



Fire Services Management Committee

Agenda

Monday, 11 March 2024
4.00 pm

Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel

Fire Services Management Committee
Monday, 11 March 2024

There will be a meeting of the Fire Services Management Committee at **4.00 pm on Monday, 11 March 2024** Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel.

Catering and Refreshments:

If the meeting is scheduled to take place at lunchtime, a sandwich lunch will be available.

Political Group meetings and pre-meetings for Lead Members:

Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: labgp@lga.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Attendance:

Your attendance will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

Jonathan Bryant
Jonathan.Bryant@local.gov.uk - 07464652746

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme, a Carer's Allowance of National Living Wage and/or London Living Wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

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Fire Services Management Committee – Membership 2023/24

[Click here for accessible information on membership](#)

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (5)	
Cllr Rebecca Knox (Deputy Chairman)	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
Cllr Nick Chard	Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority
Mr Roger Hirst	Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
Cllr Mark Healey MBE	Somerset County Council
Cllr Carol Theobald	Brighton and Hove Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Rachel Bailey	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Labour (5)	
Cllr Greg Brackenridge (Deputy Chair)	City of Wolverhampton Council
Cllr Karen Kilgour	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Nikki Hennessy	Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Cllr Jane Hugo	Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Ludwig Ramsey	Derbyshire County Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Carolyn Lambert (Vice-Chair)	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Ben Nutland	South Gloucestershire Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority
Independent (2)	
Cllr Frank Biederman (Chair)	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority
Cllr Dr Wendy Maples	East Sussex Council
Substitutes	
Cllr John Shuttleworth	Co. Durham and Darlington Fire Authority
Cllr Nigel Smith	North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority

Agenda

Fire Services Management Committee

Monday, 11 March 2024

4.00 pm

Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel

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Date of Next Meeting: Friday, 17 May 2024, 11.00 am, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Minutes of last Fire Services Management Committee meeting

Fire Services Management Committee

Wednesday, 6 December 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest
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The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Thanks and best wishes were recorded for Jonny Bugg, who was leaving his role as Head of Fire Strategy and Reform at the Home Office.

Apologies were received from Cllr Roger Price.

There were no declarations of interest.

2	Minutes of the previous meeting
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The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising:

- An update was requested on progress with Lead Member discussions on how to take forward work on toxicity in fires. LE said that Lead Members were still in the process of prioritising work streams for the year and work on toxicity was being considered as part of this.
- In relation to item 8 – RAAC update – Cllr Theobald reported that a private leisure centre in Hove had recently been forced to close after RAAC was discovered in the building. Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, said that this was becoming an increasing issue with private sector buildings and he would respond to Cllr Theobald directly.
- The Chair requested that the action agreed on item 4 – Climate Change – on the planning process and enforcement of product safety standards, be progressed as a priority.

3	Fire Framework
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The Chair invited Jenna Marsh (JM), Deputy Head of the Fire Strategy and Reform Unit at the Home Office, to give the Committee an update.

JM reported that the Home Office was in the early stages of reviewing and updating the 2018 National Fire Framework to reflect emerging threats and other recent developments. Discussions with external partners and stakeholders had begun and further themed discussions and a public consultation were planned. Finance, culture, flooding and data sharing were key issues to emerge from the early discussions.

Members' comments and questions:

- The expansion of new technologies – e.g. the electric vehicle market -was considered to be a key issue that needed to be reflected in the revised Framework. Research into these issues should be carried out as part of the remit of a new College of Fire. JM agreed that this was a crucial issue to reflect in the Framework and highlighted the work of the Academic Collaboration, Evaluation and Research Group, convened by the NFCC, in this area.
- It was suggested that the Framework needed to be more joined up with the HMICFRS and better reflect their work and informal guidance.
- The future of centrally funded programmes, such as Fire Kills, needed to be addressed in the revised Framework.
- Members discussed the Fire Reform White Paper and whether issues in this that had cross-party agreement, such as the College of Fire, could be taken forward separately from the more contentious areas such as governance and the NJC, where discussions could continue. JM regretted that the White Paper response and decision on the College of Fire had not yet been published and this was largely due to recent ministerial changes in the Home Office. Work which didn't require notifying Parliament would be progressed in the meantime.
- Improved facilities for firefighter training would be required, particularly in the light of the wide range of new and emerging threats.

The Chair thanked JM for attending the meeting and stressed that FSMC were keen to remain involved in the review.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the presentation.

4 999 Outage

The Chair invited Jeremy Smitham (JS) and Sian Penny from BT to give their update.

JS briefly ran through the causes of the outage of 25 June and apologised to members for the inconvenience that this had caused to fire services and local residents. He then ran through the steps that had been taken by BT

to reduce the risk of it happening again. These included:

- The software bug which caused the outage has been fixed and alarms put in place for future warning.
- Worked with the National Cyber Security Centre to get external challenge.
- Training for staff to make back up procedures more robust.
- Strategic back up solution put in place on 7 Dec 2023.
- Communication strategy reviewed and updated.
- Reviewing cross-government communication with external organisations, such as NFCC.
- Investigating AI supported solutions through 999 Liaison Committee to improve resilience.
- Investigating automated call back systems.

Members welcomed the update and the reassurances provided.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

5 Leadership

The Chair invited CFO Wayne Bowcock (WB), lead officer on the Leadership programme for the NFCC, to give his presentation.

WB explained that the Leadership Programme was a key strand of work overseen by the NFCC's People, Culture and Leadership Coordinating Committee and was closely aligned with Fit for the Future and the new Cultural Action Plan. He then explained the various strands of the NFCC's Leadership Pathway offer – Executive Leadership Programme; Strategic Masterclasses; Middle Leadership Programme; Supervisory Leadership Programme; and Direct Entry – and proposed future projects. WB finally ran through the role that elected members could play in developing leadership within the sector and asked how members wanted to be involved in advice and scrutiny of the programme now that the Executive Leadership Programme Board was no longer meeting.

Members' comments and questions:

- Members broadly welcomed the NFCC's refreshed leadership offer as outlined in the presentation.
- Concerns were raised about the value of the Direct Entry scheme given the amount of resource being put into it versus the relatively small number of new recruits. The importance of leadership training and pathways for existing staff was emphasised, particularly in relation to social mobility. WB responded that direct entry was never intended to resolve all the sector's problems but is a valuable new route into the service for people from all backgrounds and will help to create greater diversity in leadership roles.
- The issue of graduate entry was raised and it was suggested that any changes in this regard would need to have the agreement of FSMC. It was further suggested that a graduate toolkit might be

more beneficial than a full graduate programme.

- The importance of political training for senior officers was raised.
- The distinction made by WB between 'leadership' and 'management' was welcomed but it was suggested that all of the NFCC's pathways appeared to be management related, rather than focussed on broader leadership.
- In response to a query about the role of elected members in the process, WB confirmed that the points set out in the presentation were very much 'asks' of members, and not instructions to them.
- A breakdown of data by EDI characteristics on the High Potential Programme was requested. WB said that this information would be collated but wasn't yet available.
- The low attendance at 2 of the strategic boards was queried. WB said in-person attendance didn't necessarily reflect overall interaction as the meetings were recorded and could therefore be viewed at a later date.
- It was agreed that officers liaise directly with WB about future engagement by FSMC, in place of the Executive Leadership Programme Board.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee noted the presentation.

Action:

LGA officers to liaise with CFO Wayne Bowcock about future FSMC engagement over leadership.

6 LGA Fire Conference 2024 update

The Chair invited Marshall Scott (MS), Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

MS outlined the initial proposals being put forward for sessions at the Conference and said that, following feedback from last year's event, there would be more emphasis on delegate interaction and involvement. Members' comments on the proposals were invited.

Members' comments and questions:

- On the proposed mental health session, it was suggested that sharing of best practice in post-incident scenarios would be helpful.
- Responding to emerging technologies should be a key focus of the conference and highlighting the risks and associated costs. This should include how best to do horizon scanning and scenario planning and where members could be involved.
- It was suggested that AI and the Fire Standards Board should both be plenary sessions.
- An update for members on ESMCP was suggested, either as part of the conference or at the FSMC meeting beforehand.
- It was suggested that the HMICFRS item might be better as a workshop to encourage more open and honest feedback.
- The role of shadow ministers at the conference was discussed and



where they would best fit in.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the report and delegated final decisions on conference sessions to the Lead Members.

Action:

Schedule additional Lead Member meeting before Christmas to finalise conference sessions.

7 Local Government White Paper

The Chair invited Mark Norris (MN), Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report.

MN invited members' comments on proposed fire & rescue related content for the LGA's Local Government White Paper.

Members' comments and questions:

- Local leadership and empowering local leaders was considered a key area for inclusion. In particular, around partnership working and a greater role for political leadership in Local Resilience Forums, especially on prevention. This would enable the whole of an area to work better than the sum of its parts. Concern was expressed that HMICFRS was becoming a regulator and eroding local leadership and discretion.
- It was suggested that the time may now be right to push for broadening the role of the fire service.
- It was suggested that air quality could be an issue for FRA's to input into.

It was agreed that MN amend the wording of the submission to reflect members' views and circulate to Lead Members for final agreement.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee:

- (a) **Noted** the key areas set out in paragraph 5 of interest to the LGA as well as the emerging themes in paragraph 6; and
- (b) Subject to comments made during the discussion, **agreed** on the proposed approaches set out in paragraphs 8 to 13, and that following final sign off by Lead Members, **agreed** that these are then submitted by the Committee as its contribution to the Local Government White Paper.

Action:

MN to amend White Paper submission and clear final wording with Lead Members.

8 Pensions update

The Chair invited members to take the update as read.



Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

9 Workforce update

The Chair invited members to take the update as read.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

10 Building Safety update

The Chair invited members to take the update as read.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

11 National Fire Chiefs Council update

The Chair invited members to take the update as read.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

12 Fire Standards Board update

The Chair invited members to take the update as read.

Members' comments and questions:

- Cllr Hugo, as the Committee's Equalities Advocate, asked whether it could be made more explicit how EDI runs through the standards as a golden thread and if this could be part of the Conference session. Lucy Ellender, Senior Adviser, said that the Board had done a lot of work on this since the HMICFRS Spotlight Report. There had been debate at the FSB on whether to introduce a separate standalone EDI Standard but it had been concluded that EDI should run as a thread through all the standards. It was agreed that there should be a standing item on EDI at future Lead Member meetings and that the Equalities Advocate should attend for this.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

Action:

Equalities Advocate to be invited to future Lead Member meetings.

13 FSMC update

The Chair invited members to take the update as read.

Members' comments and questions:

- It was queried whether the FSMC was still subordinate to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and, if so, whether this was still appropriate or whether it should become a standalone Committee. MN confirmed that this was still the constitutional arrangement and said that it was not currently on the LGA's agenda to change as far as he was aware, but he would take it up with the leadership.
- Cllr Knox gave a brief update on the lessons learned from the recent independent review of Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service.

Decision:

Fire Services Management Committee **noted** the update.

Action:

MN to raise FSMC governance arrangements with LGA leadership.

Action Log

Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
MN to contact Cllr Theobald about RAAC in leisure centre	MN		
Bring a report on the planning process and product safety standards to the next FSMC meeting	LE	11/3/24	Complete
LGA officers to liaise with CFO Wayne Bowcock about future FSMC engagement over leadership	LE	11/3/24	Complete
Schedule additional Lead Member meeting before Christmas to finalise conference sessions.	JB	25/12/23	Complete
Amend White Paper submission and clear final wording with Lead Members	MN	2/1/23	Complete
Invite Cllr Hugo to future Lead Member meetings	JB	13/2/23	Complete

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Cllr Frank Biederman	Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Greg Brackenridge	West Midlands Fire & Rescue Authority
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Carolyn Lambert	East Sussex Fire Authority
Members	Cllr Karen Kilgour	Tyne & Wear Fire & Rescue Authority
	Cllr Nikki Hennessy	Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
	Cllr Jane Hugo	Lancashire Combined Fire Authority
	Cllr Les Byrom CBE	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority



	Cllr Nick Chard Mr Roger Hirst	Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex
	Cllr Mark Healey MBE Cllr Carol Theobald Cllr Ben Nutland Cllr Dr Wendy Maples	Somerset County Council East Sussex Fire Authority Avon Fire & Rescue Authority East Sussex Fire Authority
Apologies	Cllr Roger Price	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority
In Attendance	Cllr Ludwig Ramsey Cllr Rachel Bailey Cllr John Shuttleworth	Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority Cheshire Fire & Rescue Authority Co Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority
	Mark Hardingham Susannah Hancock Jenna Marsh CFO Wayne Bowcock Jeremy Smitham Sian Penny Steven Adams	NFCC NFCC Home Office NFCC (for item 5) BT (for item 4) BT (for item 4) NFCC
LGA Officers	Mark Norris Lucy Ellender Sarah Ward Claire Johnson Marshall Scott Aurora Petrova Jonathan Bryant	Principal Policy Adviser Senior Adviser Principal Adviser (Workforce) Senior Pensions Adviser Policy Adviser NGDP Graduate Member Services Officer

Stronger Local Resilience Forum Pilots

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

The paper outlines details of stronger local resilience forum pilots through the creation of a chief resilience officer. An official from DLUHC will present to the Committee, giving updates on progress and providing members with an opportunity to raise questions about the role of members and governance structures.

LGA Plan Theme: Supporting local people and places

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee support the pilots and suggest ways to address governance or other issues.

Contact details

Contact officer: Marshall Scott

Position: Policy Adviser (Fire)

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Stronger Local Resilience Forum Pilots

Background

1. In December 2022, the [UK Government Resilience Framework \(UKGRF\)](#) was published, following a consultation which [the LGA responded to](#).
2. The framework committed the Government to run a pilot across three key pillars of reform to significantly strengthen Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in England: Leadership, Accountability, and Integration of resilience into the UK's levelling up mission.
3. The pilot involves creating a permanent chief resilience officer role (CRO) for each LRF area, replacing the current model of part time LRF chairs drawn from individual LRF members such as the police/fire services or councils.
4. The CRO would be supported with the resources and mandate to bring partners together to drive and enhance resilience. They would be accountable to executive local democratic leaders, giving leaders a clear role in ensuring effective delivery of resilience activity, which is something the LGA has previously expressed concern around.
5. To strength accountability and assurance across LRFs, the framework sets out an ambition that clear mechanisms and expectations between the CRO and executive local leaders will make LRFs more accountable and provide mechanisms for local communities to hold local leaders to account for driving resilience.
6. The Government will consider the means for stronger assurance of LRFs' collective delivery, including auditable frameworks and building assessment of resilience into the inspection and audit regimes of individual responders.
7. The Government wants the CRO and local elected leaders to be empowered to work across the full range of local policy making and delivery to build resilience into wider policy making.
8. To support this, the Government intends for resilience to be included as a key aspect of devolution deals and will consider making the case for combined authorities and mayoral combined authorities to become category one responders under the Civil Contingencies Act.

Proposal

9. The LGA has previously encouraged its members to consider how the Government's ambitions could work in their areas, through engaging with these pilots.

- 10.22 areas expressed an interest in the pilots and eight were selected: Cumbria; Gloucestershire; Greater London; Greater Manchester; Northumbria; Suffolk; Thames Valley and West Mercia.
11. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) will be addressing the Committee to update on the progress of the pilots and seek LGA support for them. The DLUHC lead, Paul Phipps-Williams, will give a short presentation on the reforms, what this means for local government and the opportunities there are to make resilience a fundamental part of achieving – and protecting – the wider priorities of locally elected leaders across England.
12. This support will be particularly important in areas where the LRF covers a large number of authorities, with potentially complex governance relationships. There will be a need for flexibility in the mechanisms enabling elected leaders to take on their leadership role in resilience, given different local government structures and LRF footprints across the country.
13. The LGA has previously expressed concerns that councils are not seen as equal partners in LRFs and has called for councillors to have a strengthened role. The UKGRF's ambition to take a more preventative approach to resilience and integrate it into other policy making, should mean that fulfilling this ambition for a stronger local government role will be vital to driving the ambition of the framework and thinking beyond a narrow approach to emergency preparedness, response and recovery alone.
14. The aim of the discussion is to establish what the LGA can do to support the pilots and whether there are any concerns about progress to date which DLUHC need to address.
15. Chief Resilience Officers do not as yet have any powers in relation to local authorities; however a key issue in the pilots will be accountability and governance given the involvement of fire authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners and previous sector concerns over the failure of some emergence services to recognise the role of councils adequately.

Implications for Wales

16. The Stronger LRF pilots are not being run in Wales.

Financial Implications

17. None for LGA, as any further work on this area will be met from existing resources.

Equalities implications

18. There are no specific equalities implications arising from the pilots, though as has been seen with Covid some civil emergencies can have greater negative impacts on some people with protected characteristics, such as the elderly.

Next steps

19. Officers will take forward any actions identified by the Committee and will continue to work with DLUHC to identify the key lessons from the pilots.

The Planning Process and Fire

Purpose of Report

For direction.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This report outlines the LGA's research on the potential for fire and rescue services to have greater involvement in the planning process.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee give direction to officers regarding next steps on the issue of fire and rescue service's involvement in planning.

Contact details

Contact officer: Marshall Scott

Position: Policy Adviser (Fire)

Phone no: 07884 312232

Email: marshall.scott@local.gov.uk

The Planning Process and Fire

Background

1. On 6 October 2023, the Fire Services Management Committee considered an item on climate change, reflecting on the 'climate change evidence session' that took place in September 2023.
2. In the climate change evidence session, members discussed the importance of the role of fire and rescue services in planning. There were concerns that the voices of fire and rescue services were not given sufficient prominence within the planning process. Members were keen to further explore this issue.
3. The Committee subsequently agreed that officers should 'engage with the other boards within the LGA, particularly the Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board on issues affecting the fire service, including the fire service's role within planning and the potential fire risk impact from environment policies.

Current position

4. As instructed by members at the previous meeting, officers have met with colleagues from the LGA's Local Infrastructure and Net Zero Board and officers from the NFCC to discuss the current position of fire and rescue services in the planning process. The key issues were outlined as:
 - 4.1. Relationships between FRSs and planning departments
 - 4.1.1. There is an issue regarding the strength of relationships and communication channels between FRSs and planning departments. This difficulty is at least in part caused by a lack of mutual understanding between fire services and local authorities about each other's functions and processes. FRSs seem to have a poor understanding of the planning process and may be unaware of the appropriate time or approach to feed into the planning process. Concerns have also been raised regarding the lack of knowledge that planning departments have about risk, in particular, the risk of fire. Therefore, FRSs may not be consulted for developments with significant fire risks.
 - 4.1.2. Relationships between FRSs and planning departments may be stronger and easier to form within county services where both planning and the FRS are controlled directly by the county council.
 - 4.2. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
 - 4.2.1. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) were introduced under the Planning Act 2008 to streamline the consenting process for

large scale infrastructure projects like power stations, wind farms and solar farms.

4.2.2. FRSs are able feed into the planning process of NSIPs through their involvement in Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). Officers are currently investigating the extent to which FRSs are currently engaged in this process.

4.2.3. The UK's energy infrastructure requires significant changes to allow the UK to meet the Government's net zero goals. We suspect that the input of FRSs in the NSIP planning process will be increasingly important as this work develops in the coming years.

4.3. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

4.3.1. There is a challenge around the extent to which FRSs should be consulted during the planning stage of BESS installation. As these systems contain large amounts of lithium ion, they can present a significant fire safety risk. The risk posed by BESS heavily depends on size and location.

4.3.2. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) [released guidance on the planning process for the development of BESS](#). The guidance encourages applicants to 'engage with the relevant local fire and rescue service before submitting an application to the local planning authority' to ensure that emergency services access can be considered before an application is made. The NFCC have also [written guidance on BESS](#) for planning applicants.

4.3.3. The NFCC would like better consultation of FRSs in the planning process, specifically with regards to water supply and access as these factors have a significant impact on the service's ability to contain a potential fire.

4.3.4. The Government's guidance on BESS was welcomed by the NFCC but they are keen for the Government to release more guidance of this sort on similar issues.

4.4. Capacity issues

4.4.1. With FRSs being stretched in terms of budget, time, resource, and personnel, there are concerns regarding the amount of capacity that services would be able to devote to planning consultations.

4.4.2. There is a desire in the sector to have more involvement in planning but also a recognition that FRSs would not have sufficient resource to be consulted on every planning application.

4.4.3. If FRSs were to become statutory consultees, there may be particular issues with regional capacity. For example, if all FRSs were consulted on new developments that involved solar panels or BESS, this would put a greater strain on services with a greater number of these developments, such as those in rural areas. These regions often have smaller FRSs in comparison to metropolitan services. Therefore, there is a concern that the largest burden may be carried by services with the least resources.

4.4.4. The NFCC have emphasised the need to be strategic when thinking about how and where FRSs are involved in the planning process.

Opportunities for FRSs in Planning

5. Within the planning system, there are a number of statutory consultees who must be consulted in the planning process under certain circumstances. For example, the [Environment Agency must be consulted](#) on several types of planning application, including when a development is located within Coastal Change Management Areas or if the development may cause a flood risk.
6. There is an opportunity for LGA officers to open discussions with civil servants in DLUHC about the potential role of FRSs in the planning process. However, given the current work the Department is conducting on reform of the planning system, it is unlikely that a request for FRSs to become statutory consultees would be successful at this time.
7. In the spring/summer of this year, there will be a review of the National Planning Policy Framework. Currently, there is no mention of wildfire risk in the framework (through climate change is included) and therefore planning departments are not obliged to consider the risk of wildfire when awarding planning permission. This is a particular concern where rural and urban areas meet. When the review opens a consultation, there will be an opportunity for the LGA to give its views on what should be included.
8. Other consultations on planning policy will be issued later this year. These also represent opportunities for FSMC to feed in views on potential reforms in this area.

Implications for Wales

9. Fire and rescue related policy is a devolved matter and much of the Committee's work will focus on changes for FRAs in England, with the Welsh Local Government Association leading on lobbying for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities in Cardiff.

Financial Implications

10. The involvement of Fire and Rescue Services in the planning process may have financial implications, depending on the extent to which they are consulted. Officers will investigate how statutory consultees are currently remunerated for their work in the planning process.

Equalities implications

11. None

Next steps

12. Members to give direction on the extent to which they would like fire and rescue services to be involved in the planning process.
13. Members to give direction on which areas require further research and investigation.
14. Officers to continue to liaise with planning advisers within the LGA to better establish the current level of consultation sought from FRSs by planning departments for various types of development.
15. Officers to continue conversations with the NFCC to determine their views on the level of FRS capacity needed to be involved in various types of planning consultations.

Fit for the Future Update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

The report outlines the need for a review of 'Fit for the Future'.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee agree the next steps for the review of 'Fit for the Future'.

Contact details

Contact officer: Lucy Ellender

Position: Senior Adviser

Phone no: 07917 833058

Email: lucy.ellender@local.gov.uk

Fit for the Future Update

Background

1. Fit for the Future is a joint document between the LGA, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and National Employers which outlines our collective ambitions for the future role and capabilities of the fire and rescue service. It has been used across the three partners to support improvements across Fire and Rescue Services as well as helping to coordinate our engagement and lobbying in these areas. It was last updated in June 2022, after the original version was published in 2019. It is attached at **Appendix A**.
2. The document sets out twelve areas for improvement under three themes:
 - 2.1. Service Delivery – The role of the fire and rescue service
 - 2.2. Leadership, People and Culture
 - 2.3. National Infrastructure and Support
3. The three partners have now agreed that we should undertake a light touch review of the document to ensure that it takes account of recent developments and remains fit for purpose.

Updating the document

4. In January Cllr Biederman representing the LGA, Cllr Chard representing the National Employers (England) and Mark Hardingham, Phil Garrigan and Susannah Hancock from the NFCC held a meeting to discuss Fit for the Future. It was agreed that the document remained useful in setting out our shared ambitions but that it would be helpful to ensure that it reflected recent developments in the sector, including those around culture and inclusion such as HMICFRS's spotlight report on values and culture. As such it was agreed that a light touch review would be undertaken to ensure that the document reflected these changes, and could be used to articulate our ambitions to any future government.
5. It was agreed at the meeting that officers will undertake an initial review of the document with the aim of bringing back a reviewed document to the FSMC, National Employers (England) and the NFCC's Chiefs Council in the Summer, with the revised document in place by the Autumn.

Implications for Wales

6. Fit for the Future is focussed on England only.

Financial Implications

7. Fit for the Future discusses the importance of the service having access to adequate resources and additional funding to enable the sector to implement the ambitions outlined in the document. We expect this will continue to be a key aspect of the document going forwards.

Equalities implications

8. There are a number of Improvement Objectives aimed at improving equality, diversity and inclusion within the sector. We wish to ensure that recent work around culture and inclusion is fully reflected within the document.

Next steps

9. Members to review and approve the amended document after at a future FSMC meeting.

FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES
National Employers
(England)



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Local 
Government
Association

Fit for the Future

Revised June 2022

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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 (NJC), 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.

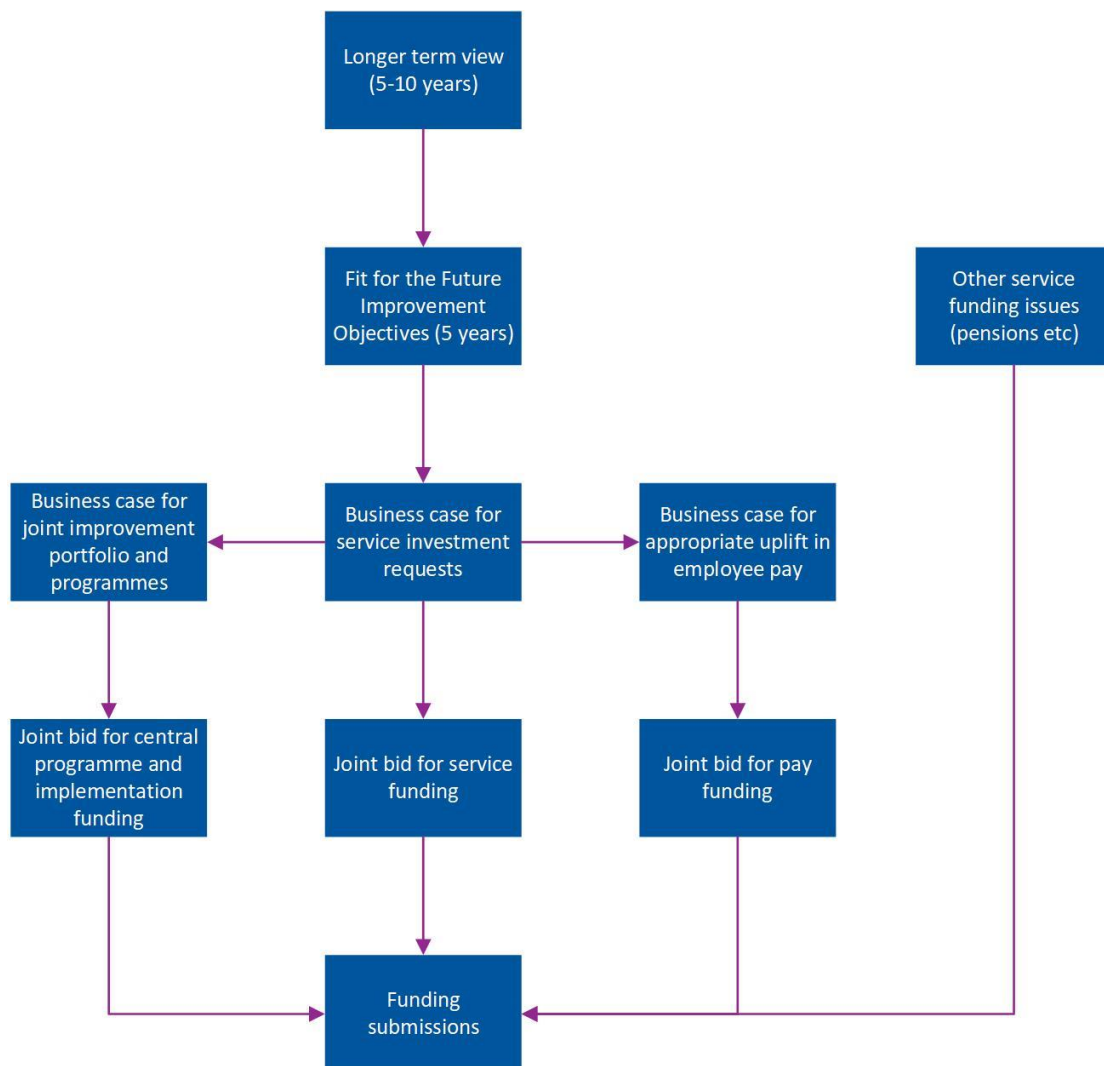
Fit for the Future is a system of evidence-based improvements, not a rigid set of static objectives that is inflexible and unresponsive. The partners will need to continually review new evidence and make changes where appropriate. Joint arrangements to do this will be put in place.

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 bombing 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.

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.

- 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.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally we will:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

- 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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?

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.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

FRAs/FRSs will:

- Have proactive senior leadership.
- Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

FRAs/FRSs will:	Centrally, we will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Achieve the Fire Standard(s) set in this area using the underpinning national guidance and tools.	<p>development of the leaders of the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 debriefs 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Document is Restricted

Pensions update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

To update the FSMC on matters in relation to fire service pensions.

LGA Plan Theme: Support to the LG Workforce

Recommendation

That the Fire Services Management Committee note the pensions update.

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Pensions Update

Background

1. This report updates the Fire Services Management Committee on pension matters and briefly describes the main pension issues at present.

Legal cases related to pension matters

2. Members are aware of the range of legal cases brought against FRAs (supported by the FBU) that fall broadly under the category of the McCloud/Sargeant litigation. As they were named as respondents in the cases, Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) had to submit defences. The defences continue to be managed collectively on behalf of the FRAs by the LGA under the auspices of the National Employers and decisions have been taken by a central Steering Group which is comprised of a number of legal and HR advisers from varying types of fire and rescue services across the UK, the national employers' Advisory Forum legal adviser, national employers' secretariat, and from the LGA its Corporate Legal Adviser and a Senior Employment Law Adviser.
3. The details of each category have been covered in previous reports. Therefore, each category is covered in short below, together with the current positions:
4. McCloud/Sargeant – These are the original claims issued in 2015 by the firefighters in England and Wales originally with the support of the FBU and represented by Ivan Walker of Walkers Solicitors. Ivan Walker is ceasing to act for the claimants, and they are in the process of transferring all the claims to Thompsons to take forward.
 - 4.1. Following the Court of Appeal's decision that there had been unlawful age discrimination in relation to the transitional arrangements for the 2015 FPS, the test cases were listed for a remedy hearing on 14 – 28 October 2022, to decide on the appropriate level of compensation for non-financial loss (injury to feelings).
 - 4.2. Following discussions with the Government Legal Department (GLD), we were notified that an offer had been agreed in principle in relation to these claims.
 - 4.3. It was agreed at the Steering Committee meeting on 12 October 2022 that the FRAs would support the application made by the Government and FBU for the remedy hearing listed for 14 – 28 October 2022 to be vacated, to allow the parties to continue to negotiate the terms of the settlement of these claims.

- 4.4. An application for postponement was therefore made and we received confirmation from the Employment Tribunal that the application was successful. This confirmed that the remedies hearing was postponed, and the claims stayed until 28 April 2023.
 - 4.5. Since that time there have been further stays applied for and granted, most recently until **8 April 2024**. This latest stay has been granted on the primary bases to allow the negotiations of the terms of the COT3 to progress.
 - 4.6. Our legal advisors continue to negotiate the terms of the COT and now approaching the latter stages of this negotiation. Once our legal team are content with the final draft it will then be shared with the Steering Committee for approval. We hope to conclude this process by **March 2024**.
5. Separate to the compensation for injury to feelings, the claimants also have a right to compensation for financial losses caused by the age discrimination in relation to the transitional arrangements for the 2015 FPS. They cover: 'consequential' financial losses (such as IFA fees, mortgage related losses, medical expenses, loss because of moving house etc.); and loss of pension benefits (including in relation to contribution holidays and non-joiners).
 - 5.1. Consequential losses - it was agreed between the parties in February 2022 that these losses are *in principle* claimable and should be dealt with (again via the test cases) at a remedy hearing, but that this was to be separate to the injury to feelings remedy hearing which had been listed for October 2022 (and which was vacated as above). Originally, the parties had agreed that the position was that directions for dealing with these losses would need to be agreed between the parties/issued by the Tribunal for them to progress to a remedy hearing. In more recent communications with Thompsons and GLD it seems that these losses have become subsumed in general financial loss of pension benefits and directions have not been progressed.
 - 5.2. Loss of pension benefits – the position taken by the parties is that these are postponed pending the introduction of legislation/regulations to remedy the discrimination with parties being able to apply to the Tribunal at any time. Thompsons, as well as GLD, remain of that view in that the new legislation should deal with these losses and so should dispose of most of the claims. Any losses that are not dealt with (and Thompsons have indicated they think these would be limited) would be raised specifically with the parties. It may be that Thompsons have in mind here the consequential losses referred to above.
6. Slater and Gordon claims - These claims are based on the same premise of age discrimination in relation to the transitional arrangements for the 2015 FPS but were issued after the Court of Appeal found those arrangements to be

discriminatory. There is a minimum of around 200 claimants within multiple claims in different Tribunals across England, Wales, and Scotland.

- 6.1. The claims are brought by Slater & Gordon with, we understand, the support of the FOA.
 - 6.2. It is not clear whether all the claims filed by Slater & Gordon on behalf of the claimants have been served on the relevant FRAs at this stage – it is possible that some have been held at the respective Tribunals whilst stays are in place.
 - 6.3. So far, the Tribunals in Scotland, England and Wales have been prepared to stay all the claims pending the outcome of the Sargeant claims – albeit our legal advisors are having to make multiple applications for such stays.
 - 6.4. Again, given the claims have all been stayed from the outset, no directions have been made in relation to different types of loss.
 - 6.5. We are aware that no suggestion of settlement has been made in respect of these claims to date.
7. New wave claims (also known as late claims) - We understand that there are approximately 4,200 of these claims by firefighters against certain FRAs in England and Wales, supported by the FBU and with representation from Walkers, again alleging age discrimination arising from the same transitional protections on the introduction of the 2015 FPS as the Sargeant claims.
 - 7.1. We understand from Walkers that the FBU ran a second exercise in 2020 to allow members who did not complete the questionnaire in 2015 a second opportunity to file a claim.
 - 7.2. There are multiple stays in place in respect of these, awaiting the outcome of the Sargeant claims, again, albeit we are having to make multiple applications for such stays.
8. Reverse claims - These are separate Employment Tribunal claims which have been brought by firefighters against certain FRAs in England, supported by the FBU and with representation from Walkers initially and now (we assume, although it has not been confirmed) Thompsons, again alleging age discrimination arising from the transitional protections on the introduction of the 2015 FPS. However, these claims are brought by firefighters who belonged to the 2006 Scheme, (unlike the claimants in the main FBU claims who are/were members of the 1992 Scheme).
 - 8.1. The allegation in these claims is that the effect of the transitional protections was to prevent the claimants, (who are older members of the 2006 Scheme), transferring to what they are alleging is the more favourable 2015 FPS and that this was discriminatory of grounds of age.

- 8.2. The claims have all been brought in the Central London ET and were stayed until the outcome of the FRAs' EAT appeal, but the claimants have not pursued the claims since then and the Tribunal has not chased the parties for an update.
 - 8.3. In terms of settlement, the last update was provided by GLD, confirming on 24 November 2022 that they have no instructions in relation to the reverse discrimination claims. We are therefore not aware of any discussions regarding settlement of these claims.
 - 8.4. There has been no recent change or update in relation to these claims.
9. Matthews & others v Kent & Medway Towns Fire Authority & others:
- 9.1. Relates to application of the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 to retained duty system employees. Those Regulations were brought into force to implement the EU Part-time Workers Directive. Following a protracted legal process up to and including the House of Lords judgment, settlement agreements were reached in respect of terms and conditions in 2015 with both the RFU (now FRSA) and the FBU regarding the many thousands of Employment Tribunal cases. The LGA acted for FRAs through the auspices of the National Employers.
 - 9.2. Defence of the pensions aspect of the case was led by government. The House of Lords judgment allowed those who were serving during the period 1 July 2000 (the date the Regulations came into force) to the date on which they elected to join the 2006 Scheme, to have special provisions which generally reflect the rules of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 ("FPS 1992"). A time-limited options exercise took place between 2014 and 2015 to allow eligible individuals to join the FPS. While the benefits awarded to special members largely mirrored the benefits under the FPS 1992, the FPS 2006 was amended as the FPS 1992 was closed.
 - 9.3. More recently, work has again had to take place on the pension's aspect of this case. This is because of a European Court of Justice judgment involving part-time judges ([O'Brien](#)), which in effect held that remedy could extend back before the Part-time Worker Regulations were implemented in July 2000. This also impacts on the fire service as the impact of the judgment and its interpretation of part-time workers' rights applies across all employers.
 - 9.4. Current position - On 9 March 2022, after an extended period of negotiations, a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) was agreed between the government, the Fire Brigades Union, the Fire & Rescue Services Association, and FRA employers.
 - 9.5. It was confirmed that remedy for retained firefighters affected by the O'Brien judgment will be provided by way of a second options exercise allowing in-scope individuals the opportunity to purchase pension entitlement as a special member of the FPS 2006. Under the terms of the MoU it was agreed

that the Employment Tribunal proceedings should be stayed for 18 months to enable that options exercise to progress.

- 9.6. A further issue arose during negotiation of the MoU around an inability to aggregate periods of pensionable service in the FPS as a retained firefighter with periods of service as a wholetime firefighter (“aggregation”). This has been addressed by affected retained firefighters (or their representatives) having the ability to give written notification to the GLD (on behalf of the Home Office) and FRAs prior to the commencement of the second options exercise with a view to discussions for six months from the MoU date on a resolution of those claims. If agreed resolution of the aggregation issues was not reached by then it has been agreed that those Claimants can ask for the stay on their tribunal claims to be lifted so the tribunal can determine outstanding issues in relation to them. As resolution was not reached within this time, a number of claims were submitted, and we proposed an approach to the collective defence of those claims.
 - 9.7. As all FRAs agreed that they were content with the approach, a joint defence of the claims commenced, continuing to use DAC Beachcroft to represent FRAs on a cost sharing basis. A significant number of individual, and later group, claims were responded to on this basis while DAC Beachcroft sought to secure a preliminary hearing to discuss the issues raised. DAC Beachcroft also sought for the requirement to file all other responses to be paused in the interim.
 - 9.8. The Employment Tribunal granted this application in respect of claims in England and Wales, and the requirement to file responses had been stayed until at least 20 April 2023, the date a preliminary hearing was listed for. A further request has been submitted and granted for a stay to remain in place until January 2025. A similar request has been submitted in Scotland; we are yet to receive a response on this.
10. Legal costs in relation to the above cases are currently shared between FRAs. Since the outset, the position of FRAs that any costs arising from these cases should be met by governments has been made clear. Work continues with legal representatives on appropriate approaches to reinforce that position, and a formal letter was sent to UK governments on behalf of FRAs. Discussions are ongoing between the Home Office and LGA officers as representatives of the FRAs to discuss the costs issues.

Matthews and the second options exercise

11. The LGA continues to assist FRAs with their obligations in respect of the Matthews remedy.
12. Regular engagement sessions continue to take place with FRAs to ensure that they are aware of their role and responsibilities.

Firefighters' Pension Schemes' (Remediable Service) Regulations 2023

13. The LGA continues to assist FRAs with their obligations in respect of the remediable service regulations.
14. Regular engagement sessions continue to take place with FRAs to ensure that they are aware of their role and responsibilities.

Scheme valuation results (2020)

15. The [2020 scheme valuation results](#) were formally published on 21 December 2023.
16. The new employer contribution rate which is effective from 1 April 2024 is confirmed to be 37.6% (allowing for 1) ill-health retirement charges, which are expected to equate to 0.8% of pensionable pay, and 2) the expected Home Office payment into the scheme in respect of tax relief for members purchasing benefits during the Matthews second option exercise, estimated to equate to 0.3% of pensionable pay). This is an overall increase of 5.4% which in monetary terms equates to approx. £73m.
17. The results set the employer contribution rate for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.
18. There was no requirement for the Home Secretary to consult on changes to the scheme as although the core cost cap cost of the scheme lies outside the 3% cost cap corridor, when the wider economic situation is taken into account through the economic cost cap cost of the scheme, the cost cap corridor is not similarly breached.
19. On 6 February 2024 the Home Office confirmed that they had successfully negotiated a further pension grant of £85.3m from HM Treasury to mitigate the impact of increased employer pension contributions from 2024/25.
20. This new grant will be distributed using the same methodology as the original pensions grant (an average of four years employer pensions contributions) but with updated data so it included 2023/24 and 2024/25 forecasts as well as 2021/22 and 2022/23 actuals.
21. The pension grant is only confirmed for one year, so the Home Office will need to make the case for this funding to continue into the next Spending Review (SR).

Administration grant

22. In addition to the funding provided for the increase in employer pension contributions, a one-off top-up payment of £6m will be provided to FRAs for increased administration costs due to the Sargeant and Matthews remedies.
23. This additional funding brings the total administration grant up to £12m, with £3m provided in 2020/21 and 2021/22.
24. The NFCC Finance Committee have been asked to confirm whether this monies adequately covers the additional costs arising due to the administration of the remedies. If evidence shows that there is a funding gap a business case will be presented to the Home Office to cover any shortfall.

Financial Implications

25. There will be financial implications arising from the legal remedies in Sargeant and Matthews in the following areas: administration, software, legal, and operational costs. Representations will continue to be made to the Government to seek to recover all costs arising as a direct result of the remedies.

Equalities implications

26. Equalities issues are central to the McCloud/Sargeant litigation and will also be considered in wider workforce issues.

Next steps

27. The pension issues will continue to be progressed as set out above.

Workforce update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

To update the Fire Services Management Committee on workforce matters in relation to industrial relations and more widely.

LGA Plan Theme: Support to the LG Workforce

Recommendation

That the Fire Services Management Committee note the issues set out in the paper.

Contact details

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Workforce Update

1. This report updates the Fire Services Management Committee on current workforce and industrial relations matters within Fire and Rescue Services, and provides some brief updates on wider industrial relations issues within the local government workforce.

NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book)

2. As part of the NJC pay agreement reached in 2023, a commitment was given to explore the more complex issues of the employees' side pay claim through a series of joint working groups:

Retained Duty System firefighters

3. The offer letter from the National Employers said: "Firefighters employed on the retained duty system are an important part of the workforce. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working group to include review of the retained duty system pay and rewards package. Membership of the group and a schedule of dates should be agreed as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working group concluding its work within 8 months."
4. The joint working group has met regularly and debated a wide range of subject areas, with the summation of that work captured in a report which was recently shared at the February NJC. It will be up to each side of the NJC to now decide how to take that work forward.

Firefighters (Control)

5. The offer letter from the National Employers said: "The employers' side of the NJC recognises the important contribution of emergency fire and rescue control employees. To inform NJC consideration on the matter of the pay differential it is proposed that a joint job evaluation process be undertaken as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded."
6. The Joint Secretaries are currently progressing this issue, with the intention that this work will be concluded before the end of June.

Pay progression:

7. The offer letter from the National Employers said: "The employers' side of the NJC is content to continue discussions around pay structure and progression. It is proposed that both parties commit to a joint working party commencing as soon as possible once the current pay award negotiations are concluded with the intention of the joint working party concluding its work within 8 months."
And: "The employers' side notes the issues raised in the claim and is open to exploring further. Given the overlap with the pay progression point, it is

proposed that consideration be incorporated into that proposed working party.”

8. The joint working group has met regularly and debated a wide range of subject areas, with the summation of that work captured in a report which was recently shared at the February NJC. It will be up to each side of the NJC to now decide how to take that work forward.

New roles

9. The 2023 pay agreement also said: “The employers’ side of the NJC also remains committed to developing the work of the fire and rescue service and to do so by agreement. It also recognises the need for this to be supported by appropriate investment as well as employee reward.” This issue has been a theme throughout the working group and working party discussions.

Pay negotiations 2024

10. There has been an exchange of correspondence between employee and employer sides of the NJC to signal the intention to begin formal negotiations. Both sides are committed to reaching an agreement in advance of the pay review date of 1 July. Reflecting on the issues discussed in the joint working groups and more widely at the NJC, the National Employers will be consulting shortly to understand priorities and views across FRAs/FRSs in relation to what shape any offer from the National Employers should take.

Culture in the Fire and Rescue Service

11. The Inclusive Fire Service Group has reviewed and updated the Improvement Strategies. Along with the statement of intent issued in 2023, and an increased engagement more widely this group (an NJC owned body, with representation from all trade unions across Fire and Rescue Services in the Grey Book space, the NFCC, as well as the National Employers) remains committed to working together to ensure genuine progress is made in improving culture across FRAs/FRSs. Meeting dates have been set for the year ahead.

NJC Employers self-led review

12. Following the response to the White Paper, the National Employers intend to engage with stakeholders and partners across the sector in order to lead a review the NJC. Noting various external and internal commentaries, the national employers intend this review to be based around the following themes:
13. Consultation and Input – how does engagement currently operate, are NJC decision makers hearing all the views they need, are there improved mechanisms that can improve the collection of views and facilitate their

conclusions.

14. Transparency – how are these considerations captured, explained and justified, is there more that should be done in this space. How does it compare to other models of pay decision making?
15. Collective Bargaining models – can we learn from other models of national or local bargaining? What are the costs and experiences and what can we learn from alternative models of industrial relations?
16. A key thread running through the review should also seek to improve the shared understanding of the purpose, approach and accountability of the NJC. The intention is to conclude this work during the summer period of this year.

“Gold Book” pay agreement 2024

17. The National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services agreed an increase on basic pay of 3.0 per cent with effect from 1 January 2024.

NJC for Local Government Services

18. The [2024 pay claim for council chief executives](#) has been received and will be discussed at next month’s [regional pay briefings](#). Separate pay claims have not yet been received from the Staff Sides representing NJC local government services (‘Green Book’), JNC Craftworkers (‘Red Book’) and JNC Chief Officers although they are expected to arrive imminently.

Teachers Pay: STRB process 2024

19. The [remit for the 2024 School Teachers' Review Body](#) was published in December. In January, over 400 members participated in a webinar where Local Authorities were invited to contribute to our biannual teachers' pay and conditions survey to inform the written evidence submitted to the STRB by national employers ([NEOST](#)). The STRB oral evidence session for NEOST has been scheduled for 9 April.

Employment Law Updates

20. [Advisory bulletin 720](#) provides an overview of the latest employment law issues including Trade union act 2016 check-off guidance (as flagged at the last FSMC workforce report), plus strikes and minimum service levels: Code of practice and guidance and other issues.

Financial Implications

21. Any cost implications will also need to be included in the work of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services' joint working groups.

Equalities implications

22. Equalities issues are taken into account in all workforce issues.

Next steps

23. Workforce issues will continue to be progressed as set out above.

Building Safety update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

This report aims to update members on the LGA's building safety-related work since the last FSMC meeting.

LGA Plan Theme: **Championing climate change and local environments**

Recommendation

That the Committee note and comment on the LGA's building safety related work.

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Building Safety update

Background

1. Since FSMC's last meeting, the LGA has continued to support action associated with the remediation of high-rise residential with dangerous cladding systems and has been engaged in the implementation of the new building safety regime created by the Fire Safety and Building Safety Acts.

Update

Overall Remediation

2. On November 16, The Minister of State, Lee Rowley MP published a [written ministerial statement](#) on the progress of remediation.
3. [The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' \(DLUHC\) Building Safety Programme Monthly Data Release](#) provides data related to its Building Safety Programme. The October data release includes new additional data on the overall progress made so far on ACM remediation, Building Safety Fund (BSF), Cladding Safety Scheme (CCS), Developer remediation, and Social Housing Sector, and Enforcement.
4. The January 2024 release gives the following relevant figures:
 - 4.1. There are 3,839 residential buildings 11 metres and over in height identified with unsafe cladding whose remediation progression is being reported on in the release.
 - 4.2. Overall, 1,608 buildings (42%) have either started or completed remediation works.
 - 4.3. A breakdown can be seen below of these:
 - 4.3.1. 797 buildings (21%) have completed remediation, including those awaiting building control sign off
 - 4.3.2. 811 building (21%) have started remediation
 - 4.3.3. 2,231 buildings (58%) have not started remediation
5. It should be noted that the total number of buildings set out above does not sum to the total number of buildings reported in the sections below which are also taken from the data release due to crossover between schemes.

ACM Cladding Remediation

6. The January 2024 release gives the following relevant figures:

- 6.1. of the 496 high-rise (18 metres and over in height) residential and publicly owned buildings with ACM cladding systems unlikely to meet Building Regulations, 476 (96%) have either started or completed remediation works.
- 6.2. of these, 425 buildings (86%) have completed ACM remediation, including those awaiting building control sign-off.
- 6.3. there are 20 buildings yet to start ACM remediation (4% of all buildings). Two buildings are vacant and so do not pose a risk to resident safety, 14 buildings have forecast start dates and three without a start forecast have had local authority enforcement action taken against them.

Cladding Safety Scheme (CCS)

- 7. As of the end of December 2023, 534 buildings 11 metres and over in height have live applications with the Cladding Safety Scheme, and a further 104 buildings have already been assessed as eligible. There are an additional 900 buildings in the pipeline that are being investigated.

Developer Remediation

- 8. 1,345 buildings have been identified with life-critical fire safety risks that will be remediated by developers. Of these 262 are reported to have completed remediation, 473 are reported to have started remediation, and 506 have plans in place for remediation but work has not yet started.

Large Panel System (LPS) Buildings

- 9. The LGA has commissioned six case studies on management strategies for LPS Buildings. These have now been completed and are now on the LGA's website.
- 10. On November 14, Bristol City Council made the decision to decant the LPS tower block Barton House and evacuate 400 residents. There was concern that the tower block could be damaged in the event of a fire, explosion or large impact which posed a risk to the structure of the building as it was thought some structural ties connecting the floors and walls could potentially be missing, and the concrete cover protecting the building's metal reinforcements may have been too thin. Subsequent investigation has revealed the structural ties were in place and in good order, and that the concrete's thickness was generally found to be good. However work is being undertaken to ensure the building is structurally sound and fire safe.

Other construction methods

- 11. Media reports suggested a school closure in North Tyneside was closed due to links with high alumina concrete (HAC) or reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). The council and HSE have been investigating.

Building Safety Regulator

12. The LGA continues to pay a role as a member of the Joint Regulatory Group (JRG), a HSE-led body as a precursor to the launch of the regulator in April 2024.
13. A model has been established to determine what buildings will be assed in any given year over the first five-year period. This has been a complex task as the model needed to take into account resources, recruitment, height and number of residential dwellings.
14. It has been determined all buildings over 50m tall with more than 11 residential units will be included for assessment in year one.
15. In addition, some large panel system buildings constructed between 1956-1973 with gas supplies and reinforcement works cannot be confirmed alongside 267 ACM buildings will also be included in year one.

Implications for Wales

16. The Fire Safety Act came into force in Wales in [October 2021](#). The new regulations passed under the FSO only apply in England. Building regulations and fire and rescue services are devolved responsibilities of the Welsh Assembly.

Financial Implications

17. Although the LGA has set up the Joint Inspection Team, the cost of doing so is being met by DLUHC. The Joint Inspection Team has secured funding for the next two years which will see it expand significantly.

Equalities implications

18. The group of people affected by building safety issues will be broad and include a wide variety of potential equalities issues, with social landlords for example having responsibilities to consider the need for personal emergency evacuation plans for people who are unable to self-evacuate from high-rise residential buildings.

Next steps

19. Officers are to continue to support the sector's work to keep residents safe and reform the building safety system, as directed by members.



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Fire Services Management Committee

Date:	11 March 2024
Title:	NFCC Chair's Update
Presented by:	Mark Hardingham, NFCC Chair
Contact:	chair@nationalfirechiefs.org.uk

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on key work within the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

2. Protection Update

Building Safety Regulator (BSR)

- 2.1 The new BSR reached a significant milestone on 1 October 2023, as the design and building of new and refurbished high-rise residential buildings are now under the effect of the new regime. The uptake of the new process has been slow, with only a few projects having been passed to FRSs for assistance at the time of writing. A significant increase in workload is expected from May 2024 when work will start on assessing current occupied high-rise residential buildings under the new regime. NFCC's Protection Reform Unit (PRU) has assisted FRSs in readying themselves to support multi-disciplinary teams under the new regulator. The PRU continues to work closely with partner agencies on multiple workstreams in relation to the delivery of the overall project.

Fire Protection Board

- 2.2 NFCC's Enforcement Review was discussed at December's board meeting. We are working with the Home Office on the direction and focus whilst simultaneously working on an audit review and the potential for a more consistent and joined-up approach to guidance. The Board also discussed work on emerging hazards, which involves a multi-stakeholder group that will explore new risks in the built environment and what mitigation and gaps there are at present.

Legislation and guidance update

- 2.3 Following on from the announcement by Michael Gove in the summer of 2023, NFCC this month released an Opinion Paper on the Provision of Multiple Routes for Evacuation of Residential Buildings to try and counter uncertainty as to what a second staircase should look like in a building. NFCC's opinion centres around three objectives:
- Stairways are independent of each other and therefore a single fire cannot impact multiple escape routes.
 - Safe egress is provided for all building users, including those who would be unable to or would find it difficult to descend stairs.
 - Suitable resilience and flexibility are provided for firefighting. This should include appropriate access and facilities, with sufficient resilience and redundancy in the design.
- 2.4 Further to the publication of the paper, a written ministerial statement was published on 19 February 2024 which outlines "the need for a second staircase in new multi-occupancy residential buildings that have a top occupied storey above 18 metres," though it noted "that evacuation lifts will not be called for as a matter of course." In light of the announcement, NFCC will review the Opinion Paper and the Single Staircase Position statement to understand the need for further actions to represent the needs of residents in newly built high-rise buildings, particularly those who cannot use stairs to evacuate buildings.
- 2.5 The PRU continues to assist the Home Office with the technical guidance programme that involves updating all the guidance on the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order. Current guidance under review includes sleeping accommodation, animal premises, an overarching fire risk assessment document, stables, and purpose-built blocks of flats.

Protection Uplift Fund

- 2.6 The PRU and NFCC's Data and Governance teams continue to support FRSs to ensure that this funding is being used effectively and efficiently.

General update

- 2.7 The PRU continue to sit on many British Standards Institute committees, boards, and working groups to assist in improving both public and firefighter safety. The PRU continues to support FRSs around complex enforcement and fire engineering issues via a peer review process. The PRU continues to support DLUHC and the Home Office with the introduction of the Major Decant Protocol for use by local authorities and partners when evacuation of residential premises is being considered.

3. Prevention Hub Update

- 3.1 The Prevention Committee met in January 2024 and was chaired by the new Prevention Committee Chair. NFCC Prevention webpages have been updated to make guidance and tools more accessible to FRSs.

Safeguarding

- 3.2 NFCC and DBS hosted joint webinars in July-December 2023 to support FRSs on what legislative change means, how to request the application of DBS checks within fire and rescue authorities, as well as the appropriate levels of DBS checks that FRSs can request for employees and volunteers.
- 3.3 After the success of these webinars, NFCC's Safeguarding Board subsequently agreed that additional webinars should be made available to strategic leads to understand both the legal and moral duties pertaining to legislative change. The three strategic webinars were made available to individuals who hold corporate risk and responsibility within their FRS to learn more about the DBS, how the legislation works and the legal position concerning appropriate levels of DBS checks and the DBS Barring List.
- 3.4 The team have supported the Fire Standards Board to review any amendments to the Safeguarding Fire Standard. The Safeguarding Practitioners Group and regional groups continue to meet online with a focus on safer recruitment training.

Serious Violence Duty

- 3.5 The FRS Serious Violence Duty guidance is being promoted to FRSs, with workshops being planned for FRSs and the Home Office in September 2024.

Children and young people (CYP)

- 3.6 The CYP Executive Board continues to meet quarterly. The CYP team are currently producing an infographic to highlight the key outcomes of the NFCC CYP survey which was completed by 81% of FRSs.
- 3.7 The Fire Safety Interventions Practitioners Foundation training course has been delivered and the monthly practitioner's meetings continue to be delivered virtually. The focus for Princes Trust and NFCC has been supporting areas around Safeguarding, Information Sharing Agreements, and support to those delivering the training.
- 3.8 We have supported 91 Fire Cadets to attend the Firefighter Memorial Service, United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO) events, and the National Remembrance Parade.
- 3.9 The establishment of a national voice for Fire Cadets is progressing well. There are 17 FRSs signed up to be a part of the National Cadet Voice and they have identified Cadet Champions to help develop the initial structure and key points of contact for their service. Three meetings have been held so far with a launch event being planned.

- 3.10 As part of the Early Intervention workstream, Tyne & Wear FRS have secured approximately £220k via the Home Office Safer Streets funding which aims to tackle violence against women and girls in the wake of Sarah Everard's murder.

Home fire safety

- 3.11 The Home Fire Safety Competency Framework has been approved by the Prevention Committee and will be launched with a new e-learning package which is being developed in partnership with FRSs and NFCC's Learning Team.
- 3.12 A Home Fire Safety Evaluation Framework and survey tool have been completed and are awaiting further approvals in the post-service pilot phase.
- 3.13 The online home fire safety check tool has been adopted by 95% of FRSs and is now available via the Google app store.

Water safety

- 3.14 NFCC launched a new video in January 2024 in collaboration with the Coastguard and RNLI. It features the story of Gareth Jones who lost his life in rough sea in January 2021 off the coast of Hove after trying to rescue his dog. The #Be Water Aware Campaign is planned for the week beginning 22 April 2024.

Road safety

- 3.15 The new Road Safety Board and Road Safety Practitioners Group have now met following recent survey outputs from FRSs and are working to define priorities and create working groups.

4. Operational Response and Fire Control Hub Update

Emerging technologies

- 4.1 Emerging technologies create challenges across prevention, protection, and operational response. The NFCC lead for emerging technologies is drafting an action plan to deliver a suite of policy and guidance products including an NFCC Energy Strategy. Some recent work includes:

- Supporting Electrical Safety First in attending an All-Party Parliamentary Group event on electrical safety.
- A review of current Grid-Scale Battery Energy Storage Guidance for FRSs.
- Supporting the Home Office and Department for Transport to produce and publish [public safety information](#).
- Working with the US Fire Administration and US Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to share information and learning (on workstreams such as contaminants and wildfires) between countries. This forms part of the Home Office's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US Government.
- A survey on the position of lithium battery incidents in 2023/24 recently closed. NFCC is now analysing the results.

- Support to the Home Office at the Cross-Government Portable Light Electric Vehicle Working Group.
- Provision of online continuous professional development (CPD) events to FRSs.

Contaminants

- 4.2 The NFCC Contaminants Group lead officer is working to agree on the additional content required to finalise the firefighting guidance foundation material before publication.

Wildfires

- 4.3 We have completed an analysis of the Wildfire Survey and Debrief Report for the 2022 Wildfire Season Executive Summary and created a gap analysis and action tracker, which was shared with wildfire lead officers and a group of subject matter experts to commence key priorities for Q4 2023/24, which include a suite of online training packages.
- 4.4 Ongoing support for the wildfire subject matter experts' group is being provided to maintain traction with the delivery of key priorities and objectives.

Rope rescue

- 4.5 We are undertaking an analysis of the current UKRO and Working at Height competency frameworks to understand structure, content, and application suitability across FRSs. We are aiming to standardise frameworks across all products where applicable.

Water rescue

- 4.6 We are analysing the submission of a new competency framework from the Inland Water Group to understand structure, content, and application suitability across FRSs.

Right care right person (RCRP)

- 4.7 Police forces are working to introduce RCRP (a National Police Chiefs Council directive) and expect to have every force on board by the end of 2024. This links to 'affecting entry' MoUs that FRSs may have and dealing with persons in crisis and need of rescue. NFCC was not consulted but has attended a meeting with the Police and the Home Office and is collecting information regards the impact on FRSs.

Updated products

- 4.8 Three guidance products have been approved by the Operational Preparedness, Response, and Resilience Committee and will go through NFCC's internal sign-out process before being published. They are:
- Change request 092 – Search, rescue, and casualty care – electrical injuries.
 - Change request 093 – Transport – various minor changes.
 - An addition of introductory wording applicable to all training specifications for operational guidance.

Fire Control guidance

- 4.9 Following stakeholder engagement and peer review that included fire control, prevention, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) subject matter experts, and BT, the consultation for emergency call management and mobilising guidance was extended and closed in January 2024. Analysis of the feedback and re-drafting of content (where needed) is taking place before the final draft is published.
- 4.10 The development of business continuity guidance continues, with consultation planned to begin shortly.
- 4.11 Research and scoping have begun for incident management guidance. It is anticipated that this guidance will deal with incident management from a fire control perspective in a range of contexts, such as transport incidents, including those on or near railways.

Operation Willow Beck

- 4.12 NFCC continues to support the use of Operation Willow Beck, assisting with the development of a familiarisation video for fire control personnel. The video is being developed to supplement training and is underpinned by multiple calls and multiple incidents guidance. Quality assurance is being carried out before the video is made available for use.

Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT)

- 4.13 The contract for MAIT was awarded to AVR Group in June 2023, and work is underway to create an implementation/roll-out plan. A letter has been circulated to all Chief Fire Officers in England, updating them on the contract award and next steps. AVR is working with three FRSs as early adopters to create a pilot of the MAIT Web product, which will go live this year.
- 4.14 An online communication session is being arranged to allow key stakeholders from English FRSs to meet with the project team to discuss the work required 'in service' to implement MAIT. A fire user group has been established, and their recent work has included participation in user acceptance testing for MAIT Web at AVR Group premises. The fire control team supports the group in developing procedures so that ways of working are consistent, and the information shared between fire controls is standardised.

5. People, Culture, and Leadership (PCL) Programme UpdateCulture Dashboard Methodology

- 5.1 NFCC is developing a Culture Dashboard Methodology that provides a framework to help FRSs work through the creation of their own culture dashboards. This comprehensive guide is designed to help services understand the principles and components needed to create an effective dashboard that can provide valuable insight and analysis and drive actionable outcomes by aligning with a service's strategy, objectives, and metrics. It is important to note that the guidance is not meant to be definitive, as strategies, objectives, cultures, and protocols may vary across FRSs.

- 5.2 The guidance highlights two specific workplace issues; firstly, building a culture of positive mental health and wellbeing, and secondly, creating workplaces free from harassment and discrimination. By measuring and analysing data related to these issues, FRSs can identify risk factors, determine the effectiveness of interventions, and take appropriate action. The journey from strategy to metrics, data to information, and information to action is crucial in achieving positive outcomes.
- 5.3 The Culture Dashboard Methodology is being consulted on over March 2024, with final publication anticipated in June 2024.

Health and Wellbeing Framework

- 5.4 This project aims to produce a comprehensive framework that answers the recommendations and priorities identified in Nottingham Trent University's (NTU) [research](#) into the health and wellbeing support provided in FRSs, published in 2023. NFCC is procuring an academic partner from within NTU, and a working group of sector subject matter experts have been identified to quality assure the draft framework document.

On-Call Research Project

- 5.5 The On-Call Research Project is part of NFCC's strategy to reduce community risk and vulnerability. The project will address workforce challenges in the On-Call Duty System (OCDS) by conducting a national review to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of on-call resource management and systems across the country. The project will also deliver a standardised data set and approach to on-call data management which will provide the basis for future change. The project will be entering the initiation stage soon, subject to a partnership with the Fire Service Research and Training Trust.

Educational and behavioural programmes

- 5.6 NFCC continues to develop several educational toolkits that form part of our Culture and EDI Hub. This includes a Challenging Behaviour Toolkit, which is a collation of positive practices that is presented in an accessible and easy-to-use format. It is designed to provide clear advice and guidance to anyone on the best ways to challenge poor behaviour. Consultation on the Challenging Behaviour Toolkit is taking place over March 2024, with publication planned for June 2024.
- 5.7 The programme has also produced three thematic EDI toolkits, covering faith and religion, disability, and menopause. These were developed with support from the Asian Fire Service Association, Women in the Fire Service, and the Menopause Champions Network. The three EDI toolkits have been through a consultation process and will be published by the end of March 2024.

EDI Listen and Learn sessions

- 5.8 NFCC's Listen and Learn sessions are typically hosted by the EDI Project Executive (Chief Fire Officer Kathryn Billing) and led by a guest speaker discussing key aspects

of the topic area and sharing lived experiences where relevant. Sessions are promoted to all FRS staff and wider partners and delivered remotely using Microsoft Teams. All sessions are recorded and made available online as podcast episodes via NFCC's YouTube channel.

- 5.9 13 sessions have been delivered in the financial year 2023-24, on topics including menopause awareness, Women in the Fire Service, menopause in fire, freedom to speak up, Black History Month, men's mental health, LGBTQ+ inclusion, intersectionality, reverse mentoring, standing up to bullying, International Women's Day, Transgender Day of Visibility, and violence against women and girls.
- 5.10 Listen and learn sessions have been attended by over 1,000 representatives from across UK FRSs as well as government and other industry partners.

Direct Entry

- 5.11 The Direct Entry Scheme has successfully appointed six direct entrants as Station Managers. All six are settling into their services well.
- 5.12 The direct entrants have completed a six-week Operational Foundation Course at the Fire Service College which commenced in January 2024 with their 'passout' ceremony in February 2024.
- 5.13 NFCC has been provisionally approved as a Skills for Justice Awards Centre – the first step towards becoming a fully approved training centre. This means that NFCC can register learners on the following Certificate of Achievement programme: 'Leading the Function in the Fire and Rescue Service (Direct Entry Route) (ACH)'.
- 5.14 The direct entrants will continue with training coordinated and managed by NFCC's Direct Entry Operational Training and Development Course Director in collaboration with each participating service and the Fire Service College.

Middle Leadership Programme (MLP)

- 5.15 The MLP project is on target to launch in April 2024.
- 5.16 The project has developed four training modules aligned to the NFCC Leadership Framework which have been quality-assured by voluntary groups within the sector. Several embedding guidance documents have been developed to support learners and their line managers, along with an Evaluation Framework.
- 5.17 Each FRS will receive 20 free licences to the MLP over the coming two years, with additional licences available for purchase.

Strategic CPD Masterclasses

- 5.18 Six masterclasses are now uploaded onto the [NFCC Website](#) and accessible to all NFCC members.

Core Code of Ethics (CCoE)

- 5.19 NFCC representatives recently met with CCoE partners, including the Local Government Association and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, to

consider the code's future. Discussions are ongoing and will be informed by HMICFRS thematic reviews due for release in summer 2024.

Interactive leadership and careers pathways

- 5.20 An outline business case for a new project to develop interactive career pathways has been approved to progress.
- 5.21 Content, design, and development work have begun, and a leadership pathway has already been designed. Information-gathering exercises will take place in March and April 2024, which will include regional FRS workshops and one public-facing forum. This will ensure there is buy-in to the project and help define the content the sector wishes to see.

360-Degree Feedback Guidance

- 5.22 The draft national 360-Degree Feedback Guidance underwent consultation in late 2023. Feedback confirmed that FRSs welcomed the guidance and would benefit from it. Four explanatory videos have been produced by NFCC to support all FRS employees in understanding the benefits of this feedback method.
- 5.23 NFCC's Coordinating Committee will soon review the guidance, after which it will be launched on NFCC's website.

6. Data, Digital and Technology (DDaT) Hub update

DDaT Strategy and Roadmap

- 6.1 The DDaT Committee and associated governance boards were established in 2023. A key priority was to collaborate with the sector, partners, and wider stakeholders to develop a DDaT Strategy and Roadmap for the fire sector, to commence from 2024-26. This strategy builds on NFCC's Digital and Data Strategy of July 2020 and reflects the changes within the organisation and the technology landscape since then.
- 6.2 The strategy sets out our high-level priorities for moving toward a digitally transformed fire and rescue sector, recognising the need for flexibility and innovation within those priorities to take advantage of new advances that may present themselves.
- 6.3 The strategy is accompanied by a high-level roadmap that sets out specific project and product development timelines over the next two years. Some projects will have a longer lifespan, and we acknowledge the significant differences in available resources and governance across the sector which may affect the progress of longer-term goals.
- 6.4 The DDaT Committee has signed off the draft DDaT Strategy and Roadmap, which is now progressing through NFCC's final sign-out stages, including a presentation at Council.

techUK partnership

- 6.5 [An MoU](#) for NFCC's strategic partnership with techUK has been signed. The strategic partnership aims to facilitate and foster a culture wherein NFCC and tech companies work together collaboratively exchanging ideas, knowledge, and skills. The

partnership will aim to overcome barriers to industry collaboration with NFCC and provide tech companies with an equal opportunity to showcase their solutions, problem solve, horizon scan, and drive innovation across the sector.

National Fire Data Collection System (NFDCS)

- 6.6 NFDCS is a Home Office-led project to transform the existing Incident Recording System into a more comprehensive, flexible, and scalable NFDCS. There are two major workstreams underway, firstly the technical development of the new system, with the second comprising a data review. The suppliers are fully mobilised and have started the alpha phase of the system's development. A review of other datasets, including those for prevention, protection, and workforce, will likely commence after summer 2024. The target for an initial solution to be in place for incident data is autumn 2024.

Data Management Framework (DMF)

- 6.7 Following the publication of the Data Management Fire Standard in 2022, the team defined and developed the underpinning guidance and tools for the new standard. The [DMF has been published](#) and a series of sector engagement sessions were undertaken in February 2024.

Digital, technology, and cyber

- 6.8 The Home Office has allocated three years of funding to improve cyber resilience in English FRSs. A partnership with IBM has been established to conduct detailed research into FRS compliance with the Cyber Assessment Framework, which has determined a set of recommendations for the sector.
- 6.9 The DDaT team has collaborated with cyber subject matter experts, the Home Office, and the National Cyber Security Centre to turn these recommendations into a prioritised action plan which will be published shortly. Home Office will allocate funding from their cyber resilience programme to support NFCC delivery of this work.
- 6.10 The DDaT team and Fire Standards Board have commenced production of the Digital, Technology, and Cyber Fire Standard. The estimated publication date is Summer 2024. Supporting guidance and tools will be identified as the standard develops.

CPD

- 6.11 The DDaT team is identifying a series of CPD opportunities for staff from across the sector, focusing on digital and data literacy and upskilling.
- 6.12 'Learning Bytes' is a series of online workshops hosted by NFCC's DDaT Hub and led by cross-sector experts that will enhance sector knowledge and skills in the ever-evolving world of digital, data, technology, and cyber. The Learning Bytes series is not exclusive to digital and data professionals. All FRS staff are invited to participate and broaden their understanding of the crucial role DDaT plays in the fire sector.

- 6.13 The Learning Bytes series began in February 2024 with renowned location data experts Ordnance Survey (OS), who presented a comprehensive overview of the data, tools, and technical support that they can provide to all UK FRSs.
- 6.14 Work to weave data and digital leadership into other PCL development programmes has started. Digital leadership courses for senior leaders have been appraised, and work has started to commence pilot cohorts in Q1 24/25, and a pilot cohort for an Office for National Statistics Data Masterclass will also commence in Q1.

PROGRESS REPORT

Title of Paper	Fire Standards Progress Report
Decision or Information	For information
Date of Meeting	March 2024
Attachments	None

Summary

This paper provides members of the Fire Service Management Committee with a summary of the progress on Fire Standards.

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) last met formally on 20th December 2023. During the Board meeting, the members were asked to:

- Approve a proposed wording amendment to the Safeguarding Fire Standard as a result of feedback received from the NFCC Safeguarding Board, which was agreed.
- Extend the Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard consultation due to the Christmas and New Year break, which was agreed.
- Note the general progress update on phase 3 Fire Standards currently in development: Internal Governance and Assurance, Procurement and Asset Management, and Digital and IT.

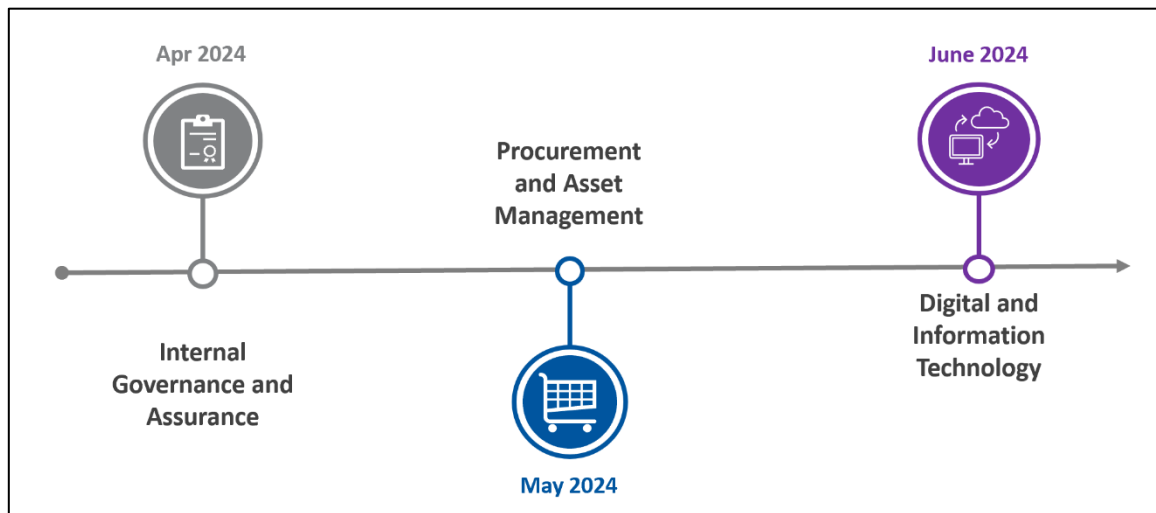
Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report for information,
- Provide ongoing support to officers, enabling and empowering them to engage with the Fire Standards, to see their service achieve them and contribute to continually improving the service offered to the public,
- Encourage the monitoring of the benefits of Fire Standards in their services.

Phase Three Fire Standards Development

The phase 3 Fire Standards, which fall within the 'Enabling' category, are expected to be published as per the timeline below. The current titles are working titles only and subject to change.



Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard

- Consultation closed on 15th January 2024, which was an agreed extension by the Board of one month due to the Christmas and New Year break.
- A comment resolution process is now taking place with subject matter experts (SMEs). There will then be an external quality assurance review prior to publication.

Procurement and Asset Management Fire Standard

- Although originally intended to go out to consultation in December, this was delayed due to concerns raised by Home Office over the initial draft.
- Home Office and Fire and Rescue Service SMEs reconvened in February to discuss the concerns and agree revisions to the draft. The new draft is to be presented at the next FSB meeting on 8th March 2024, with a request to release for consultation.

Digital and Information Technology Fire Standard

- The cross-sector SME group met in February and continued drafting work.
- It is hoped a first draft will be ready in time to present to the FSB at the next meeting on 8th March 2024.

Safeguarding Fire Standard amendment

Revisions were made to the Safeguarding Fire Standard as a result of recommendations made in the HMICFRS values and culture in fire and rescue services report. The NFCC Safeguarding Board since identified that wording of a criteria did not fully align with legislation. FSB members agreed at the meeting on the 20th December 2023 to amend this to ensure alignment, noting that it delivered the same overall outcome, but provided clarity. The change has been communicated to the sector.

Implementation support

The FSB, through the NFCC Fire Standards and Implementation Support Teams, continue to support services as they work to achieve the Fire Standards. Gap analysis tools are provided with all published Fire Standards to support services with self-assessment of their position against any given Fire Standard.

Work is underway to review the gap analysis tools following feedback from services and to bring focus on the Outcome Statement of each Fire Standard.

The NFCC has regional Implementation Liaison Managers to assist services with their work in achieving the standards. In addition, the FSB Chairs continue to visit services across the country. In doing so they meet with senior teams to discuss how services are engaging with the Fire Standards.

They seek to provide external perspectives and share the experiences of others. They can provide support to senior leadership teams in ensuring services use the Fire Standards to good effect as part of the ongoing organisational development of services; encouraging innovative approaches to reform working practices and ultimately drive behavioural change. The combination of which contributes to building positive working cultures within services.

With the majority of the proposed standards in place, the FSB are keen to continue engagement with services across England to understand the impact they are having and to assess what more may be required to assist services in achieving them. Should a service wish to host a visit of the FSB Chairs, please contact the NFCC Fire Standards Team at fsb@nfcc.org.uk.

Supporting local achievement of Fire Standards

The support of Fire Authority members is pivotal to the work of the FSB. To help improve levels of awareness and understanding, the FSB have recently made available three new videos which explain the work of the FSB, the positive impact Fire Standards represent for communities, and the support fire and rescue services can receive from the NFCC. All videos are available on the [FSB website](#).

Background Information

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) is responsible for the identification, organisation, development, and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England.

Led by an independent Chair and Vice Chair, membership of the Board includes the NFCC, employers (both the LGA and the APCC) and the Home Office.

The LGA representative on the Board is Cllr Greg Brackenridge.

Given the various stages of development required and the time needed for engagement with services in the early stages, as well as through formal consultation, development work and publications of the

respective Fire Standards are staggered. This is primarily done to align capacity and resources in a considered way, but also to pace the rate at which standards are released to services.

Once approved, Fire Standards are shared on the [Fire Standards Board website](#).

Services are by now well aware of the requirements being placed upon them through these Fire Standards. HMICFRS reference the standards in their inspections and services should be prepared to evidence their progress towards achieving them.

The FSB welcomes and appreciates the support of Fire Authority chairs and members.

Fire Services Management Committee Update

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Fire Services Management Committee not covered under other items on the agenda.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee give direction to officers regarding next steps on the issue of fire and rescue service's involvement in planning.

Contact details

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Fire Services Management Committee Update

Updated Climate Emergency Handbook

1. We have received contributions from the NFCC on wildfires, emerging technology and sustainable procurement, from Professor Rowena Hill on climate change, the Environment Agency on incidence management and resilience, as well as relevant case studies from several fire and rescue services.
2. The updated handbook will be published online as this year's conference document.

Fire Performance Oversight Group

3. Councillor Frank Biederman attended HMICFRS's Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG) on 7 February 2024. He highlighted the work the LGA has done to assist the services currently in FPOG. Councillor Biederman will also attend the next FPOG on 5 March.

Firefighters Pension Scheme Advisory Board

4. Councillor Biederman attended the Firefighters Pension Scheme Advisory Board on 14 December 2023.

Fire Productivity and Efficiency Forum

5. FSMC Lead Members attended the Fire Productivity and Efficiency Forum on 9 February 2024. The Home Office gave a presentation on the Police Productivity Review and considered whether a similar review in Fire would be appropriate.

HMICFRS External Reference Group

6. FSMC Lead Members attended the HMICFRS External Reference Group on 14 February 2024 to discuss initial findings from the third round of inspection, State of Fire and emerging issues in the sector.

CoLab – Operational Independence

7. FSMC Lead Members met with Home Office officials from the Policy and Innovation Lab (CoLab) to discuss their work on operational independence and a revised Fire Framework. CoLab is leading a project that aims to help explore how operational independence could work in practice. Their findings will help the Home Office's Fire Strategy & Reform Unit reflect on how to implement operational independence, likely through a standardised scheme of delegation and/or amendments to Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Veterans Hubs and Clubs

8. Buckinghamshire Council has established a 'Veterans Hubs and Clubs' initiative, which utilises fire stations as a facility to regularly convene veterans. The initiative aims to improve the wellbeing of veterans by using existing networks and partnerships more efficiently, allowing more veterans to receive personalised and relevant support. This will topic return to the FSMC at the next meeting on 17 May 2024 as an agenda item. Please see **Appendix A** for more information.

Events

Leadership Essentials

9. The most recent Fire Leadership Essentials Programme was held in Warwick on 6 & 7 February 2024. The programme was hosted by David Weaver and had nine attendees. Sessions covered a range of topics including the Home Office's fire reform plans, the HMICFRS inspection regime, building safety, climate change, reflections of an FRA chair, good governance, EDI and leadership.

Implications for Wales

10. None.

Financial Implications

11. None.

Equalities implications

12. None

Next steps

13. Members to note the update.

APPENDIX 1

Veterans' Hubs and Clubs

Adding value to existing services and resources.

This is an initiative arising from an idea at the Civilian Military Partnership Board at Buckinghamshire Council.

A Task and Finish group from the Board, chaired by Cllr Mimi Harker, proposed and then implemented Veterans' Hubs and Clubs (VHC) in 2021 that contributed to Buckinghamshire Council being awarded Gold status in the Armed Forces Covenant.

The VHC draws on existing veteran links, eg Breakfast Clubs, by providing specialist services to Veterans using Fire Stations as a facility.

The idea is straightforward, that by using the existing networks and partnerships more efficiently, that more veterans can be given personalised and relevant support.

Background.

There is recognition by the public sector that veterans and their well-being are important.

There is recognition that veterans are intrinsically reticent to be pro-active in seeking support, tending to rely on trusted people over time.

There is a close link between the Fire and Rescue Service and veterans.

Fire stations are seen as a safe space for veterans.

Fire stations have facilities to host a regular session, they have canteen facilities and space.

How it works.

A fire station hosts a VHC on a set date and time with a monthly frequency.

Veterans are invited to attend the fire station where they enjoy refreshments and socialise.

Experience has shown there are underlying concerns that veterans have which they are usually reluctant to share.

When veterans share their concerns, referrals are made to appropriate council officers to attend a future VHC and resolve.

The veteran meets the officer at a subsequent VHC and resolves their concern.

Why it works.

It works because the fire station is seen as a safe space and the hosting firefighters are trusted and valued.

The VHC is an efficient process as officers only attend when required and are fully briefed before attending.

It's an uncomplicated idea that uses existing partnerships and resources.

The VHC concept can be applied to any local authority area.

Outcomes

Data is being collected which shows a range of successful outcomes which are directly attributable to the HVC project.

Strengthened community link with Fire stations and improved wellbeing for involved firefighters.

Better use of public sector assets, both buildings and local authority officer time.