

Title of Paper	Fire Standards Progress Report
Decision or Information	For information
Title and Date of Meeting	LGA Fire Service Management Committee 6 th December 2023
Attachments	None

Summary

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

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) last met formally on 9th October 2023. During the Board meeting, the members were asked;

- to approve the response to the HMICFRS Review into Culture within Fire and Rescue Services, which led to the revision of three Fire Standards.
- Prioritise the work streams for the remainder of the financial year.
- Approve the EDI statement explaining how the Board ensure EDI is appropriately referenced within its standards, prior to publication on the website.

Recommendations

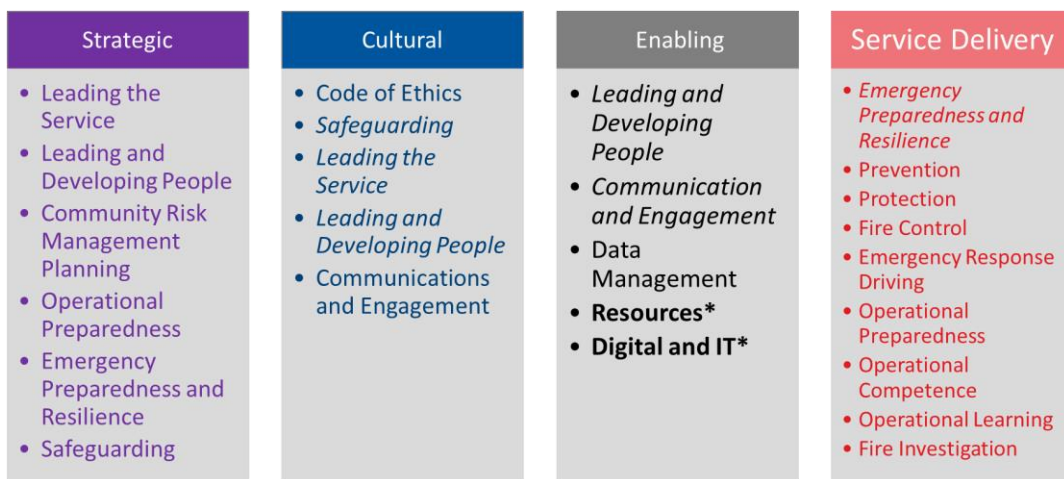
Members are asked to:

- 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; and
- encourage the monitoring of the benefits of the Fire Standards in their services.

Current Status of the Publication and Production of Fire Standards

There are now sixteen approved and published Fire Standards forming a complimentary suite of describing what good looks like across the activities performed by services. They are all available on the [Fire Standards Board](#) website.

The figure below shows the published Fire Standards and the categories of activity they link to. Some standards appear in more than one category. The areas in bold are where Fire Standards are currently in development.



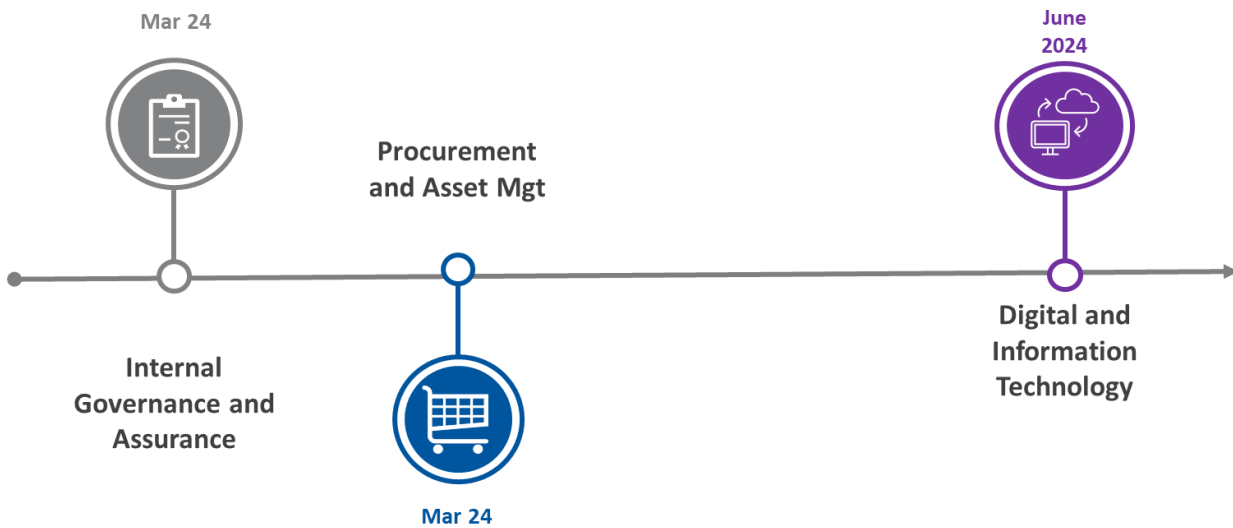
It is anticipated that the full suite of standards will total approximately 19.

Services are encouraged to view the standards as a holistic suite that when considered together, provide a framework for services to benchmark and self-assess themselves against as part of their ongoing work to continually improve.

Phase Three Fire Standards Development

Consultations for the Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard and the Procurement and Asset Management Fire Standard are now in progress. All services are encouraged to consider the draft standards and respond with their views via the consultation questionnaire. Details of how to take part in the consultation can be found on the [FSB website](#)

The Board anticipate both standards will be published in Spring 2024, subject to consultation as shown in the figure below:



Progress with Development Work

Finance Fire Standard

A decision about the need for a specific standard for finance related activities was reached by the FSB in Autumn 2023. The decision was not to proceed with a single standard, but to integrate identified elements of good practice relating to financial practices within other relevant standards. It was agreed this was a more appropriate approach at this time and would help avoid any confusion with the extensive range of guidance and legislative requirements for financial matters already applicable to all public services.

Digital and Information Technology

The remaining area of activity being considered for potential Fire Standards is digital and Information Technology.

Discovery and scoping work has commenced with liaison with subject matter experts and drafting work due to take place in early 2024.

Review of Fire Standards

The HMICFRS Spotlight Report on Culture and Values published in Spring 2023, made several recommendations for the FSB . After collaborative work with the NFCC, three Fire Standards have been reviewed and revised to emphasise the importance of and clarify how services should approach Safeguarding, the handling cases of misconduct and background checks, especially to accommodate requirements in the revised Safeguarding legislation.

The revised standards include:

- Leading the Service
- Leading and Developing People
- Safeguarding.

At its last meeting in October, the FSB agreed the work undertaken had met the requirements of the HMICFFRS recommendations and has informed the HMICFRS such along with copies of the revised standards.

This exceptional review work was carried out in addition to the original development work agreed at the start of this financial year.

The FSB's periodic review schedule is based on reviewing standards when they have been published for three years unless a requirement to do so is identified sooner. In which case an exceptional review may be called.

At its last meeting in October, agreement was reached to prioritise completing the suite of Fire Standards before commencing any planned or exceptional review work as no feedback from the services, or new learning had been identified that may impact any existing Fire Standard significantly.

This will be kept under review and considered when planning work for the 2024-2025 financial year.

Implementation support

The FSB, through the NFCC Fire Standards and Implementation Teams, will 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 inform the NFCC Fire Standards Team on fsb@nfcc.org.uk.

Supporting local achievement of Fire Standards

The support of Fire Authority members is pivotal in helping to support the work of the FSB that has developed the suite of national standards and supporting their officers in raising awareness of the standards within their service.

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 notes for 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 should now be 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.