Fire Vision 2025

**Purpose of report**

For discussion and direction.

**Summary**

The Joint Fire Reform Board between the LGA, National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office has discussed producing a vision for the fire and rescue service to help inform work around the fir reform agenda going forward. This paper sets out a draft Fire Vision 2025, which is attached for information and comment.

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| **Recommendation**  That the Fire Services Management Committee members comment on the vision and to approve it in general terms.  **Action**  Officers to seek the views of the National Fire Chiefs Council and submit a further draft to the Fire Reform Board. |

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**Fire Vision 2025**

**Background**

1. The Fire and Rescue Service is operating within a rapidly changing environment, where Government’s reform agenda, new legislation, the creation of new national institutions and the expectations of the new National Framework are creating powerful new policy drivers. The Government’s fire reform agenda has three pillars: efficiency and collaboration; accountability and transparency; and workforce reform.
2. The Fire Reform Board, which members will recall brings together the Committee’s Lead Members with the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and colleagues, as well as officials from the Home Office, has been established to provide an oversight of the reform programme.
3. Discussions at the Fire Reform Board’s first meeting raised the advantages for the sector in establishing its own ‘vision’ for the future of the fire service, both in discussions with Ministers and in providing a context for the work of the new NFCC structures and as the NFCC develops its own strategies and work programmes.
4. Further discussions took place at the Fire Reform Board’s last meeting on 7 March 2017. It was agreed that the Policing Vision 2025 could provide a useful model for a fire vision: <http://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Policing%20Vision.pdf>

**Fire Vision 2025**

1. Officers of the LGA and NFCC were asked to draft a vision document for the fire and rescue service in England. An initial LGA draft which has been shared with, but not commented on by NFC, is set out in **Appendix A** for members’ views. Some sections are currently incomplete as they require NFCC input to draft. However, members’ views on what these sections should cover would be helpful in drafting these sections.
2. As well as setting out how the fire and rescue service will look in 2025 the final section under ‘What will change?’ also seeks to provide measureable commitments so that progress against the vision can be gauged. Again members’ views on whether these are the right commitments or if other commitments should be included would be helpful in revising the draft.

**Implications for Wales**

1. Fire and rescue services are a devolved matter in Wales and the remit of the Fire Reform Board covers England only. The Fire Vision 2025 would therefore apply to the fire and rescue English service.

**Financial implications**

1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Next steps**

1. Members’ discussion will, together with the views of the NFCC, inform a revised draft of the vision for submission to a future meeting of the Fire Reform Board.

**Appendix A: Fire vision 2025 - draft**

Introduction

‘What does the 21st Century fire and rescue service look like in 2025?’

1. The twenty-first century fire and rescue service will be a comprehensive safety service.
2. Our traditional fire and rescue role will remain central but we will offer a range of interventions around health and community safety, building on our record of success in prevention and based on local needs.
3. [NFCC to insert National Resilience section]
4. We will recruit, retain and develop a workforce that reflects the communities it serves. The service will have an inclusive culture, in which everyone is supported to do their best, free of inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour. Our workforce will be flexible, with up-to-date skills, state-of-the-art equipment, first-class training and operating to rigorous professional standards.
5. We will deliver increasing value for money, working in effective partnerships that evolve to meet new local and national demands efficiently.
6. The delivery of our services will be locally-tailored by the priorities of accountable local politicians informed by national evidence and overseen by a robust system of independent inspection, supported by peer challenge.[mention new fire framework?]

‘How will we deliver these changes for communities?’

1. Our starting point is our first-class record in fire prevention and national resilience. In the last decade we have reduced the number of fires by half.
2. As we reduce the incidents of fire still further, we will nevertheless need to maintain capacity based on risk rather than demand. As a result, our capacity to expand our local work into other areas of public health and community safety will increase. We are ideally placed to do this given our expertise in promoting prevention.
3. We will drive down costs and improve performance by sharing services and investing in technology, both frontline and backroom.
4. The service’s political and operational leaders will work together, with the Home Office and with partners to ensure each is supported and enabled to lead in their respective fields, and to ensure all services learn from the best and move at the pace of the fastest.

Mission and Values 2025

1. Our mission is to serve our communities by preventing harm, protecting life and property and keeping the public safe, both locally and by ensuring national resilience. We want to be a service that reflects the communities it serves.
2. This mission statement is informed by the values of the fire and rescue service. These are: efficiency, effectiveness, inclusivity, local accountability, national resilience, professionalism, safety, transparency and a collaborative approach. We are a team in which every member is valued.

Purpose of the Vision

1. The Fire Vision 2025 underpins the fire reform programme. The broad parameters of that programme have been set by Government, but the process of reform is led by the political and operational leaders of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England.
2. This vision stands as a guide and reference for those involved in taking the fire and rescue service forward and delivering a service for the twenty-first century. It is owned by the Fire Reform Board.
3. The local accountability of our political leaders and the operational independence of our Chief Officers are essential components of the fire service as a whole. Politically, Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) in England are currently represented by the Local Government Association’s Fire Commission and the Fire Services Management Committee while chief officers are represented by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
4. These two bodies are brought together by the Fire Reform Board, on which Home Office officials are also represented.
5. Much of the detailed work required to implement the vision will take place in the coordinating committees which sit beneath the NFCC. [We will add the names of the committees when we have them] These committees will establish ad hoc working groups on specific issues as necessary and FRA members will sit on both the committees and the working groups as necessary.
6. The purpose of the Fire Reform Board (FRB) is to monitor progress toward the realisation of the vision in general terms, providing strategic leadership to the process and focussing on specific issues where doing so helps to accelerate reform. Its membership will be kept under review to ensure that it remains comprehensively representative.
7. The FRB’s formal terms of reference are to:
   1. Provide an oversight of the work being undertaken within FRAs / FRSs, CFOA (NFCC) and LGA FSMC in support of the English Fire Reform programme.
   2. Initiate activity through the participating bodies (LGA FSMC, NFCC) on specific aspects of the reform programme.
   3. Provide a mechanism for reporting progress to the Home Office, CFOA (NFCC), LGA FSMC and FRAs.
   4. Provide a group to progress work with the Home Office on specific elements of the reform such as a revised National Fire Framework.
   5. Engage in specific aspects of the reform programme as appropriate to ensure that the views of the sector leadership are appropriately represented.
8. The Board would not be responsible for establishing/confirming standards (professional and organisational) for the sector since this is has a UK focus.

Why does the fire and rescue service need to change?

1. Every service needs to change – to meet new dangers, to adapt to social change, to improve effectiveness and efficiency and to grasp the opportunities offered by technological advances.
2. Climate change is likely to mean an increased risk of flooding; the drive for increased tourism increases the need for our preventative role in promoting water safety and our involvement in water-related rescues; we are already working with the police and security services to play our part in meeting the challenge of extremist terror.
3. Perhaps our greatest challenge is financial. These pressures are unlikely to change in the near future and we must adapt to them in order to continue to provide the service the public expects in the face of diminishing resources. We must maintain the ability to cope with major incidents and provide resilience at a national level, but we must ensure we extract maximum value from that capacity by continuing to expand the range of roles we perform and continuing to seek more efficient ways of doing so.
4. The skills our workforce need will change as technological advances change the way we do our jobs and as the kind of tasks we undertake expands.
5. The fire and rescue service firefighter workforce staff is currently 95 per cent male and 96 per cent white. This is no longer acceptable. The fire and rescue service of the future must reflect the make-up of the community it serves if we are to attract recruits of the quality we require to keep up with the pace of change. Traditional barriers to efficiency must be removed and the standards to which we operate must be kept relevant to modern needs. These barriers include elements of the image of our service that deters non-white and non-male applicants.
6. To meet these challenges we will need to be flexible; we will need to work in effective partnership with a wide range of organisations; we will need to be at the forefront of operational and technological advances and we will need the best recruits, equipped with state of the art equipment and skills, operating to high professional standards
7. In every aspect of change we need to ensure we share best practice effectively and look beyond our local service both to learn from our colleagues and to enable them to learn from us.

What will change?

Community protection

1. The nation must continue to have a fire and rescue service funded on the basis of risk rather than demand.
2. We don’t have to deal with a major incident on the scale of the Bunsfield fire or the Shoreham air disaster every day – but we have to be able to deal with these sorts of incidents when they occur.
3. We don’t have to rescue a family from a burning house in the middle of every night. But if you wake up and smell smoke, you want to know that we will be there quickly and get you out safely.
4. We have learned that the best way to fight fire is to prevent it. We are already applying that lesson to other areas of risk, such as safe and well visits, and there is scope to extend this work.
5. A service designed around risk, which seeks to reduce demand through prevention is a good thing. However, the success of such an approach means that we have a capacity for work greater than that required on an average day. To continue to provide value to our communities in an age of contracting budgets, we must use that capacity to its fullest extent – developing our range of services and working closely with our partners.
6. By 2025 every fire and rescue service will be delivering a wide range of public protection services with a variety of partners.
7. The challenge we face over the next decade is to develop as a comprehensive public protection service, using the skills we possess in prevention in new areas of health and community safety, while retaining our existing capabilities and expertise in fire and rescue.
8. Possible commitments:
   1. We will continue the existing pilots of collaboration with health and by 2025 embed this work into the everyday experience of all front line staff.
   2. We will work in partnership with councils, public health colleagues and others to expand our involvement into every aspect of community safety – where this offers improved value to the public.
   3. We will reduce incidents of fire BY? And drownings BY?

National Resilience

1. Sharing national burdens – list them – anything new (MTFA)?
2. Effective national partnerships with police etc
3. Could we set a target in terms of inspectorates finding on how we deal with the national areas?
4. NFCC to add

Workforce

1. To achieve our aims the role of the firefighter will continue to develop and change.
2. Firefighting is already a decreasing aspect of our role, the title firefighter may well be a misnomer by 2025.
3. Standards need to be more flexible, while remaining rigorous; for example, fitness standards must be high, but only where they are relevant to the work actually undertaken.
4. The old rigid distinction between wholetime and retained firefighters needs to kept under review and removed where it is unnecessary. The National Joint Council which brings unions and management together must act as a vehicle for progressing change for the good of the service and those who work in it, it must not become a means of delaying and frustrating the changes we need to make.
5. To attract the best people for the job the current level of diversity within both the firefighter workforce specifically, the workforce as a whole, and among volunteers, needs to be improved significantly. The service must develop an inclusive culture in which employees are treated and treat each other with trust and respect.
6. Bullying, victimisation, discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated and there will be effective routes to report such behaviour and consequences for employees found to have engaged in these practices.
7. Our standards, our skills and our staff must be flexible enough to adapt to the changing nature of the job.

Possible commitments:

1. We will ensure that 50 per cent of all staff and at least 25 per cent of front line staff are female by 2025; in each FRS both frontline staff and staff as a whole will reflect the ethnic diversity of the community they serve.
2. We will increase the diversity of senior ranks to mirror these proportions by 2025.
3. We will retain an increased proportion of recruits and maintain the gender and ethnic balance in the workforce (ie those five years in will not be less diverse than the cohort was when recruited).
4. Measures of confidence in leadership.

Cost effective

1. The fire service must grasp the new opportunities offered by technological change. By 2025 it is likely that a combination of advances in digital and drone technology will revolutionise the way we fight fires and rescue those in danger, while reducing the risk to our own personnel.
2. If these opportunities are to be taken we will need to constantly review the skills needs of our frontline staff and provide training that meets those needs. The new standards body will be critical to this process, as will its alignment to the requirements of inspection.
3. We will seek to digitise backroom and support services wherever this increases efficiency. We will also seek opportunities to share these functions across fire and rescue services and with partners outside the service where that increases efficiency.
4. This will further increase the proportion of our spending directed to frontline services.
5. We will seek both to learn from the best international practice and to be world leaders in developing and marketing new skills and technologies.

Possible commitments:

1. Percentage of procurement budget dealt with nationally increases [by ….]?
2. Proportion of resource devoted to frontline work increases by?

Accountable

1. We are a locally accountable service and this must continue to be the case even where we provide national resilience contributions and share services across areas to provide better value for money.
2. Local people need to feel they own the service through transparency on key indicators. The public must be able to find out what is being spent, what it is being spent on and what that spending is achieving.

Possible commitments:

1. As the Home Office is leading work on increasing the transparency of the service we can pledge to support/work with them on this.