

MINUTES

Date: Thursday 3 September 2020
Time: 14:00– 16.00hrs
Venue: Virtual Meeting Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Suzanne McCarthy (SMcC) – Chair
Alison Sansome (AS) – Vice-Chair
Jonny Bugg (JB) – Home Office
Cllr Nick Chard (NC1) – Local Government Association (LGA)
Nick Collins (NC2) – NFCC Central Programme Office
Roy Wilsher (RW) – National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

Apologies: Julia Mulligan (JM) – Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC)

In attendance: Joy Flanagan (JM) – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)
Sadie Bryant (SB) – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)
Natasha Elia (NE) – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO)
Jessica Norman (JN) – Local Government Association (LGA)

Introductions, welcome and apologies and conflicts of interest

Chair

The chair welcomed members to the meeting, Julia Mulligan sends her apologies and provided the chair with her comments on the Board papers virtually.

No conflicts of interest were expressed by Board members.

Minutes of meeting 4 June 2020 and matters arising

Chair

Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting 4 June 2020.

Action A034: CPO to facilitate a discussion with the HMICFRS sharing the draft Fire Standards to date to gain their feedback for Board.

In response to Action A034, JF confirmed that the CPO has and will continue to facilitate discussions with HMICFRS regarding integration of the Fire Standards into the HMICFRS' Inspection Frameworks and Judgement Criteria. It has been clarified that each HMICFRS pillar lead will be responsible for Fire Standards that relate to their part of the inspection and the Fire Standards will be integrated into the HMICFRS' Framework, as and when they are approved.

SMcC told the meeting that she, along with AS and JF, held an Introductory meeting with Fiona Dolman, LFB Transformation Director, to explain the work of the Fire Standards Board.

Recruitment

JF highlighted for the Board's information that the FSB Executive Support Team (within the NFCC Central Programme Office) now had appointed a Senior Project Manager and a Portfolio Analyst. A Communications Manager was yet to be recruited with interviews due to be scheduled by the end of October 2020.

Appendix A: Letter from the Minister to FSB Chair – The Chair referred to the letter received from the Minister which had been circulated with the Board papers and that she and the Vice-Chair proposed that she should reply to the Minister after the December Board meeting. This was agreed by the Board.

The Chair reported that Susan Ellison-Bunce (SEB) had commenced a new role within the London Fire Brigade and would no longer sit on the Board. The Chair referred to the paper's proposal that, given the role played by SEB on the Board and the maturity and make-up of the Board at present, she should not be replaced on the Board. She reported that Fiona Dolman had agreed with this and that JM was also in support. This could be reviewed again after the new head of CPO was appointed. The Board expressed their warm thanks to Susan for her contribution as a member of the Board and agreed that, at present, she should not be replaced.

RW noted that recruitment for the head of the CPO was ongoing with the aim to recruit as soon as possible. The recruitment was, however, reliant on LFB Procedures. NC2 would continue to hold interim day-to-day responsibility for the CPO until the appointment was made.

It was reported that Mark Hardingham would replace Roy Wilsher as NFCC Chair and on the Board from April 2021.

It was also reported that a Memorandum of Understanding with the Inspectorate had been agreed which would be published on the respective websites.

JF explained that after conversations with the People Programme project teams who are currently developing the Code of Ethics and Leadership Standards, it had become apparent that there was some confusion about the content of the Leadership Standard.

To help make the Board's position clear on the Leadership Standard's content, it was proposed that a commissioning brief should be created for that standard. It was proposed that commissioning briefs could be used for other standards, as necessary, as part of the standards development process.

SMcC explained that there were two decisions for the Board:

- To consider, and if content approve, the draft Commissioning Brief template (Appendix B of Paper 2); and
- To agree whether Subject Matter Experts (SME) should be involved in the drafting of commissioning briefs and/or invited to attend Board meetings to present their standard.

RW stated that both producing a Commissioning Brief and allowing the SME to attend the FSB meeting to provide more detail on the proposed Fire Standard were good suggestions. A discussion with the SME attending the meeting could enable the Board to understand conflicts of workload, time constraints and nuances in direction.

JB explained the need to ensure that the Fire Standards are owned by the sector and having SME's involved would be an important factor in assuring this. However, we needed to find a balance in ensuring the Board's independence in seeking clarification and challenge.

NC1 concurred with JB's comments and advised there should be a standardised look and feel to the Fire Standards to ensure consistency.

AS suggested that the Commissioning Brief should be drafted by the Board initially to ensure the Board was aligned in terms of its expectations and then used as the basis for further discussion with SMEs.

JF reminded the Board that there was guidance on how Fire Standards should be structured and developed to achieve consistency. The CPO would help monitor the look and feel of Fire Standards in development to ensure the consistency required by the Board was maintained.

Decision - D013 The Board approved the following:

- 1. The Commissioning Brief template (Appendix B)**
- 2. As necessary, a Commissioning Brief would be created prior to the development of a particular Fire Standard. The Brief would be drafted initially by the Board to aid dialogue with the Fire Standard development team allowing the CPO to clarify, as necessary.**
- 3. If the Board felt that it would assist, the Board may invite the person or persons leading on the development of a Fire Standard to a Board meeting.**

JF explained that the paper set out how the Board would report progress overall. She specifically mentioned the following:

- The FSB was on target to have five Fire Standards that have undergone consultation by December 2020;
- Two Fire Standards would be consulted on by February 2021; and
- It was anticipated that there would be seven Fire Standards published by the end of March 2021.

The consultation on the Operational Response Standard had been extended by a week due to requests by services based both on summer leave and extenuating circumstances relating to COVID. Initial analysis of the responses so far received did not identify any causes for concern.

JB requested clarification on which Fire Standards would have undergone consultation by December 2020. JF said these were:

- Operational preparedness;
- Operational learning;
- Operational competence;
- Code of Ethics; and
- Risk Management Planning.

JB advised that there were some changes within his team:

- Arooj Razvi had moved to a new role and had been replaced by Tom Pinchbeck; and
- Heather Kinzett had taken maternity leave and Anjili Mapara was providing her maternity cover for 12 months.

Action - A037 JB to arrange a meeting with the FSB Chairs and JB’s team.

Emergency response driving

JB said that he proposed to follow up this matter with the Department for Transport (DfT). During the meeting, he checked with his team on the status of a reply from the DfT to the Chairs letter and the potential for a meeting.

SMcC asked that she be sent a substantive response to the letter.

Action – A038 – JB to provide an update to the Board on whether the DfT were receptive to a meeting on Emergency Response Driving as suggested in the letter sent to the Department contained in the Board meeting pack.

Action – A039 – JB to request a response to the Chairs letter from the DfT.

Code of Ethics

It was reported that the draft Code of Ethics Fire Standard was almost ready for consultation. The Chair asked the Board to consider and discuss the following:

- If they supported the Code of Ethics Fire Standard and the Code of Ethics (Code) be published together as a joint consultation; and
- whether the Board was content to not use “national” or “core” in the Standard’s title but for it to be called *Code of Ethics for the Fire and Rescue Services (England)*.

Decision - D014 - The Board decided the name of the Fire Standard should be ‘Code of Ethics for the Fire and Rescue Services (England)’

RW advised that from an NFCC Leadership Project Board perspective the consultations for both the Fire Standard and the Code should not be published simultaneously as proceeding in this way could cause confusion by consulting on a Fire Standard when the Code it related to had not yet been agreed through NFCC and LGA governance processes.

JN clarified that the draft Code had been viewed only by the working group that created the document. Therefore, the document would need to go to the NFCC for viewing prior to being issued to the LGA Lead members who were meeting on the 25 September 2020. The working group were then proposing a four-week consultation. Once that was complete with final amendments the document would then follow the final sign off process with the Council and the full LGA Fire Services Management Committee for publication in mid-late December 2020. The concern was that there might be the need for a second consultation if major amendments were required post-consultation. The LGA consensus was that the Code must be finalised before the Fire Standard could go out to consultation.

NC1 said that he would like the consultations for Fire Standard and the Code to run in parallel to keep up the momentum. He suggested that the Board was not asking to design the Code, but a Fire Standard that addressed how the Code was applied, implemented, and demonstrated.

AS suggested that how a consultation would be understood was dependent on how the consultation was presented. Therefore, the relationship between the two could be explained in accompanying communications and it would be understood that the content could require amendment subject to the consultation. Fundamentally it did not make sense she felt to disaggregate the Fire Standard and the underpinning Code in this case. The Fire Standard was seeking to make the Code applicable.

JF said that, in principle, the Fire Standard outlined what a service with a positive working culture would look like and the Code was one of several things that a service can utilise to achieve that goal. HMICFRS had found that generally where a service had clearly outlined ethical conduct, they had a more positive working culture. Whereas the services that did not have a clear ethical code that staff could relate to or point to had more challenges with the culture throughout all organisational levels. HMICFRS maintained that the focus should be on what we are trying to achieve which is creating more positive working cultures. The Fire Standard was designed to set out what that culture should look like and not seek to set out what the ethical code contained. In conclusion, JF concurred that the two should be combined into a joint consultation.

SMcC said that it was unlikely that the consultation on the Code and its finalisation would lead to radical changes. Therefore, she felt that the Code and Fire Standard could go for a joint consultation recognising that, although the Code being consulted on was not the final version, it was a good indicator of what the end product would contain. SMcC also mentioned that JM had commented that it was important to keep up momentum, particularly on this important Fire Standard and that JM felt that both Code and Fire Standard should be circulated together.

RW noted that with many of the other Fire Standards recommended by the FSB, each Fire Standard would point to and reference underpinning guidance and supporting information for services. Additionally, it was a concern that this Fire Standard would not meet HMICFRS' timescales. However, there were numerous Fire Standards that would also not meet the HMICFRS' agreed timescales. If the Code followed the LGA process and was published first, the Fire Standard could still go through consultation and be published within this financial year, as agreed. Although this could be seen as an easy Fire Standard to complete, we should not rush the production of it.

JF explained that the aspiration was always that we would have guidance to underpin Fire Standards, although we know that in some cases not all guidance would be available ahead of the Fire Standard. However, the point RW made was understandable. Until we see the Code and the Fire Standard side by side, we would not be able to identify if there are any conflicts.

RW suggested that a meeting outside of the Board may be the most successful way to resolve the issue.

The Chair proposed that a meeting as RW suggested between the Chairs, NFCC and LGA be arranged before the next Board meeting to discuss how to progress the consultations on both the Code and the Fire Standard. This was agreed by the Board.

Action – A040 – FSB Chairs, NFCC and LGA to meet before the 12 October 2020 Board meeting and discuss how to move forward with the consultation on the Code of Ethics and the associated Fire Standard.

Leadership – Appendix B

JF explained that the paper's aim was to summarise how the project had progressed to date. Several activities at strategic level were identified within the Activity Framework for which expected leaders

would have responsibility. The goal was to identify what a well led organisation would look like. The HMICFRS had identified that there were issues around how people were managed which could be resolved by good leadership and processes implemented at a local level. The relationship between how an organisation is led and how people are managed needed to be separated from how future leaders are developed and what we expect of leaders. There was some confusion as to what we are concentrating on within a Fire Standard under the heading of leadership.

The Board was asked to consider and discuss the following topics:

- background information and draft Commissioning Brief;
- its own position on the aim and outcome of the Leadership Fire Standard; and
- the finalisation of the Commissioning Brief.

RW agreed with the approach and explained that it was very difficult to define a single Fire Standard for Leadership. Therefore, we should not try to define a single Fire Standard. Addressing many of the components that support good leadership was the right direction to take.

SMcC suggested that the Board approve the draft Commissioning Brief with the caveat that the introduction was amended explicitly to state that the Fire Standard would be covering a number of Leadership Standards, the full extent of which was yet to be determined.

JF proposed that the next steps would be to review the content of the Commissioning Brief in light of the Board's discussions, initiate the first Leadership Standard, which would be to define what a well led organisation looks like taking account of the responsibility of leaders. We could then discuss a second Fire Standard with the People Programme relating to the development of leaders within the service as opposed to trying to create an overarching Fire Standard.

SMcC, on behalf of JM, raised a query as to where Positive Action would sit within the Framework. JF advised that this would need to be discussed and explored further before a decision could be made.

Action – A041 JF to further discuss Positive Action directly with JM

Decision - D015 - the Board approved the Leadership Commissioning Brief (Appendix B) subject to amendment in line with Board discussions.

Fire Protection Fire Standard

JF advised that there was recognition that work had been done post-Hackitt review around a competency framework for Fire Safety Regulators. The NFCC had been heavily involved and had developed a competency framework which was now being referenced by many fire services. As this document was explicit in targeting individuals and individual competency, the aspiration was to develop an overarching Fire Standard that stated what a good function looks like. After discussions with Mark Hardingham, in his capacity as NFCC lead for Fire Protection, it was proposed to redefine this Fire Standard so that it was overarching, describing what a good Fire Protection function looks like underpinned by national guidance including a relevant competency framework.

The Board was asked to change title from the Protection Roles and Competence Fire Standard to Fire Protection Fire Standard. A report on the agreed scope and revised timeline for this Standard would be provided at the October Board meeting.

Decision – D016 - the Board agreed the proposed way forward explained by JF and agreed the Standard should become the ‘Fire Protection Standard’ going forward.

Community Risk Management Planning Standard

The Board also noted the progress made on the Community Risk Planning Fire Standard. A pre-consultation draft would be shared virtually with the Board as it is proposed to start the consultation early in October. The post-consultation draft would be presented back to the Board along with the results of the consultation at the December meeting.

Any Other Business

Chair

SMcC shared with the Board that the Chair was among recipients of a letter from Sir Tom Windsor of the 27th July 2020 asking for contributions to his next State of Fire Report. SMcC would like to respond as Chair of the Board to explain what the FSB was doing and how we hoped Fire Standards could be used to promote professionalism.

Action - A042 – SMcC to draft and send response to Sir Tom Windsor on behalf of the Board.

Next Meetings: 12th October 2020 and then 9th December 2020

Actions & Decisions

Action Log				
ID	Date	Action	Action Owner	Status
A037	2/9/2020	JB to arrange a meeting with the FSB Chairs and JB's team.	JB	CPO liaising with JB to arrange
A038	2/9/2020	JB to provide an update to the Board on whether the DfT were receptive to a meeting on Emergency Response Driving as suggested in the letter sent to the Department contained in the Board meeting pack.	JB	JB office informed CPO a response to the chairs letter is on its way.
A039	2/9/2020	JB to request a response to the Chairs letter from the DfT.	JB	To be confirmed.
A040	2/9/2020	FSB Chairs, NFCC and LGA to meet before the 12 October 2020 Board meeting and discuss how to move forward with the consultation on the Code of Ethics and the associated Fire Standard.	JF	Meeting arranged 28 th September 2020
A041	2/9/2020	JF to further discuss Positive Action directly with JM	JF	JF to secure time in JM diary
A042	2/9/2020	SMcC to draft and send response to Sir Tom Windsor.	SMcC	Completed. Letter sent in response.

Decision Log		
ID	Date	Decision
D013	2/9/2020	<p>The Board approved the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Commissioning Brief template (Appendix B) 2. As necessary, a Commissioning Brief would be created prior to the development of a particular Fire Standard. The Brief would be drafted initially by the Board to aid dialogue with the Fire Standard development team allowing the CPO to clarify, as necessary. 3. If the Board felt that it would assist, the Board may invite the person or persons leading on the development of a Fire Standard to a Board meeting.
D014	2/9/2020	The Board decided the name of the Fire Standard should be 'Code of Ethics for the Fire and Rescue Services (England)'
D015	2/9/2020	the Board approved the Leadership Commissioning Brief (Appendix B) subject to amendment in line with Board discussions.

D016	2/9/2020	the Board agreed the proposed way forward explained by JF and agreed the Standard should become the 'Fire Protection Standard' going forward.
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