

PROGRESS REPORT

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

Summary

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

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

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

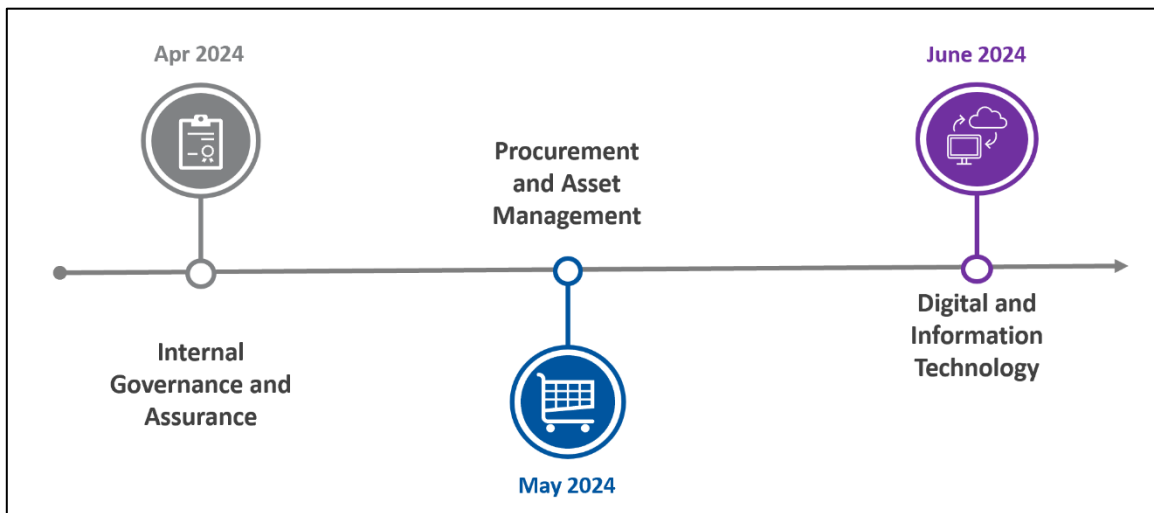
Recommendations

Members are asked to:

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

Phase Three Fire Standards Development

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



Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard

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

Procurement and Asset Management Fire Standard

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

Digital and Information Technology Fire Standard

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

Safeguarding Fire Standard amendment

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

Implementation support

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

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

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

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

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

Supporting local achievement of Fire Standards

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

Background Information

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

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

The LGA representative on the Board is Cllr Greg Brackenridge.

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

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

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

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

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