

Bid for interim funding for 2020/2021 to support standards and improvement in Fire and Rescue Services

1 Executive Summary

Background

- 1.1 The recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, combined with the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have far reaching implications for fire and rescue services. Although a much loved service by the public, its reputation has been damaged by recent clear criticism of the way it operates. There is a clear need for improvement across a number of areas.
- 1.2 In the last 15 years, central support and direction to fire and rescue services has been largely diminished with a government emphasis on localised delivery. The recently created NFCC and Fire Standards Board will have important roles to play, but both bodies mainly rely on staff working on national activities in addition to their day jobs.

"An unintended consequence of this localism has been the lack of national capacity and capability to bring about lasting sector change..... In June 2019, we also recommended that the Home Office address this lack of national capacity and capability." (Sir Tom Winsor - State of Fire December 2019)

- 1.3 The NFCC has agreed a new strategy, which will come into effect in April 2020. It is titled "Achieving More Together" (see appendix n)which clarifies the NFCC's mission to support continuous improvement in all fire and rescue services.

"The NFCC's mission is to be a collective, unified professional organisation supporting the improvement of fire and rescue services at a national level." (Achieving More Together – February 2020)

Programme and Project Management (PPM)

- 1.4 Following the successful delivery of new National Operational Guidance (NOG) through a 6 year programme, the NFCC have established a Central Programme Office (CPO) to coordinate the delivery and implementation of standards, tools and guidance in a number of areas that directly address the issues that fire and rescue services are facing.
- 1.5 The NFCC is clear that, taking a programme and project management (PPM) based approach with assured, high quality delivery is the way to address the issues. Successful programmes are not just about the delivery of products. They are about delivering change. High quality PPM ensure that the focus stays on the most important and effective things that need to be done, that will really make a difference. It also secures delivery and implementation that delivers real

improvement. But investment is needed. This bid seeks Government endorsement and funding to support the delivery of improvement across all fire and rescue services.

Do the right things and..... do things right. (Managing successful programmes ref)

Scale and purpose of additional interim funding

- 1.6 The current programmes are limited in scope and breadth because of the availability of current funding. In response, this business case seeks £3.85m for the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This is in addition to the existing £1.5m funding for professional standards - a total of £5.35m in 2020/21. This will support the further development of central functions to support improvement within all fire and rescue services leading to improved consistency and higher levels of performance and efficiency. The detailed breakdown of the proposed additional spend is laid out in sections NN to NN below.
- 1.7 The NFCC is also working with the LGA and Employers (England) in the development of the bid for funding to support improvement in the fire and rescue service in the period 2021-2024. This will form a part of the overall spending review business case that will be developed between now and September 2020.
- 1.8 Without interim funding, even if this element of the spending review proposal were to be agreed later this year, this would mean that capacity building to deliver improvement would have to wait until funding was available in April 2021. As a result, resources would probably not be in place and operating until the middle of 2021 and not be fully established until March 2022. This is inconsistent with the urgency of the need and public expectations of the need for change in fire and rescue services.
- 1.9 As a result, after discussion with Home Office officials, this business case seeks interim funding for 2020/21 that will allow resources to be put in place throughout the upcoming financial year. This will have the effect of bringing forward the capacity building process allowing improvements to be delivered much earlier.
- 1.10 So this bid funds a capacity building trajectory in 2020/21 towards a level of resourcing that it is assumed the spending review outcomes will support for 3 further years. The current funds at the disposal of the NFCC are already fully deployed - as will be explained in below. If the element of the spending review bid for a central improvement function from 2021-24 is unsuccessful, the proposals within this business case can not be fully delivered and any additional capacity built in 2020/21 will have to be dispersed, with all of the cost that entails.

Partnership and unified focus on improvement

- 1.11 To focus on "doing the right things", the programmes draw on the "Fit for the Future" improvement objectives and narrative that are appended to this document (appendix A). This work demonstrates a clear alignment between the NFCC, LGA and the Employers (England) about what needs to be achieved within fire and rescue services to improve outcomes for the public. This alignment is, in itself, a significant achievement - but change will not happen without "doing things right" by appropriately resourced central leadership to drive a portfolio of programmes that represent a sustained effort to deliver.

- 1.12 The "Fit for the Future" improvement objectives are derived from analysis of current and historical reports relevant to the performance of fire and rescue services. The most significant of these include;
- 1.12.1 the recommendations of the **Grenfell Tower Inquiry**;
 - 1.12.2 all three tranches of the **inspection reports produced by HMICFRS**;
 - 1.12.3 the **State of Fire** report by Sir Tom Winsor; and
 - 1.12.4 the the **Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety** by Dame Judith Hackitt.
- 1.13 The approach that the NFCC is taking to bringing the different recommendations together from these reports to create clear themes and objectives is described in more detail in nn below. It also describes how ongoing learning and evaluation will continue to feed into improvement.
- 1.14 Alignment of the key stakeholders, including members of fire authorities and employers, to a common suite of improvements is key to their implementation within fire and rescue services. Chief Officers are the employees of fire and rescue authorities and will be required to seek authority for resources to invest in improvement inside their respective fire and rescue services. Only through partnership at both political and professional level can a unified focus be achieved that can deliver consistent, tangible change.

Existing and proposed programmes

- 1.15 It is proposed that improvement will be delivered through 5 core programmes and a range of supporting functions, all of which will need additional funding:
- 1.15.1 **The Community Risk Programme (CRP)** which is seeking to support fire and rescue services in the improvement of their deployment and service delivery through their Risk Management Plans (IRMPs in England). This programme is already well advanced and , if the bid is successful will take on new project managers, analysts and support staff over the upcoming year. It will also commission additional consultancy advice, academic support and research. The proposed total increase in funding for 2020/21 is £nnm which will allow the projects scoped within the programme (detailed in nn below) to be accelerated and for the projects awaiting funding to begin. The output of the programme, to be delivered over the next 4 years will be a toolkit to assist every fire and rescue service to improve its approach to risk management planning, optimising the use of local resources to minimise the risks to the public in the context of the local risk profile.
 - 1.15.2 **The People Programme (PP)** is already in place and well advanced, which is seeking to improve the way that people are recruited, trained, led, managed and supported within all fire and rescue services. This is an area which HMICFRS have particularly identified is weaker within many fire and rescue services. The programme has already delivered a new leadership framework, tools to support recruitment and retention of on call staff and has developed and is implementing a new apprenticeship strategy. The proposals will allow the programme to take on new project managers, analysts and support staff and increase capacity for consultancy. The proposed total increase in funding for 2020/21 is £0.432m. The enhanced programme will embed the new

leadership framework; a standard on ethics in the fire and rescue services; redefined competence expectations for staff; embed the national approach to apprenticeships including a new end point assessment approach; propose revised working patterns, including a review of the current on call system; create a new professional development framework; develop national guidance on culture and cultural change; create new recruitment toolkits; implement a national strategy for addressing inclusion and diversity issues; and create a health and wellbeing framework. The deliverables for all of these issues will be in place over the next 4 years, in accordance with a schedule in section nn.

- 1.15.3 **The Digital and Data Programme (DDP)** is established, but currently with minimal resources, with only a programme manager in place being supported by some part time consultancy support. It is in the process of scoping its work. In the medium term, the programme is seeking to improve the way that the service collects, stores, uses and presents data, develops and presents information and uses digital technology. In time it will develop and deliver products that will support the delivery of all of the other programmes. It is proposed that the programme will grow by £67.5k in 2020/21 to take on a new project manager. It is also proposed that a more substantial operating budget be created that will be used to develop national web based products through which standards, guidance and tools can be accessed and deployed through work with consultants, contractors and academics. These will be available for use by all services. To achieve this, budget for expenditure in this area needs to expand by £200k in 2020/21. The programme will deliver new data standards for fire and rescue services and create national reporting that can be used to take strategic decisions and drive funding requirements. When successful, it will propel fire and rescue services to the forefront of digital technology and embed the use of data in creating an evidence base that supports the future of fire and rescue services. Full details of the current and proposed future work of the programme can be found at nn.
- 1.15.4 **The Building Safety Programme (BSP)** is a significant programme of work that was established quickly after the Grenfell Tower fire and continues to grow as the improvements required to the built environment, and its regulation, grow more evident. The Programme includes responding to the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety by Dame Judith Hackitt; influencing and responding to the Government's Building Safety Programme; responding to the Protection recommendations of the Grenfell Public Inquiry; and most recently, chairing the Protection Board. The Programme is currently run through the NFCC Protection Committee, and a team funded by MHCLG and Home Office. The Programme is involved in all the fire safety aspects of the Building Safety Programme and ensures that the views of all fire and rescue services inform the advice of NFCC to Government and other partners. The Programme is also key to ensuring the outcomes of the many changes and improvements are fit for purpose. In part this means that they can be successfully implemented in fire services across the country, and that those services are supported in this implementation. The full costs, benefits and delivery timetable can be found in a separate bid document here.
- 1.15.5 **Prevention Programme (PrP)** is a proposed new programme that will continue to support the existing Children and Young People (CYP) Project as a part of its scope. This programme will contribute, along with the building safety programme in 1.11.4

above, to develop and implement a national prevention and protection strategy in partnership with the Home Office. The scope of the programme will be to seek to understand the causes of loss, injury and death in local communities, working with the Community Risk Programme to do so. It will then run projects to develop national standards, tools and guidance for the use of all fire and rescue services that will reduce the likelihood of these incidents occurring. The work of the programme, once embedded will be fully evaluated and reviewed to ensure their effectiveness in the long term. The programme has only the resources allocated to the CYP at its disposal at present. It is proposed to appoint a programme manager, project manager and programme support officer, in 2020/21 to establish and scope the programme. The costs of these staff, and their operating budget will be £nnk. More detail of the proposed programme is in nn below.

Portfolio Support

1.16 In order to manage all its programmes effectively, the NFCC is taking a "Portfolio Management" approach. This means effective and efficient coordination of all of the programmes, recognising their interdependencies. To do this, there are a number of cross cutting elements of support that need to be in place to deliver all the programmes to the required level, to ensure appropriate oversight and make sure that the benefits are realised. Additional resources are needed to support these functions appropriately which are identified below. These elements are:

1.16.1 **Content management** –The NFCC is clear that national products, once developed, need to be continuously kept under review to prevent obsolescence. The first suite of such products are all the elements of **National Operational Guidance (NOG)**. A key aspect of this continuous review process is to continue to learn from incidents and events as soon as possible after they occur. To this end, a **National Operational Learning (NOL)** system has been established and is being managed by the NFCC. Clearly, the Grenfell Tower incident in 2017 and the recommendations from the ongoing Inquiry are fundamental to the future content of NOG. The maintenance work is managed through a "content team" within the NFCC CPO. Additional projects are now being planned in areas of guidance such as fire control, incident command, fires in buildings and joint operations (JESIP). The team are also coordinating the response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations across all services in the UK. A further £nnk is sought for additional project managers and research officers. The output will be new national guidance and working protocols in all of these areas in 2020/21, much of it within the next 6 months. Additional resources to support the learning process throughout all fire and rescue services are also proposed, with a number of new content managers and officers, amounting to £nnk. It is very important not to see the content team as just being about NOG and NOL, though. The team will also take responsibility for the maintenance of all new products, including leadership and professional frameworks; apprenticeship standards and guidance; code of ethics; IRMP standards and guidance and so on. Over time the content team role will expand to maintain the increasing range of products. At the same time the programmes are likely to reduce in scope as the development work is delivered.

1.16.2 **Quality and Standards** - The work on standards development has an agreed staffing and resourcing structure and does not need further resources in addition to the £1.5m p.a. already provided. There is, however, a need to provide a quality assurance

structure, including appropriate external assurance to the work in all the programmes. There is also a need for a high level of communications, engagement and stakeholder management resources to support programme development and delivery. A quality assurance manager, communications manager, additional officers working on communications are needed, as well as benefits realisation staff at a cost of £nnk in 2020/21. Details of the proposals for the Quality and Standards team are in NN below.

- 1.16.3 **Implementation and benefits realisation** – The impact of radical change in the expectations of fire and rescue services will place significant pressure upon them. The NFCC fully recognises the need to support the implementation of new standards, guidance and tools across all services. Currently the resources allocated to this are limited to one junior officer working in the content team supporting the implementation of NOG. Increased funding will provide resources to support to services to implement change, realise the identified benefits and demonstrate improved outcomes. The proposal is for an "outward facing" team of senior staff who will each be responsible for assessing the needs of 4 or 5 services that they are responsible for and providing support to them in implementing national standards, guidance and tools. Funding of £nnk is sought in 2020/21 to start to develop a regional network of officers who will support implementation. This will enable the implementation support needs of each service to be assessed and for business change resources to be targeted where they are most needed. Proposals for this implementation and business realisation function are detailed in nn below.
- 1.16.4 **Management, Coordination and Governance** - The management of the improvement portfolio, and the changing national expectations of the role of the NFCC Chair has led to a review of the support provided to that position. There is also an expectation that there will be much more rigour in the reporting arrangements back to the Home Office if the bid is successful. It is therefore proposed that the NFCC Chair be supported by a Chief of Staff, Staff Officer, Policy Officer and finance support resources amounting to £nnk in 2020/21. The portfolio administration and governance functions of the CPO also need to expand to take on the additional workload created by such significant expansion of the programmes and supporting teams. A Portfolio Coordinator, Finance Officer, Procurement Officer and additional administrative support amount to a further £nnk in 2020/21. Details of these proposals are in NN below.

Pace of Change

- 1.17 It is clear that the Home Office expect to see continuous improvement of fire and rescue services, including any learning from HMICFRS on how standards should be implemented. Recent reports are clear that change needs to happen quickly, and this is recognised by all leaders in the fire and rescue service including NFCC, LGA and Employers (England) As explained above, the capacity to support that change needs to be built and made to operate efficiently and effectively. This will take time as much of the expertise needed needs to be identified or developed. Some of the skills and experience needed are in short supply and will already be working to capacity. Providing funding is only the start of the process, building capacity to deliver is the next step. With this said, there is much to be done in the shorter term and the changes that can be delivered quickly are identified and prioritised throughout this business case.