Revised draft

1. About the Local Government Association (LGA)

1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government, and our members include councils and fire and rescue authorities. We work with our members to support, promote and improve local government.

1.2 We are a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of councils and all fire and rescue authorities, PFCCs and Deputy Mayors for fire, all of whom are members of the LGA, to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.

1.3 This narrative represents the agreed LGA position, and although it should be noted there are a range of views among Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) about the proposals in the White Paper, those in this document represent the views of the overwhelming majority of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee.

2. The White Paper

2.1 We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Government's Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service White Paper.

2.2 As with any public service we recognise that we need to evolve and build on our successful track record to continue to protect our local communities and save lives. We are committed to ensuring that local communities get the right protection, prevention and response services, which meet local needs and risks, and that our organisations are led by trusted and skilled operational and political leadership working in partnership. We wish to ensure that the fire and rescue service can continue to deliver and enhance its services into the future.

2.3 The work that the LGA, the National Employers (England) and the National Fire Chiefs Council have done on Fit for the Future outlines our ambitions on how the sector can and should improve over the next five years. It contains 12 improvement objectives covering services delivery, leadership, people and culture and national infrastructure and support. We feel these objectives will drive improvement in the sector, with the right investment and resources to support our ambitions.

2.4 We welcome the Government's ambition to improve the Fire and Rescue Service and believe much can be achieved quickly without the need for further legislation.

2.5 We are supportive of reform and want it to be introduced in the best and most productive manner possible, therefore we have focused on those areas where we believe proposals need further consideration and where possible have provided practical solutions on how these could be developed to deliver reform. We have also set out the potential barriers to reform we see and where we believe change could be achieved more quickly.

2.6 We hope that the answers contained within this narrative will be helpful to provide clarity, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these further with the Government. We believe empowered local decision makers, who understand their local areas and can work effectively in partnership will lead to better outcomes and improvement.

2.7 Alongside this narrative we have also provided responses to the questions, however, the narrative provides a more substantive answer to many of the questions.

Governance

3. Mayoral model/Police and Crime Commissioners/Other Options

3.1   The LGA continues to believe it should be for local areas to decide on how they should be governed, and there should be no forced transfers of governance. We welcome that no mandatory transfers of governance have been proposed.

3.2   As with levelling up, real change and improvement within the sector and communities will be more successful if local councils and fire and rescue services are empowered to decide what their local governance structure will be, based on the needs of their communities. Therefore, transfers of governance should only take place where there has been local agreement to and support for the transfer.

3.3   In discussions with the local area, local support for any change of governance should be the principal basis for making any determination on the future of the service, therefore empowering local decision makers.

3.4   This will not only help to ensure that local areas can determine what works best for them and their communities but will make the process less open to challenge if services can be sure that local support has been given primary weighting in any assessment process.

3.5   The LGA believes that a panel of experts should make an assessment of the business case for any contested transfers of governance. The panel should include expertise in fire, policing, local government and finance to look at the different elements of the business case. If independently and expertly assessed the current tests of economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and public safety could provide criteria for the transfer of governance where there is local opposition. It is clear from the inspection process that there are a wide variety of service performances, regardless of governance type.

3.6   We believe the model of executive leadership set out in the White Paper can be achieved in a number of ways, including within existing structures. Set out below are three alternative options that we believe can achieve the White Paper's objectives, though local areas should also be allowed to formulate their own proposals. Consideration should be given to how these alternatives could be delivered. Our current understanding for example is that option 3 could be introduced without the need for primary legislation, though it would be needed in the case of options 1 and 2:

   3.6.1. Greater delegation of decisions to the chair of the FRA.
   3.6.2. Create a cabinet/scrutiny model for governance on both metropolitan authorities and combined authorities.
   3.6.3. Metropolitan and combined authorities reorganise themselves to create a small management committee to exercise an authority's executive functions, which would then be scrutinised and supported by/accountable to the full authority.

3.7   These are illustrative models and other ones may be more appropriate depending on local circumstances and needs.

3.8   If the Government does undertake a review of the Fire Framework with the intention of strengthening and clarifying the legal basis for fire and rescue authorities the LGA would wish to be included in any discussions.

3.9 In terms of scrutiny, if Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) are intended to take on the role of scrutinising fire as well as police, they need to be given appropriate resources and powers to do so. PCPs have consistently expressed concerns around the tools available to them regarding complaints handling, limitations of the powers of veto or the ability to undertake pre-scrutiny of major decisions. We are aware that there are variations on how much funding is claimed by PCPs, however to include a new policy area under their purview will require further time, training and resources to ensure they can fulfil any new burdens appropriately. Another alternative would be to allow individual areas to create their own fire panel, separate from the PCP. This would require adequate funding from Government.

4. Operational independence and balanced leadership model

4.1 We agree there should be a clear separation between the role of the chief fire officer and the authority and believe that this can be achieved quickly through appropriate schemes of delegation and constitutional arrangements. This is already the case across many fire and rescue services, with local circumstances playing a role in how those schemes work in individual services.

4.2 Both the operational and political leadership of the sector have distinct and complementary roles to play. Both will bring their own expertise and experiences into discussions on the service, which will ensure that better outcomes are achieved. Ensuring that chief fire officers have the ability to make operational decisions is important, as is maintaining political oversight and accountability. We are pleased that the White Paper recognises the importance of this relationship with chief fire officers being "properly held to account for performance by strong governance".

4.3 We would welcome the opportunity to input further into this as the government seeks to define the balanced leadership model.

4.4 There should be a clear understanding between each of what their respective roles are, however, it should be for local areas to determine how best to resolve issues and work effectively at a local level, based on clear principles of good governance, such as those outlined in our document "Leading the fire sector".

4.5 There should be a mature level of discussion and challenge to ensure that services are delivering for their communities. Mutual trust and honest communication should characterise the relationship between chief fire officers and their governance structures. As democratic representatives of their community FRAs have a duty to ensure that that voice is properly represented in decisions affecting the running of the service, whilst also having due regard for the professional expertise of their chief fire officer.

4.6 By working together with clear processes for resolving issues, and discussions over issues such as closing fire stations, staff, crewing levels, etc and their impact on budgets and the estate, this should lead to the right decisions being made at a local level. This is especially important as FRAs are the employer, not the chief fire officer, as well as holding responsibility for the estate and the budget.

4.7 There will be times when there will be both strategic and operational elements to a decision. Crewing is a particular example where there are both strategic and operational issues that should be considered – for instance a change to crewing could mean that a station changes from 24-hour crewing to day crewing plus or retained. The impact on the local community must therefore be a fully considered and

appropriately represented in any decision making alongside the operational elements of any change.

4.8 We look forward to contributing to further discussions on the proposed balanced leadership model, and ensuring that there is an appropriate delineation between the strategic and operational leadership. The current list does not reflect the complexities of decision making, for instance governance involvement in the appointment of senior management beyond just the Chief Fire Officer would be appropriate, as they would be a key part of the team delivering on the strategic priorities of the governance.

5 Legal entity of chief fire officers

5.1 We do not believe that chief fire officers need to be made corporations sole, as operational independence can be achieved more easily and quickly through other means, without the need for further legislation. We acknowledge that there will be some areas where it may be locally determined to be the best model, in London for instance.

5.2 For county fire and rescue services corporation sole would cause very significant difficulties in their operation. Many county chief fire officers sit within a wider management team structure within a county council, rather than at chief executive level, and may not sit on the strategic management team. If chief fire officers were made corporation sole in county fire and rescue services, that may pose challenges over the employment of staff, the ownership and disposal of the estate, difficulties may also be created for back office functions such as IT, HR and legal advice which are a part of the county council and how these would be paid for. If these issues are to be resolved new legislation would be needed to regulate and resolve these issues in advance of any introduction of corporation sole.

5.3 Ring fenced budgets could potentially also play into the difficulties facing counties as a result of this change. It should be for local services to determine if ring fencing would be appropriate in their area, or if there are other considerations that would make ring fencing unsuitable. Integration, access to wider council funding, including capital funding and reserves, and joint working across a county council can have positive benefits to the public and this should be weighed when looking at any changes that would potentially restrict flexible working. Equally this may lead to funding being ring fenced to a particular level, that is not appropriate into the longer term. Careful consideration is needed to ensure that there are no unintended outcomes from ring fencing.

6 Clear distinction between strategic and operational planning

6.1 We wish to ensure that there is a clear line of accountability in any proposed changes. The chief fire officer will need to provide assurance that they are meeting the strategic objectives as set out within any strategic plan, or the CRMP/IRMP if this stays the same. We know that this separation is in place in Mayoral areas and PFCC areas.

People

7 Industrial relations and pay machinery

7.1 We welcome the opportunity to participate in the independent review proposed by the Government to review the current pay negotiation machinery and consider the

potential of any alternative proposals to achieve similar results. We would be pleased to input into the Terms of Reference as they are developed for the review.

7.2 There is always an opportunity to learn from best practice in other sectors and improve, however we are supportive of the work of the National Employers and the National Joint Council (NJC). The LGA recognises the importance of industrial relations stability in the sector nationally which existing arrangements have provided over recent years. Furthermore, it has played a fundamental role in facilitating resolutions to local disagreements and improving relationships at local level.

7.3 It should also be noted that the NJC is a national body covering all four nations in the UK, rather than just an English body. This must be taken into account when conducting any independent review of the machinery.

7.4 The White Paper suggests that the national negotiation mechanisms have been a barrier to a "rapid and flexible response" and has resulted in services "struggling to adapt", with chief fire officers being unable to deploy resources as they see fit. The White Paper particularly mentions the tripartite agreements as an example of this in practice.

7.5 The tripartite agreements were between the National Employers, Fire Brigades Union and National Fire Chiefs Council. The tripartite agreements enabled local flexibility and work, rather than hindering the process. Without the tripartite agreements, it would have meant that each local area would have had to negotiate individually with local union representatives about what employees could do, taking up valuable time and resources that could have been spent elsewhere in responding to the pandemic.

7.6 Those who were engaged in work as a result of the tripartite agreements or other local additional work agreements were volunteering to be a part of the response to the pandemic, as this work was outside of their current terms and conditions.

7.7 If chief fire officers had had operational independence or were the employers (through corporation sole) during the pandemic, they would still not have been able to deploy their resources against employees' terms and conditions. They would still have needed to rely on volunteers or to consult/re-negotiate roles at a local level.

7.8 The strong density of union membership within the sector is not likely to change, meaning that individual chief fire officers may need to negotiate at a local level, with unions with a strong national presence. This will require significant time and resources and may lead to greater fragmentation. Any changes to the negotiating machinery should be carefully considered within this context.

8 Modern Working Practices

8.1 The White Paper proposes that chief fire officers should have the flexibility to deploy their resources to help address current and future threats as well as play an active role in the wider health and public safety agenda. We are very supportive of ensuring that services are flexible and able to respond to crises and their communities effectively.

8.2 As a part of our work on Fit for the Future we have said that local areas must have a clear understanding of the risks that they face through a high-quality and evidence-based community risk management plan (CRMP), 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. Services will work to protect the most vulnerable people in their communities, tackling the health

inequalities that put their wellbeing at risk, this could include a variety of work, dependent on local circumstances and needs. It would also be subject to having the appropriate equipment, training, and resources to do so.

8.3 It must be recognised however, that asking fire and rescue service employees to undertake other work and duties is only possible within what is permitted in their current contracts of employment which in turn reflect arrangements agreed at national, and additionally, local levels, Any significant variation may result in the need to negotiate changes. Fire and rescue services would also need the appropriate resources, as well as employees with the right training and equipment to do so.

9 Nurturing new and existing talent

9.1 We welcome the Government's focus on ensuring that the fire and rescue service's employees have the right skills, talents and values to meet the challenges that they will be facing in a changing world. We absolutely see the value in drawing our employees from the widest pool of talent possible, though we would wish to ensure that any new entry requirements are proportionate and the implications of raising of entry requirements have been fully considered. We wish to ensure that staff have the skills, talents, and values that we need to make them effective employees and leaders and we would not wish to see people who have the right attributes unable to join the service due changes in entry requirements.

9.2 There may be unintended consequences of an increase in entry requirements on equality, diversity and inclusion in the sector which must be carefully considered. There are also particular concerns around the introduction of different entry requirements for on-call staff. It is well documented that there are issues throughout the country recruiting on-call staff, and we would not wish to see this exacerbated any further.

9.3 We agree that an array of roles could benefit from a direct talent and management scheme, from station and area manager to senior management. The fire and rescue service should be open to talent from across different sectors, and we would not wish local flexibility to appoint the right person for the role to be hampered. This should also be considered when looking at the introduction of a new 21st Century Leadership Course.

9.4 As outlined in Fit for the Future we believe that services should focus their investment in the selection, training, and development of employees to maintain, support and improve their skills throughout their careers, underpinned by effective local strategies for workforce development with clear competence standards to workforce performance.

Professionalism

10 21st Century Leadership course

10.1 We agree that effective leadership plays a crucial role in driving the performance of the sector. The tasks facing a new chief fire officer will require a whole range of skills which could come under the new leadership course. We would therefore propose that any new Leadership Course takes in the whole range of leadership and managerial issues likely to face the fire and rescue service going forwards to ensure that it is fit for purpose in preparing future leaders. Consideration needs to be given to how the sector should develop in the future and therefore what skills leaders need as they progress.

There are a wide range of issues that could be usefully covered by such a course that would support the development of the sector and its leadership.

10.2 All staff have a role as leaders within the service, this should be recognised by the Government through the development of broader leadership courses. This would enable fire and rescue services to develop and support leaders within their organisations through appropriate selection, training and development programmes as we outlined in Fit for the Future.

10.3 There are a number of existing programmes and frameworks in the sector currently that can usefully be the starting point for the development of any new Government programme.

10.4 We want to ensure that fire and rescue services can recruit from the broadest pool possible, therefore services should still have the option to appoint people from outside the service who can then undertake the Leadership Course at an accelerated rate, be appointed contingent on completing the Leadership Course within a fixed period or have an equivalent qualification. By enabling this flexibility, the Government would empower local services to make decisions based on the local circumstances, challenges and issues which will play into these recruitment decisions. We would not wish to see fire and rescue authorities pool of candidates for senior management positions limited.

11   Research

11.1 The White Paper proposes that a central fire and rescue research capability could undertake activities collaborating, commissioning, conducting and collating research. These would be helpful areas to concentrate on and the research function could usefully become a part of the proposed Independent College of Fire.

12   Clear expectations

12.1 The LGA supports the work of the FSB, and is a Board member alongside the NFCC, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the Home Office

Ethics and Culture

13 Code of Ethics

13.1 The LGA is committed to ensuring that the sector has an inclusive and welcoming culture, underpinned by the Core Code of Ethics and associated standards, as outlined in Fit for the Future.

13.2 The LGA, NFCC and APCC worked together to create the Core Code of Ethics (the Core Code), which was introduced in May 2021. it was developed by the sector, for the sector and is currently being embedded in services across the country.

13.3 We wish to ensure that there is no delay in embedding the behaviours outlined in the Core Code. Whilst there are some clear advantages to making a code of ethics statutory, legislation to make a new code will take time to come into force and there are mechanisms in place such as the standard and HMICFRS to ensure that the Core Code is being adhered to currently. We would not want there to be ambiguity in fire and rescue services around the importance of implementing and embedding the Core

Code whilst awaiting any new legislation. It is important the fire and rescue services can use the Core Code now to improve the culture.

13.4 If the Government are minded to make a Code of Ethics statutory, some consideration must be given for how this would work within a county council context, where there may be different codes of conduct that employees would be expected to adhere to. Furthermore, if not the current Core Code of Ethics, further engagement with the sector including all interested parties would need to take place creating even further delay including in then communicating and embedding the 'new' Code at local level.

14 Fire and Rescue Oath

14.1 We support the Government's drive to ensure that the culture of the service is inclusive and welcoming, underpinned by clear ethical principles. We feel that there are mechanisms that are in place now to achieve these outcomes, without the introduction of an Oath, which would require legislation. We wish to ensure that the Core Code of Ethics, with the accompanying standard and guidance, is being adhered to and is fully embedded across services.

14.2 The Core Code of Ethics provides a baseline for discussion regarding behaviours and provides the fire and rescue service with a blueprint from which to structure their own behavioural framework. All personnel have a duty to act where a concern is raised about any behaviour, level of performance or conduct which may amount to a contravention of the Core Code.

14.3 Police officers undertake an oath when appointed as servants of the crown, they are independent legal officials with personal liability for their actions, and separate from political influence over their roles. This is a different role to firefighters, who are directly employed by FRAs to carry out their duties.

14.4 There are also concerns about whether or not employees who have been in the service for a significant period of time would be receptive to the introduction of an Oath, especially if there have never been any concerns regarding their own behaviour. This could make it challenging to introduce, especially if it was mandatory, across the whole of the service where the possibility of making it into an employment issue might undermine the intent.

15 Independent Strategic Oversight

15.1 The LGA welcomes the Government's commitment to support the sector through a new College and agree with the proposed themes. We agree on the vital importance of any new College working with the sector, and we would be delighted to play our part in the creation of the College and its programmes as representatives of the governance of the sector.

15.2 There are a number of alternatives that could be appropriate for the College of Fire, we would be keen to discuss any potential proposals for the hosting of the College with Government. It is important that the College is seen to be independent and providing the services and programmes that fire and rescue services, employees and governance want and need. To ensure that the College is truly sustainable we believe that it will need funding from the Government into the long term.

Key issues for the sector

16 Resilience

16.1 Unlike some public services which are demand led, the fire and rescue service needs to have enough resources available to provide an emergency response even in times of exceptional demand. This includes the ability to deal with large scale emergencies and/or a range of smaller incidents but all occurring simultaneously and/or incidents that are of extended duration. This often can rely on mutual aid arrangement being in place and coming into force at times of exceptional need.

16.2 The recent spate of wildfires during the heatwave in July however has shown the difficulties that can be experienced when the whole country is enduring the same challenging conditions. Multiple fire and rescue services declared major incidents, with services across the country responding to multiple incidents.

16.3 Ensuring that the sector is resilient and appropriately resourced to the risks facing the country both now and into the future, is therefore vital. Especially as weather related incidents such as wildfires and flooding are likely to increase as a result of climate change.

17 Fit for the Future

17.1 Fit for the Future has been developed by the LGA, the NFCC and the National Employers (England) to set out the future role of the fire and rescue service and the improvements that we will need to make in the next five years to achieve them.

17.2 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, the service will do this to save lives and protect local communities.

17.3 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.

17.4 The evidence considered within Fit for the Future identified 12 improvement objectives, which have been divided into three themes:
　17.4.1.　Service Delivery – the role of the Fire and Rescue Service
　17.4.2.　Leadership, People, and Culture
　17.4.3.　National Infrastructure and Support

17.5 The improvement objectives are set out in **Appendix A** of this narrative.

18 Sector led improvement

18.1 The LGA has a successful record developing and delivering improvement programmes for a wide range of services, in particular our peer review and support offer, which has delivered sustainable and impactful improvement across local government.

18.2 Our members have indicated support for the development of a Fire Sector Led Improvement Offer. Based on experience from our improvement work in other areas, and initial conversations with key stakeholders we have started to shape what we could offer to Fire authorities, if appropriate funding was mobilised. The LGA can also play a role in supporting the sector to respond to inspection recommendations. However, activity in this area is not currently funded through the LGAs DLUHC grant.

18.3 The LGA would welcome the opportunity to discuss this work and potential funding streams further with the Home Office.

19 Pensions

19.1 The service needs to ensure that it has the resources and staffing it needs to meet its ambitions for the future.

19.2 We are concerned that there are other issues it would be helpful to consider when looking at the reform of the sector. We are aware that a number of chief fire officers have felt compelled to retire due to issues around pensions tax. Pensions tax issues are reportedly having an impact on the ability of the sector to attract and retain chief fire officers and other senior officers, and we expect this issue to persist for a significant period of time prior to a new cohort of chiefs with different pensions arrangements ready to take up the reigns. We would not want to see the talent pool shrink any further, particularly where this may negatively impact on equality, diversity, and inclusion

19.3 Across public sector workforces, anecdotal evidence suggests that an increasing number of scheme members are incurring year on year tax charges and potentially incurring numerous scheme pays debits. There is a growing concern across employers, that their employees are making decisions such as not pursuing promotion or opting out of the scheme to avoid further pension growth. For the smaller workforces in particular, this concern can lead to a smaller talent pool to recruit from.

19.4 In 2019, the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board undertook a data collection exercise to seek evidence from FRAs on the impact of pensions tax within their organisations. The summary report presented to the Board on 14 March 2019 clearly demonstrates the level of concern.

19.5 The position will be somewhat mitigated in the long-term due to all pension scheme members building up service in the reformed 2015 scheme from 1 April 2022, which has a less generous accrual rate, is based on career-average earnings rather than final salary and has a later normal retirement age of 60. However, individuals with a significant length of service in the 1992 scheme who achieve a substantial promotion are still likely to incur an unwanted tax charge and subsequent reduction to their pension benefits.

19.6 The Board has a long-standing action to consider whether a business case can be put forward to government to request more flexibility across the scheme to allow individuals to manage their pension growth more effectively, while noting that evidence of impact on frontline services would be essential. One suggestion would be the introduction of a 50/50 scheme as in the Local Government Pension Scheme where members pay half the contribution rate and build up half the benefit. Increased education and access to independent financial advice would also be greatly welcomed.

Responses to the consultation questions

People

Modern Working Practices

Q1: To what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should have the flexibility to deploy resources to help address current and future threats faced by the public beyond core fire and rescue duties?

==Strongly agree== / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Public Safety

Q2: To what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should play an active role in supporting the wider health and public safety agenda?

==Strongly agree / Agree==   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Business Continuity

Q3: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the business continuity requirements set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 provide sufficient oversight to keep the public safe in the event of strike action?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Pay Negotiation

Q4: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the current pay negotiation arrangements are appropriate?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response

==See paragraphs 7.1 to 7.8.==

Nurturing New and Existing Talent

Q6: To what extent do you agree/disagree that consistent entry requirements should be explored for fire and rescue service roles?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.

==See paragraphs 9.1 to 9.4,.==

Q8: To what extent do you agree/disagree that other roles, in addition to station and area managers, would benefit from a direct entry and talent management scheme?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Professionalism

A 21st Century Leadership Offer

Q9: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed introduction of a 21st century leadership programme?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.

See paragraphs 10.1 – 10.4.

Fit for the Future (FfF), an initiative developed in a partnership between the National Employers (England), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) sets out a joint picture of the future for all fire and rescue services in England. Leadership, People and Culture is a key theme of FfF and clear ambitions around this have been developed following extensive engagement across fire and rescue authorities (Chairs, Portfolio holders, PFCCs and Deputy Mayors) and within fire and rescue services (CFOs and other senior managers). This includes the development of common approaches and leadership frameworks that set out service values, expectations, and behaviours. Any work around the development of a leadership programme should be informed by and compliment FfF.

Q11: To what extent do you agree/disagree that completion of the proposed 21st century leadership programme should be mandatory before becoming an assistant chief fire officer or above?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Smarter Use of Data

Q12: To what extent do you agree/disagree that each of the activities outlined above are high priorities for helping improve the use and quality of fire and rescue service data?

- A national data analytics capability.
- Data-focused training.
- Consistent approaches to structuring data
- Clear expectations for data governance
- Securing data-sharing agreements.

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q13: What other activities, beyond those listed above, would help improve the use and quality of fire and rescue service data? Please give the reasons for your response.

Accurate data is critical to driving improvements in the way the service is deployed, managed and evaluated. The LGA welcomes initiatives to improve this including the development of a national data analytics capability that will serve the needs of all Fire and Rescue Services.

Across all the areas of improvement identified in Fit for the Future (FfF) there is a need for current accurate data to further support change. 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.

An additional priority should be the replacement of the current Incident Recording System with a modern National Fire Data Collection System (NFDCS) that meets the needs of the service.

It is also important that there is a longer-term plan for investment and development in developing data and digital capabilities that supports better service delivery to the public.

We would also welcome any national efforts to improve data governance and overcome data sharing barriers between partners, particularly with health and police to ensure that further targeting of activities could take place.

Research

Q14: To what extent do you agree/disagree that each of the activities outlined above are high priorities for improving the use and quality of fire evidence and research?

- Collaborating
- Commissioning
- Conducting
- Collating

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q15: What other activities, beyond those listed above, would help improve the use and quality of evidence and research on fire and other hazards? Please provide the reasons for your responses.

The priorities above set out important ways to improve the use and quality of evidence and research. We would like to see research that provides greater insight into early intervention and prevention, supporting FRSs to target work effectively and identify new and innovative ways to prevent fires and other emergencies.

Additional activities could include learning from recent events and incidents, as well as de-briefs from other industries and sectors and research findings from academia both from the UK and internationally and feedback from HMICFRS.

Code of Ethics

Q16: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of a statutory code of ethics for services in England?

Strongly agree / Agree / <mark>Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/</mark> Strongly disagree

Q17: To what extent do you agree/disagree that placing a code of ethics on a statutory basis would better embed ethical principles in services than the present core code of ethics?

Strongly agree / Agree / <mark>Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/</mark> Strongly disagree

Q18: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the duty to ensure services act in accordance with the proposed statutory code should be placed on operationally independent chief fire officers?

Strongly agree / Agree / <mark>Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/</mark> Strongly disagree

Q19: To what extent do you agree/disagree with making enforcement of the proposed statutory code an employment matter for chief fire officers to determine within their services?

Strongly agree / Agree / <mark>Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/</mark> Strongly disagree

Fire and Rescue Service Oath

Q20: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of a fire and rescue service oath for services in England?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / <mark>Disagree/ Strongly disagree</mark>

Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.

<mark>See paragraphs 14.1 to 14.4.</mark>

Q22: To what extent do you agree/disagree that an Oath would embed the principles of the Code of Ethics amongst fire and rescue authority employees?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / <mark>Disagree/ Strongly disagree</mark>

Q23: To what extent do you agree/disagree with an Oath being mandatory for all employees?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q24: To what extent do you agree/disagree that breach of the fire and rescue service oath should be dealt with as an employment matter?

Strongly agree / Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / <mark>Disagree/ Strongly disagree</mark>

Professionalism Summary

Q25: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the five areas listed above are priorities for professionalising fire and rescue services?

- Leadership
- Data
- Research
- Ethics
- Clear Expectations

==Strongly agree== / ==Agree==   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q26: What other activities, beyond the five listed above, could help to professionalise fire and rescue services?

The 'Leadership, people and culture' theme (Theme 2) in Fit for the Future sets out a range of improvement objectives including competence, attracting, and retaining employees, and inspirational and inclusive leadership. A range of activities to support these objectives have been developed and these could be considered by government as part of any future work on professionalism.

Independent Strategic Oversight

A College of Fire and Rescue

Q27: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of an independent College of Fire and Rescue to lead the professionalisation of fire and rescue services?

==Strongly agree== / ==Agree==   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response

==See paragraphs 15.1 to 15.2==

Governance

Governance Structures

Q29: To what extent do you agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility for fire and rescue services in England to a single elected individual?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q30: What factors should be considered when transferring fire governance to a directly elected individual?

Please provide the reasons for your response.

See paragraphs 3.1 to 3.9.

The Mayoral Model

Q31: Where Mayoral Combined Authorities already exist, to what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue functions should be transferred directly to these MCAs for exercise by the Mayor?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Police and Crime Commissioners

Q32: To what extent do you agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility for fire and rescue services in England to police and crime commissioners?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Other Options, such as an executive councillor

Q33: Apart from combined authority mayors and police and crime commissioners, is there anyone else who we could transfer fire governance that aligns with the principles set out above?

Yes   No

Q34: If yes, please explain other options and your reasons for proposing them.

See paragraphs 3.6 – 3.9.

Q35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the legal basis for fire and rescue authorities could be strengthened and clarified?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response

See paragraph 3.8.

Boundaries

Q37: To what extent do you agree/disagree that boundary changes should be made so that fire and rescue service areas and police force/combined authorities (where present) areas are coterminous?

Strongly agree / Agree   / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree/ Strongly disagree

Fire Funding

Q38: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ring-fencing the operational fire budget within fire and rescue services run by county councils and unitary authorities?

Strongly agree   *Agree*   ==*Neither agree nor disagree*   *Disagree*==   *Strongly disagree*

Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.

==See paragraph 5.3.==

A Balanced Leadership Model

Q40. To what extent do you agree with this proposed approach (as outlined in the table above)?

Strongly agree   *Agree*   *Neither agree nor disagree*   *Disagree*   *Strongly disagree*

Q41. Do you have any other comments to further support your answer?

==See paragraphs 4.1 to 4.8.==

==**Q42**. Are there any factors we should consider when implementing these proposals?==

See paragraphs 4.1-4.8.

Q43: What factors should we consider when giving chief fire officers operational independence?

Please provide the reasons for your opinions.

==See paragraphs 4.1 to 4.8.==

Legal Entity of Chief Fire Officers

Q44: What factors should we consider should we make chief fire officers corporations sole?

==See paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2.==

Clear Distinction Between Strategic and Operational Planning

Q45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the responsibility for strategic and operational planning should be better distinguished?

Strongly agree   *Agree*   *Neither agree nor disagree*   *Disagree*   *Strongly disagree*

Q46: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the strategic plan should be the responsibility of the fire and rescue authority?

Strongly agree   *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree*   *Disagree*   *Strongly disagree*

Q47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the operational plan should be the responsibility of the chief fire officer?

Strongly agree   *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree*   *Disagree*   *Strongly disagree*

Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.

See paragraph 6.1.

20 Appendix A: Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives

21 Theme	22 Improvement Objective
23 Service Delivery – the role of the Fire and Rescue Service	24 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.
	25 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.
	26 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.
	27 4. The benefits of all fire and rescue service activity are measured and evaluated so that decision making about resource allocation can be improved.
28 Leadership, people, and culture	29 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.
	30 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.
	31 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.
	32 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.
	34 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.
33 National infrastructure and support	35	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.
	36	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.
	37	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.