from risk planning of prevention, protection, recruitment and retention through to how we work with others to improve safety in our communities.

Fit for the Future can only be useful if it genuinely drives change and improvement in the fire and rescue services the public receive. As national organisations, we will do all we can to support its delivery. Locally, in Fire and Rescue Services, we invite careful scrutiny of the material so as to actively plan to make the improvements we have set out. Each FRA (Fire and Rescue Authority) and FRS (Fire and Rescue Service) had the opportunity to engage at local political and officer levels.

The significant areas of improvement and reform set out in Fit for the Future will clearly need adequate resources and additional funding to support them. The partners believe there is a

sound case for such funding in terms of the societal value and the benefits to the public that will be delivered. That case will be made in support of the delivery of Fit for the Future.

We will take regular steps to ensure Fit for the Future remains current and fresh. As we continue to learn and develop as a sector, we will review it.

Executive Summary

Making our fire and rescue service Fit for the Future

In order to reflect societal, environmental changes; and risk in an ever-changing world the role of the fire and rescue service always needs to evolve.

The fire and rescue service has extensive capabilities to build upon to serve the public during a crisis or when demand places extensive pressures on other parts of the public sector.

Mindful of local risks and needs, we will do this to save lives and protect local communities.

To deliver these improvements the fire and rescue service will need adequate funding and resources.

Some things will be different to reflect changing risks and demands

Each FRA/FRS will use their duties, powers, capabilities and people to…

… put local communities at the centre of any decisions made when responding to major emergencies (irrespective of the type and nature of the incident). For instance, the Covid 19 pandemic is an example of the contribution the fire and rescue service can make. This can be done by:

- Leading the development of high-quality local resilience plans, with partners.
- Taking a prominent role in leading and managing the response.
- Having the capability to quickly put highly trained, competent people into any stage of a crisis 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

… protect the most vulnerable people in our communities, tackling the health inequalities that put their wellbeing at risk. This could include:

- Focusing on the people in local communities who are most at risk.
- Preventing accidents by identifying and explaining how people are at risk and helping them if an accident happens.
- Responding to urgent medical emergencies, such as heart attacks, in advance of the ambulance service.
- Supporting the ambulance service when demand is high, where fire service capacity and capability allows.

Some things will be enhanced

Each FRA/FRS will enhance the way they…

… prevent fires and other emergencies by…

- Increasing their understanding of the root causes of fires and other emergencies and how to address them.
- Working with partners to reach people most at risk and make them safer.

… protect people from the effects of fires and regulate the built environment by…

- Identifying and increasing the understanding of people and the buildings and places that represent the most serious risks and enforce wherever appropriate.
- Targeting audit and inspection regimes to identify buildings that are unsafe.

… respond to fires and other emergencies by…

- Being better prepared to deal with a wide range of emergencies and major incidents.
- Having highly trained, flexible employees who can manage emergencies with the highest levels of professionalism.

… have a diverse workforce that helps manage risk in local communities by…

- Embracing the Core Code of Ethics to create a positive and inclusive culture.
- Improving recruitment and retention of employees from all backgrounds.
- Celebrating diversity and promoting equality in all its forms so all employees have a strong sense of belonging.

… represent value for public money by

- Measuring and quantifying the benefits of the work delivered by the fire and rescue service in terms of public safety.
- Continuously learning and improving the service.

Ownership

Fit for the Future is applicable to England. It has been developed in partnership between the National Employers (England), the NFCC and the LGA. All organisations recognise their separate roles in improvement in support of fire and rescue services. They also recognise the importance of working together to deliver the fire and rescue service that they seek to achieve.

Engagement by the partners will continue to regularly refine the content of Fit for the Future so it works at strategic and operational levels for FRAs and FRSs. The idea is to have common agreement about what the future needs to look like, what needs to change to improve the service and how the benefits of that improvement can be realised.

- The National Employers have strategic responsibility in every part of the UK to create an "enabling framework" that will allow local fire and rescue authorities to implement services that will reduce risk in their communities in the most effective and efficient way. To achieve this, they negotiate directly with national employee representatives, through the National Joint Councils (NJCs), to agree how employees' roles should align to the delivery of these local services and determine national pay and terms and conditions that will support this. They also support fire and rescue authorities and fire and rescue services as they seek to implement change at local level.

- The LGA represents fire and rescue authorities who have the legal and democratic responsibility for fire and rescue services. The LGA works to support, promote and improve fire and rescue services through policy and improvement work. This work is directed by the Fire Services Management Committee. The LGA's Fire Commission provides a forum for all fire and rescue authorities to discuss fire issues.

- The NFCC represents senior managers who have operational responsibility to deliver the fire and rescue service in every part of the UK. The NFCC will provide evidence and advice, as appropriate, to the National Employers (England) and the LGA in support of new ways of working that will deliver a service that is fit for the future.

Background

Fit for the Future establishes a common picture for the future of fire and rescue services in England. Its purpose is to identify what needs to change, using a sound evidence base and then identify how that change could be delivered at local and national levels, supporting its implementation across all services.

We have reviewed a wide range of sources to establish a credible picture of the future. The sources we've used include feedback about the current performance of the service as well as considering what might happen in the future over the next 5 to 10 years.

The partners' approach draws upon the available information about service effectiveness and efficiency from service reviews, inspectorate reports and expert commentary. It uses this information to create the common areas of improvement and an agreed future role for the fire and rescue service that is set out in Fit for the Future. Necessary future funding, employee roles and national tools can then be aligned with that view of the future role of the fire and rescue service and its areas of improvement.

Even though the partners in their analysis have looked up to 10 years ahead, this is too long a timescale to set for the delivery of the changes identified in Fit for the Future. Our ambition is that these will be achieved within 5 years.

Wide engagement has taken place on the concept and content of Fit for the Future to ensure it reflects the views of senior managers and political leaders.

There are a number of key areas of work and oversight that will be informed by Fit for the Future, these include:

- Production of central guidance, doctrine and tools.
- Audit and inspection.
- Pay and conditions for employees.
- Standards development.

Fit for the Future is a system of evidence-based improvements, not a rigid set of static objectives that is inflexible and unresponsive. The partners will need to continually review new evidence and make changes where appropriate. Joint arrangements to do this will be put in place.

Funding

Wide engagement has taken place on the concept and content of Fit for the Future. The partners listened carefully throughout the engagement process and are clear that without adequate funding, resources and cross government support, the ambitions cannot be fully realised.

There will be demonstrable societal value and public benefits resulting from the improvements and reforms that the partners have outlined in Fit for the Future. But we know that simply setting out our ambition and then seeking funding will not be enough. Well evidenced business cases will be made to government in support of our ambitions. Flexibility will also be sought for other funding authorities and bodies to support this work. These business cases will demonstrate how we will save more lives, recognise employee contribution and continue to deliver excellent value for money.

The funding and resourcing issues that arise from the implementation and sustained delivery of some of these elements of work are set out in the diagram below:
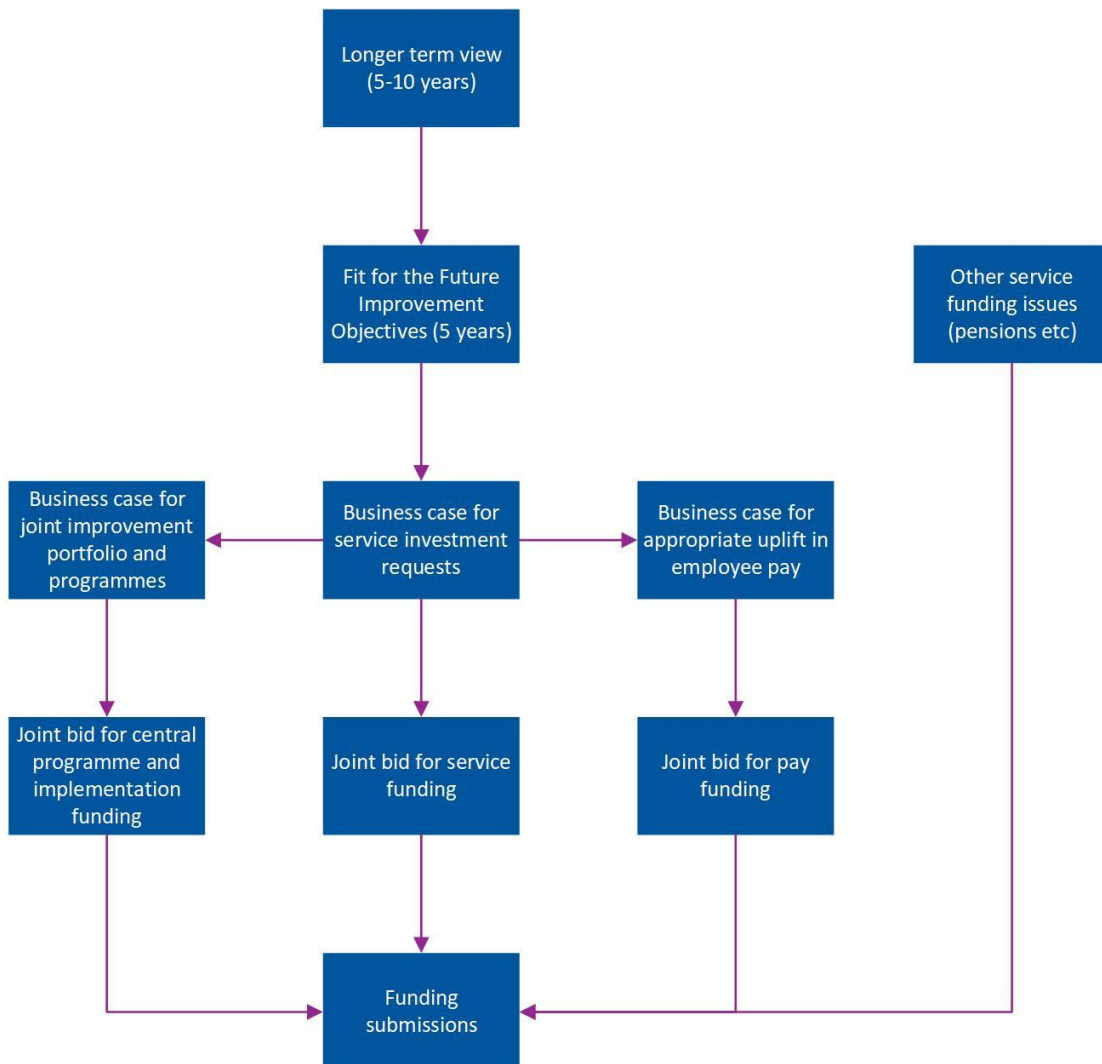
Relationship to Pay and Terms and Conditions for Employees

Fit for the Future has a range of implications for the roles of employees. The changes that may need to be agreed and the value of the benefits of those changes will be the basis of a key business case to the English government, for funding to support appropriate pay arrangements.

To support the aspirations set out in Fit for the Future in providing improved services to the public, the partners also recognise the value of good industrial relations and the role of employee representatives.

The National Employers (England) will continue to consult/negotiate on any changes in roles, pay and other terms and conditions for operational employees.

The Working Environment

Society is changing in different parts of the country in different ways. Fire and rescue services need to be able to reshape to address societal changes, including population growth and movement, an aging society and health inequality.

FRAs and FRSs also need to be able to build upon their success in changing human behaviour through prevention and other associated issues and broaden their contribution to a safer, more prosperous society.

The pandemic has resulted in significant changes in society. There are now well-established new ways of working including using technology that can move people away from more office-based models. It has also established the practical reality of widening the scope of the service offer to the public within fire and rescue. This needs to be built upon.

There are global challenges posed by the climate warming leading to increasing risks of extreme heat, wildfires, flooding and water scarcity. Services need to take into account changes in context such as modern methods of construction, technology and innovation.

These societal and global changes are reflected in the risks that drive the activities of the fire and rescue service. Although many risks and some resultant activities are common to all fire and rescue services, no one service is identical to another. Through consistent and robust Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) local risks need to be properly assessed to inform the deployment of local services. Proposals for service delivery need to be carefully developed, and local communities fully engaged, to ensure that service delivery reflects their expectations, and the impact of services is known and understood.

All fire and rescue services and authorities need to continue to strive for excellence in their core functions and to meet their statutory duties. This includes preventing fires and other emergencies, protecting people from the effects of incidents that do happen and providing a timely, effective response to the highest standards of quality.

Fire and rescue services need to ensure that their responses are resilient and can respond in collaboration with others to large scale events such as wildfires and major flooding. The threat of terrorism is a sad reality that needs to be prepared for and the ability to respond, in line with civil contingencies and with partner agencies, is vital.

Recent tragic events have challenged fire and rescue services and placed their operations under intense scrutiny. Both the Grenfell Tower fire and Manchester Arena bombings demonstrated to the public that although all fire and rescue services do respond to major

incidents, they are organisations that need to continually learn, reflect on their actions and implement change so that they can improve the services they deliver to the public.

We must all make sure that we take time to learn from events and incidents and acknowledge that implementing real change, that will have a positive impact, will take time.

Recommendations for change, and for improvement should be considered in the wider context of an evolving fire and rescue service. Improvement needs to be considered from a wide variety of sources and the response needs to be joined up and co-ordinated to best effect.

All these issues are reflected in Fit for the Future, and to improve the service we need:

- Clarity of the future service delivery role of fire and rescue services.
- Organisations with an inclusive culture and employees with a broad range of skills.
- National infrastructure and support to enable authorities and services to deliver improvement.
- Appropriate funding in recognition of the societal value and public benefits delivered.

Improvement Objectives

The evidence considered within Fit for the Future identified 12 improvement objectives, which have been divided into three themes:

- Service Delivery – the role of the Fire and Rescue Service
- Leadership, People, and Culture
- National Infrastructure and Support

These areas are all underpinned by a verified and extensive evidence base.

Alignment between the improvement objectives and the themes is set out in the below table.

Theme	Improvement Objective
Service Delivery – the role of the Fire and Rescue Service	1. Fire and rescue services will have evidence based, high quality and consistent community risk management plans, based on the Community Risk Planning Fire Standard. The Plans will encompass all aspects of service deployment and delivery, addressing local risks within diverse communities as well as ensuring they are resilient to national risks and threats.
	2. Fire and rescue services support new and innovative ways to prevent fires and other emergencies. They will work with people in local communities to make them safer including tackling the health inequalities that put their wellbeing at risk.
	3. A culture of responsibility and ownership will be driven by the fire and rescue service to influence all organisations and bodies responsible for fire safety. Fire protection activity carried out by fire and rescue services will reflect their role as a part of the changing regulatory system.
	4. The benefits of all fire and rescue service activity are measured and evaluated so that decision making about resource allocation can be improved.

Leadership, people, and culture	5. Fire and rescue services refocus their investment in the selection, training and development of employees to maintain, support and improve their skills and knowledge throughout their careers.
	6. Prospective employees are attracted to fire and rescue services as their employer of choice where inclusive recruitment practices and the available diverse roles and responsibilities help the service manage risk in the local community.
	7. An inclusive culture is at the heart of every fire and rescue service. They are welcoming and supportive places to work, retaining the widest variety of people from all backgrounds throughout their careers.
	8. Political leaders and managers work together to deliver strong inclusive leadership across all fire and rescue services. Common approaches and leadership frameworks will be developed that set out service values, expectations and behaviours which all can support and promote. This will be the basis on which fire and rescue services are led and all employees operate.
National infrastructure and support	9. Fire and rescue services have access to comprehensive national implementation support and a repository of standards, guidance and tools that they embed in their own local service delivery.
	10. Opportunities to collaborate are considered in all aspects of service delivery, where it will bring about better outcomes for communities. Partnership working will be based on solid evidence and data to determine the most efficient and effective use of resources to ensure the safety of the public and our employees.
	11. All fire and rescue services will develop the management of data and digital capabilities to ensure evidence-based decision making. This will enable the measurement of benefits delivered through service activity, evaluation of the service and also support employee development.
	12. The National Employers (England), the LGA and the NFCC will work in partnership to drive and embed organisational learning to promote continuous improvement at all levels. The partners will jointly own an implementation group to support delivery of the Fit for the Future improvements at local level.

Theme 1 – Service Delivery – The role of the fire and rescue service

Our ambition is that within five years' ...

- FRAs/FRSs will produce consistent, high-quality Community Risk Management Plans (CRMP) to protect each local community from a range of risks1. Each service will work with partners to understand and respond to local risks within diverse communities, as appropriate.

- A high quality, timely, safe and effective response will continue to be a key feature of each CRMP, able to manage all foreseeable risks.

- Each FRS/FRA will work with partners to develop local joint plans to make local communities resilient to the risks that face them. The response of the fire and rescue service will be flexible and agile, able to put highly trained, competent people into any stage of a crisis 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

- Depending on the assessment of the risks within the local CRMP, wider areas of consideration for each fire and rescue service in support of health, social care and ambulance colleagues could include:
  - Focusing on the people in local communities who are most at risk.
  - Preventing accidents by identifying and explaining how people are at risk and helping them if an accident happens.
  - Responding to urgent medical emergencies, such as heart attacks, in advance of the ambulance service.
  - Supporting the ambulance service when demand is high, where fire service capacity and capability allows.

- Prevention work will be centred on the people in communities who are most at risk from harm from accident and injury. Services will learn from incidents that do happen to inform future prevention activity.

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[1]"Community Risk Management Plans" will be made in a way that is consistent with preventing what might happen (risk) and seeks to provide the right people, systems, and equipment (resources) to deal with what does or could happen.

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- Each fire and rescue service will have proactively implemented the new national regulatory system, provide information and guidance, and enforce the Fire Safety Order in their areas working with councils to promote fire and building safety.

- Fire and rescue services will continue to make the best use of public money. They will measure and quantify the benefits of their work to be clear about how they are making their communities safer. This will further establish the value of fire and rescue service work to the public.

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Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP)

What are we going to improve?

Improvement objective 1

Fire and rescue services will have evidence based, high quality and consistent community risk management plans, based on the Community Risk Planning Fire Standard. The Plans will encompass all aspects of service deployment and delivery, addressing local risks within diverse communities as well as ensuring they are resilient to national risks and threats.

What does this mean?

Each fire and rescue service will develop and implement a high quality, evidence-based community risk management plan based on an assessment of risks within their area and the best way to address them. Each service will balance the deployment of its resources to match its plan and the local risks identified.

It must be recognised that public funding and resources are finite and must be used in the most effective and efficient way possible. The current evidence suggests that there is inconsistency across England in the way these plans are produced and that the services provided, and the resources deployed to deliver them could be optimised making the public safer whilst using of available funding to greater effect.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally[2], we will deliver:
• Produce plans that are accessible to the public and reflect their expectations. • Ensure plans give equality of access to services for all in our diverse communities. • Show how local resources will be used efficiently to deliver the service required.	• A consistent approach to the development of CRMPs across the country and make them accessible to FRAs and FRSs • A common methodology that leads to a clearer understanding of the relationship between risks and resources.

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[2] "Centrally, we will" - In each of the improvement objectives we say "centrally, we will:". This describes the ambition of the partner organisations to provide support to fire and rescue services for improvement. Each element of that ambition will be supported by one or more of the partners, as appropriate. Each partner organisation retains responsibility in its own area and will work together wherever it is appropriate to do so.

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally[2], we will deliver:
- Develop their plans in a consistent way that makes them more easily comparable across FRAs. - Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	- A strong evidence base for activity using a wide range of data sources and analytical techniques. - Good practice in the development of working patterns that support risk management, balanced against the needs of employees. - Good practice guidance and case studies to support improvement in this area. - Evidence and guidance to support improving access to services for diverse community group.

Prevention

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement Objective 2**
>
> Fire and rescue services support new and innovative ways to prevent fires and other emergencies. They will work with people in local communities to make them safer including tackling the health inequalities that put their wellbeing at risk.

What does this mean?

The fire and rescue service will continue to reduce risks in communities through a wide range of prevention work. We will further develop our work with key stakeholders and partners where appropriate, educating communities to adopt safer behaviours, improve their safety, health and wellbeing. We will ensure such work is accessible to all parts of diverse communities, focusing where the risk is greatest.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally we will:
- Raise the profile of prevention within CRMPs. - Identify the people who are most at risk in communities and target their prevention activities ensuring equality of access for all. - Evaluate prevention activity to demonstrate the financial and public value it brings to inform allocation of resources. - Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	- Identify and develop new innovative prevention activities, in collaboration with other stakeholders that meet the needs of diverse communities, mindful of any potential contractual impact on employees. - Provide a person-centred framework with a range of supporting tools, that places the individual and the community at the core of prevention activity. - Provide research to give greater insight into early intervention and prevention. - Provide information, methodologies, and evidence-base for evaluating the effectiveness and reach of prevention activities, supported by central data collection.

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FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally we will:
	• Continually improve prevention products and activities.
	• Include prevention in the development of competence frameworks for all fire and rescue services.

Protection

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement Objective 3**
>
> A culture of responsibility and ownership will be driven by the fire and rescue service to influence all organisations and bodies responsible for fire safety. Fire protection activity carried out by fire and rescue services will reflect their role as a part of the changing regulatory system.

What does this mean?

Fire and rescue services are a key part of the overall regulatory system that ensures the built environment is safe. They need to influence and work with partners and stakeholders, including central government, to ensure that the regulatory system is fit for purpose and that the fire and rescue service role in it is clear.

Each fire and rescue service will assess the risk to life that buildings pose across their areas, prioritise inspection resources and focus on the buildings that represent the most significant danger to the public.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
- Identify and inspect the buildings that represent the most significant risks in their area as part of a community risk management plan. - Influence and support those organisations and bodies who have a role in fire safety in their areas to fulfil their responsibilities. - Engage with Government's remediation partnership programme and councils - Work with building safety regulator to deliver the new building safety regime - Embed competence requirements and provide training for fire protection employees	- Continue to advise government about the regulatory regime, ensuring it is effective and the FRS role is clear. - Influence national organisations responsible for elements of the fire safety system to effectively play their part in delivering a culture of safety. - Develop a consistent system for fire and rescue services to use that identifies the buildings that represent the greatest risk in their area. - Identify the competence requirements for protection, both for front line employees and specialists. - Develop a retention strategy for specialist employees to ensure

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- Allocate appropriate resources alongside improving ways of working to increase capacity and productivity.
- Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.

sufficient capability and capacity is kept within the fire and rescue service.

Evaluation

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement Objective 4**
>
> The benefits of all fire and rescue service activity are measured and evaluated so that decision making about resource allocation can be improved.

What does this mean?

The fire and rescue service has been very successful in reducing a range of risks in communities. But there is a need to become much better at establishing the value of activities that are planned and undertaken. In particular, every service needs to be clear about the benefit that different activities bring to the public and how they are being measured and demonstrated. Creating a clear link between what is done and what benefits it brings will support better funding and resource allocation decisions.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Have made significant progress in evaluating the benefits of their activities. • Draw on central evaluation techniques to improve local evaluations. • Use the outputs of evaluation to inform risk planning and learning. • Achieve any Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	• Develop a model that demonstrates the economic value of the service that all stakeholders can use. • Clearly identify the benefits to be achieved in improvement projects and programmes and how they are being measured. • Improve the specification of data requirements, collection protocols and analysis to support evaluation and to make service plans and performance more comparable across FRAs and FRSs. • Develop and implement good practice guidance on evaluation and benefits realisation for use in all fire and rescue services.

Theme 2 - Leadership, people and culture

Our ambition is that within five years' ….

- Everyone working within the fire and rescue service will be clear about how their role contributes to making local communities and their colleagues safer and how that is reflected in their local Community Risk Management Plan.

- All employees' terms and conditions and working patterns will reflect the adaptability and flexibility needed to reduce the identified risks in their communities.

- Employees will be able to switch between different aspects of their role, as required, calling on different skills as they do so.

- Employees will have the ability to respond to any anticipated incident, safely and effectively which will be reflected in the expectations, training, and leadership of employees.

- Employees will be selected, trained and managed to achieve their full potential. There will be a consistent approach to maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills within every role in the service, with clear expectations set in an open culture of performance review and development.

- Employees will consistently support and demonstrate the behaviours envisaged in the Core Code of Ethics.

- Employees will be supported with high quality equipment, relevant and focused training and be well led by highly professional managers to provide the best possible outcomes to those affected.

- All employees will have working patterns, which are based on the best way to serve the local community, together with the need to ensure they are safe, attractive to employees and secure a healthy and work/life balance.

- Employees that work either wholetime or part time will have attractive duty systems, pay, and terms and conditions that also meet the needs of their fire and rescue service.

- High expectations of the public will need to be reflected in the right pay and terms and conditions for employees and Fit for the Future will be utilised to underpin a business case seeking additional funding.

- Fire and rescue services will be workplaces that are inclusive and welcoming of diversity and are attractive to people from across all sections of the community. They will have a culture based on delivering excellent public service, making all that they do accessible to all, in line with the fire and rescue service's Core Code of Ethics and supporting Code of Ethics Fire Standard.

- The importance of leadership will be recognisable in every aspect of the fire and rescue service and in every role. Potential leaders will be actively recruited and developed. Every employee should display leadership behaviours appropriate for their role and can expect to be led by a qualified, competent leader in all aspects of their work.

Competence

What are we going to improve?

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Improvement objective 5

Fire and rescue services refocus their investment in the selection, training and development of employees to maintain, support and improve their skills and knowledge throughout their careers.

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What does this mean?

The fire and rescue service is enormously proud of its employees. It is right for us to focus on how we can make sure we continue to recruit and retain the best people, train and develop them to the highest standards and then support them to make sure they safely perform to the best of their ability.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
- Have a clear and effective strategy for workforce development and competence, mindful of any impact on pay, terms and conditions. - Expect employees to perform to any relevant competence standards for the fire and rescue service. - Develop and implement working patterns that address the risks in their communities whilst being mindful of the impact on employees. - Achieve any related Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	- Analyse the functions of a modern fire and rescue service and set outcome-based standards in each area. - Develop a competence framework that covers all roles and functions within an FRS that is agile to changing landscape and flexible to meet local FRS needs, mindful of any implications for pay, terms and conditions. - Provide tools that align selection of employees with the values, behaviours, skills and abilities needed to perform these functions competently. - Review training and development approaches, including apprenticeships, to support the highest standards of professionalism in all aspects of the service.

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FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
	• Streamline assessment and development protocols to focus on performance and nurturing talent.

Attracting Employees

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement objective 6**
> Prospective employees are attracted to fire and rescue services as their employer of choice where inclusive recruitment practices and the available diverse roles and responsibilities help the service manage risk in the local community.

What does this mean?

The fire and rescue service needs to broaden the base from which it can recruit. This will enhance the range of experience, skills and diversity of thought that can enter it.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Promote the fire and rescue service as a welcoming and inclusive workplace. • Make the diversity of opportunities within the fire and rescue service clear to maximise access to talent from the broadest possible base. • Take positive action when needed to recruit from under-represented groups. • Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	• Provide good practice tools, guidance, and support to fire and rescue services in nurturing a welcoming, inclusive culture that celebrates equality and diversity. • Use robust evidence, analysis and data to better understand where we are now, the barriers to and measurement of progress. • Assess the impact of all aspects of central work, adopt and champion inclusive practices and diverse talent and promote this practice within all fire and rescue services.

Retaining Employees

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement objective 7**
> An inclusive culture is at the heart of every fire and rescue service. They are welcoming and supportive places to work, retaining the widest variety of people from all backgrounds throughout their careers.

What does this mean?

Creating an inclusive, positive and supportive professional culture is a key part of ensuring that employees remain happy and valued within their roles.

To support work in this area, the Core Code of Ethics has been developed and published by the LGA, NFCC and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). It is underpinned by a Code of Ethics Fire Standard. All fire and rescue services are expected to adopt the Core Code of Ethics, which may be supplemented by local codes of behaviour and conduct.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
- Adopt the Core Code of Ethics. - Fully embed the principles within the Core Code of Ethics in all aspects of their work, including behavioural and service delivery expectations. - Ensure that unacceptable behaviours are able to be and are challenged within the workplace and individuals work together effectively within a healthy positive culture. - Actively manage their organisational culture, by upskilling everyone on inclusive behaviours and an awareness of unique differences. - Foster direct engagement with the workforce to ensure ownership at every level of a positive culture.	- Promote the Core Code of Ethics. - Continue to develop guidance and tools that support the adoption of the Core Code of Ethics and different aspects of a positive organisational culture. - Explore the most effective ways of benchmarking and testing cultural performance to assess aspects of culture such as ability to learn as an organisation.

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FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Have proactive senior leadership. • Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:

Inspirational and Inclusive Leadership

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement objective 8**
> Political leaders and managers work together to deliver strong inclusive leadership across all fire and rescue services. Common approaches and leadership frameworks will be developed that set out service values, expectations and behaviours which all can support and promote. This will be the basis on which fire and rescue services are led and all employees operate.

What does this mean?

Delivering improvement relies upon the unified, coordinated and sustained effort of leaders at every level across political and officer roles locally and centrally. Achieving unity around what needs to improve, as outlined in Fit for the Future, will act as a compelling vision and starting point to build on.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
- Recognise the investment needed to develop and support leaders within their organisations through selection, training and development. - Create and adopt a strategy to manage and develop leadership talent within their organisations. - Diversify the candidate base for leaders at all levels. - Ensure leaders understand the need to be inclusive, deriving maximum benefit for their employees and their organisation. - Adopt and promote the Core Code of Ethics as a vital element of setting the expectations of employees and leaders.	- Continue at national level to work in partnership across the National Employers (England), the LGA and the NFCC to lead the delivery of Fit for the Future. - Create and deliver a strategy for leadership development, including developmental pathways tailored to the needs of all leaders in the fire and rescue service to support inclusive leadership. - Provide tools and guidance to support leadership strategy, including appropriate scrutiny and performance management protocols to hold all leaders to account. - Implement national leadership programmes to support the

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FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	development of the leaders of the future. • Complete the development of Fire Standards for leadership and the supporting national guidance and tools.

Theme 3 - National infrastructure and support

Our ambition is that within five years' ....

- The national partnership between employers, political leaders and senior managers will have collectively provided support, products, guidance and tools to help services to achieve the objectives within Fit for the Future leading to more consistency and continual improvement in fire and rescue service performance. That work will be ongoing.

- The use of data and digital technology to support planning, prioritisation, evaluation and measurement of benefits achieved through widening the scope of work undertaken by fire and rescue services in line with Fit for the Future will be fully understood and embedded by all fire and rescue services. This data will also inform evaluation at national level through the partnership. The sector will have a programme in place to further explore and utilise digital technology in the delivery of services to the public wherever possible.

- Organisational learning will be fundamental to each fire and rescue service and the sector. The ability to evaluate learning from a variety of sources and act on it effectively will be inherent in services. Learning may include event and incidents, as well as de-briefs from other industries and sectors and research findings from academia both from the UK and internationally and feedback from HMICFRS. Learning from recent events, including the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester Arena Bombing will have been acted upon. The feedback coming from the inspectorate as well as from other commentators and expert scrutineers will continue to be actively considered.

- The Fire Standards Board will have completed a suite of Fire Standards to support continuous improvement and high-quality performance. The Fire Standards will be underpinned by accessible and user-friendly resources including national tools and guidance that will support services in achieving the specified outcomes.

Creating National Implementation Support

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement objective 9**
> Fire and rescue services have access to comprehensive national implementation support and a repository of standards, guidance and tools that they embed in their own local service delivery.

What does this mean?

Findings from the inspections by HMICFRS, and other previous reports, have highlighted issues with inconsistent approaches and some other performance concerns many of which are being addressed within Fit for the Future. There is a clear need for central resources to coordinate improvement support in an efficient and effective way. This needs to be supported by accessible resources that fire and rescue services can use to meet their own local needs. The development of nationally recognised Fire Standards will continue through the Fire Standards Board.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Contribute and collaborate with national bodies in the central development of materials, which can provide efficiencies for all fire and rescue services. • Feedback on the effectiveness of all standards, tools and guidance so they can be continuously improved. • Achieve the Fire Standard(s) and where appropriate make use of any supporting guidance and tools.	• Work together across the partner organisations to develop a joint portfolio of work in support of the improvements set out in Fit for the Future. • Create a joint partnership group to coordinate support and resources supporting implementation of improvement across all Fire and Rescue Services. • Continue the development of Fire Standards, tools and guidance to meet service needs and drive key improvements.

Collaboration

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement Objective 10**
> Opportunities to collaborate are considered in all aspects of service delivery, where it will bring about better outcomes for communities. Partnership working will be based on solid evidence and data to determine the most efficient and effective use of resources to ensure the safety of the public and our employees.

What does this mean?

There is a sound basis for improving collaboration and partnership with other organisations across all fire and rescue services. Many organisations locally serve the public, and often the same members of the community become affected by different risks, managed by different agencies. Working together to address these issues, at every level, is key to efficient management of risk in communities.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
- Have analysed all potential partner organisations with which they could interact with to deliver their services in the best way that provides good value for the public. - Establish working relationships and where appropriate common objectives with each partner. - When working with partners, develop common ways of working, data sets and evaluation protocols when appropriate. - Achieve any Fire Standard(s) and where appropriate make use of any supporting guidance and tools.	- Where relevant and helpful include collaboration in Fire Standards. - Identify partners at a national level to support efficient local delivery. - Develop data sets and shared objectives with national partners to support all fire and rescue services.

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Data and digital support

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement Objective 11**
> All fire and rescue services will develop the management of data and digital capabilities to ensure evidence-based decision making. This will enable the measurement of benefits delivered through service activity, evaluation of the service and also support employee development.

What does this mean?

Across all the areas of improvement identified in Fit for the Future there is a need for current accurate data to further support change. This will help drive improvements in the way the service is deployed, managed and evaluated. This needs to be supported by better use of digital and technology solutions to ensure maximum benefit can be achieved in delivering the service to the public. Using data to better understand the needs of the workforce and to direct resources where they are needed to provide the best development and support to them.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Collaborate with each other and with partner organisations to pool and analyse data to achieve maximum benefit. • Achieve the Fire Standard(s) and where appropriate make use of any supporting guidance and tools.	• Work with central government to replace the current Incident Recording System with a modern National Fire Data Collection System (NFDCS) that meets the needs of the service. • Develop a national data analytics capability that will serve the needs of all Fire and Rescue Services. • Create a longer-term plan for investment and development in developing data and digital capabilities that supports better service delivery to the public.

Organisational Learning

What are we going to improve?

> **Improvement objective 12**
> The National Employers (England), the LGA and the NFCC will work in partnership to drive and embed organisational learning to promote continuous improvement at all levels. The partners will jointly own an implementation group to support delivery of the Fit for the Future improvements at local level.

What does this mean?

The partner organisations see organisational learning as the consideration of notable practice and where improvement is needed at a national or local level. This informs improvement action within Fire and Rescue Services. It is not limited to learning from responding to incidents, although this is clearly an aspect of it. A jointly owned partnership group to support implementation of improvement at local level will be put in place.

How will we improve it?

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
• Openly promote a learning culture where lessons are shared. • Follow the good practice guide for operational learning, feeding learning into the National Operational Learning and Joint Organisational Learning systems as appropriate. • Draw upon central support for local implementation where required. • Achieve any Fire Standard set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	• Set up a jointly owned partnership implementation group to promote the Fit for the Future improvement objectives and to support delivery of such change at local level, drawing in relevant expertise from the partner organisations. • Continue the partnership approach to setting national improvement objectives based on the best available information and data. • Create a good practice guide for Organisational Learning in support of this objective. • Identify and access all the key information and data to inform organisational learning.

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
	• Create and maintain a national database and system for analysis of learning material to inform decision making.
FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will: