

MINUTES

Date: Monday 09 December 2020
Time: 11:30 – 15:00
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) Julia Mulligan (JM) – Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC) Roy Wilsher (RW) – National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
In attendance:	Rachael Aldridge (RA) - Local Government Association (LGA) Natasha Elia (NE) – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) Joy Flanagan (JM) – NFCC Central Programme Office (CPO) Tom Pinchbeck (TP) – Home Office Eddie Smithwick (ES) – Association of Police & Crime Commissioners (APCC)
Guests:	Becci Bryant (BB) - National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Gill Gittins (GG) - Local Government Association (LGA) Nikki Richards (NR) - National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

Introductions, welcome and apologies and conflicts of interest

Chair

The chair welcomed members to the meeting.

No conflicts of interest were expressed by Board members.

Minutes of meeting and matters arising

Chair

Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting of the 12th October 2020. An update on the actions is given below:

A043 CPO to conduct user testing on the proposed new elements of the FSB website

In response to Action A043 Action completed and update provided within Agenda Item 3

A044 CPO to facilitate meeting between Chairs and Becci Bryant and draft Commissioning Brief.

In response to Action A044 The Chairs met with Becci Bryant on the 29th October 2020. Revised Commissioning Briefs for Leadership Fire Standards have been drafted and shared with the Board and with Becci Bryant. The amended Commissioning Briefs are attached to the paper for Agenda Item 4.

A045 CPO to issue final version of the Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) Fire Standard prior to consultation via email.

In response to Action A045 the draft CRMP Fire Standard was issued to Board members on the 5th November 2020.

A046 CPO to update the progress table colour coding, specify whether expected publication dates will be achieved.

In response to Action A046 Colour coding on the progress table amended and clarification of publication dates presented within Agenda Item 4.

A047 CPO to review Quality Assurance (QA) timescales once the pilot process had been completed.

In response to Action A047 Action remains open until pilot QA process completed in January 2021. This will be reported at the next Board in February 2021. **Action to remain on Matters Arising.**

A048 CPO to provide a consultation report and final draft proposals to the Board for the Operational Response Fire Standards.

In response to Action A048 Presented within Agenda Item 5.

A049 JM to promote the work of the FSB and consultations to other PFCC members.

In response to Action A049 JM confirmed that a Fire Standards WhatsApp group has been created for PFCC members.

A050 CPO to amend the Fire Standard template section header “what is required to meet this standard” to “To achieve this standard a service must....”.

In response to Action A050 This has been actioned with all Fire Standards now using the new section header.

A051 JB to facilitate a meeting being arranged with Chairs and the Minister in December 2020

In response to Action A051 Due to take place on 17th December. This is referred to in Agenda Item 3

A052 JF to provide clarity to JB on when the Leadership Fire Standard would be available for review.

In response to Action A052 Presented within Agenda Item 4.

SMcC provided the Board with an update both of meetings having taken place between the Chairs and key stakeholders and those which are planned in the following months.

Quality Assurance

JF presented the approach to Quality Assurance (QA) for Fire Standards and confirmed that due to current timelines, the first Fire Standards to go through the QA process would result in a report which would be shared via email with the Board. Any further QA reports for future Fire Standards would be presented at Board meetings, providing the timing of meetings coincided and did not cause any delay to publication. Otherwise, they would be circulated to Board members via email.

JM questioned how benefits realisation would be measured. JF clarified that benefits were drafted with their measurements in mind and in dialogue with the Inspectorate. There are aspirations to gain feedback from services about the benefits achieved.

SMcC suggested that a paper come to the Board at its next meeting, describing how benefits are developed and measured to which JM could provide input on how her service approached benefits realisation. RW supported the preparation of a paper which could assist services with local adoption and implementation. JF proposed that Zoe Billingham from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) could be invited to the next Board to assist with these discussions as well as discussing the outcome of COVID learning by services.

Action FSB-A054: CPO to produce a paper for the February Board meeting with input from JM, to describe how benefits are developed, measured, and realised.

Action FSB-A055: CPO to invite Zoe Billingham from HMICFRS to attend the next Board meeting to discuss both the measurement of benefits and learning from COVID.

User Website Testing

JF explained to the Board that, in accordance with the Board's suggestion, user testing had taken place with a range of different users. A general positive response to the website was received, with a few minor changes as listed in the Board paper to be considered. It is recognised good business practice to keep websites regularly reviewed and updated, and it was proposed that a review of the website would be appropriate four to six months after the publication of the first phase of Fire Standards. The publication of Fire Standards was very likely to drive increased use of the website. It was proposed that

a review be conducted at the end of 2021 to ensure the whole site remained fit for purpose and revise, as required.

Action FSB-A056: CPO to plan for a website review in December 2021 to ensure it remained fit for purpose and to identify any changes required

Item 4 – Paper 2 – Delivery Plan Progress Update

CPO

Code of Ethics Fire Standard – Becci Bryant (BB) and Gill Gittins (GG)

The Board welcomed BB and GG to the meeting to discuss the Core Code of Ethics (core code) in the context of the Code of Ethics Fire Standard.

BB summarised the development process followed for the core code explaining that a working group comprised of members from services which had performed well in the people and values behaviours element in the last round of HMICFRS' audits. She confirmed that as a result of the responses received to the consultation on the core code, discussions with various key stakeholders and a meeting chaired by the Minister on 3rd December 2020, the core code (and supporting guidance being developed) had undergone further amendment. She summarised the key changes that had been made in response to comments received. A fundamental change has been the inclusion of examples of what the core code would mean for all types of individuals as well as the implications for the organisation.

BB also advised that the guidance document would contain links to both other ethics related information and implementation support for services. She said that this approach would assist both supervisory and middle managers in discussions with their employees about what the core code means to them as individuals and as an organisation. It would also aid employees in their understanding of how to use the core code. AS stressed the importance of ensuring that the meaning of the core code to employees should be made clear to the reader in the core code itself without the need to read other supplementary documents and supporting information.

All agreed that the primary purpose of the Fire Standard and the core code was to drive cultural change in services and therefore it should include a positive foreword to highlight the difference the core code would make to employees, services, and the communities they served.

SMcC raised concerns with the anticipated publication timescale if a further consultation was needed on the collective suite of documents as was suggested by the Minister. BB explained that formal consultation did not normally take place on guidance documentation. However, there was value in conducting a targeted consultation with key stakeholders including PFCCs, APCC, Home Office, the LGA

Lead Members, the NFCC and its Steering Group on the full suite of documentation including the Fire Standard. BB advised that the working group was responding quickly to feedback, and she felt that it was realistic to assume that the target publication date of March 2021 could be achieved. She proposed to review the situation in early 2021 and advise if any issues had arisen.

JB agreed that this was a positive step and proposed that the core code be supported by the LGA, the NFCC and the APCC. A discussion took place about the appropriate endorsement of the Core Code by the relevant bodies. JM stressed the need to accept the changing governance landscape which now included Police Fire Crime Commissioners through the Association of Police Crime Commissioners (APCC). BB asked how other governance models such as the Mayoral Model be represented on documents such as the core code.

JM proposed a discussion between herself and NC1 about how future working between the LGA and the APCC be evolved outside of the meeting. NC1 acknowledged the complex history between the LGA and APCC and agreed that a discussion should take place. JB added that the way the recommendation from the HMICFRS had been phrased was unfortunate and potentially could be reviewed by the Inspectorate. He also proposed that the Home Office might also wish to endorse the core code when finalised.

RW, AS and JB supported the collective approach to multiple signatories on the core code.

Action FSB-A05X – CPO to liaise with the Home Office regarding the most appropriate engagement method for services governed through mayors.

Action FSB-A057: NC1 and JM to arrange a meeting to discuss the longer-term relationship between the LGA and APCC and the joint endorsement of future Fire Standards and supporting guidance.

JM wondered whether conducting user testing on the core code through focus groups would be beneficial. BB said that the working group had conducted testing of the core code when in draft with a number of station-based employees and once the core code was closer to completion that approach would continue.

JM also proposed that the core code might benefit from professional proof editing. BB confirmed that the CPO had applied basic proof reading and Plain English editing. However, if external technical authoring expertise was considered appropriate, then this could be organised. JF clarified that the CPO could coordinate professional proof editing on the final draft version of all documentation.

Action FSB-A058: CPO to liaise with BB to coordinate professional proof editing of the final draft documents and ensure alignment of language.

Leadership Fire Standards

The conversation then moved on to discuss the leadership Fire Standards. Following the discussion at the previous Board meeting, revised respective Commissioning Briefs had been prepared for the two proposed Leadership Fire Standards – one on a well-led organisation and the other on developing and promoting good leadership across services.

Developing Leaders Fire Standard

BB noted that the Commissioning Brief for the Developing Leaders Fire Standard would be reviewed at the Leadership Board in January 2021. Discussions regarding the two Leadership Fire Standards had taken place at the National Fire Chiefs Council where it was agreed that this was the right approach. CPO would work with BB to determine the timeline for delivery of the Developing Leaders Fire Standard.

NC1 felt that it was pertinent for senior managers and leaders to acquire a political awareness in the context of leading a fire and rescue service. This was not specifically addressed in the Developing Leaders Commissioning Brief and NC1 felt that it was important for this to be included

JM suggested that there should be a move away from capability-based frameworks to strength-based ones. She also emphasised the importance of including those responsible for recruiting Deputy Chief and Chief Fire Officers in the development of the Developing Leaders Fire Standard and suggested the creation of a working group for those with this responsibility. BB responded that the current thinking was based around technical leadership and command skills which are inclusive in terms of recruitment to ensure that roles are open to the best qualified people.

JM also said that she would like to see Positive Action included within the topic of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and proposed to BB that the ability to lead organisational change and have strategic planning skills was of key importance and should be addressed within this Fire Standard.

BB and GG left the meeting, however the discussions continued on the Leadership Fire Standards.

JM said that the relationship between the governing body and the Chief would be of interest to HMICFRS as it related to the debate on operational independence. She also noted that the quality of leadership was provided through governance arrangements and not just by operational leadership within the services. There was learning that could be drawn upon within the PFCCs such as the Policing Protocol which defined the relationship between the Police and PFCCs. JF suggested that the HMICFRS

could be brought in as peer reviewer as the Inspectorate had commented on leadership and governance within the services and there was a need to work with them to establish how they would ask for this information when they inspect and how services will evidence this.

Action FSB-A059: CPO to relay NC1's comments regarding leaders acquiring political awareness as a skill to the Leadership project team for consideration within the Developing Leaders Fire Standard.

Action FSB-A060: CPO to relay the suggestions made by JM to the Leadership Project relating to learning that could be drawn upon from PFCC's, such as the policing protocol and the involvement of HMICFRS in the Developing Leaders Fire Standard development.

Well-Led Organisation Fire Standard

JF confirmed that the well-led organisation Fire Standard would be developed through the CPO and in conjunction with various NFCC leads as it would span several areas of expertise. JB questioned if there was a need for a Chief Officer to sponsor this within the NFCC. JF responded that a strategic lead would be required, but some thought needed to go into determining who this may be. The CPO would consider this suggestion and liaise with the NFCC to confirm.

Action FSB-A061: CPO to set up meetings with representatives from all governing bodies to agree stakeholders and NFCC Lead for the well-led organisation Fire Standard development acknowledging the suggestion made by JB.

Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard (CRMP)

The Board welcomed NR to the meeting to discuss the CRMP Fire Standard.

NR summarised the process of developing the Fire Standard to date. The consultation had closed on 7th December 2020 and 42 responses had been received. Early indications showed that responses were generally positive. Detailed analysis was due to be completed in January 2021.

NR explained that it was anticipated that the Fire Standard would be developed first with a suite of guidance and information underpinning it following later. The plan was for there to be a full suite of guidance published by October 2021. JB noted the importance of progressing this guidance at pace as it was linked to key HMICFRS recommendations.

NR stressed that the development team was aware that many services would already be meeting what was required by the Fire Standard so little change may be needed by them. It was accepted this would not be the case for all services, and the Fire Standard would provide a benchmark for those to measure

themselves against and identify the areas where they needed to improve. NR confirmed that the Fire Standard aligned with those areas where services should be achieving as identified by HMICFRS.

RW said that the CRMP was one of the foundations of the fire and rescue service, and noted the good work achieved by NR and the team. He was pleased with the way this work has progressed. JB agreed about the importance of this Fire Standard and informed the Board that the Minister had written to the NFCC Lead (CFO Phil Loach) to congratulate the team on the development process and open approach adopted. JB emphasised the Minister's position which was that there needed to be clarity between Operational and Strategic Planning. NR responded that these comments had been taken on board to ensure the planning approaches complemented each other and were being considered in the guidance development.

NC1 stated that this Fire Standard would be pivotal in enabling better comparisons of risk management plans which had been an issue for communities and many stakeholders, in particular the representative bodies who were critical about the lack of standardisation in this subject area.

JM requested that the development team consider how community risk management planning was carried out under the various governance models and ensure that the various governing body responsibilities were accurately reflected.

NR responded that the Fire Standard was worded to address the requirements of all services regardless of their governance model. NR noted that there was an opportunity to better understand the Mayoral and PFCC-led governance models and would ensure any guidance reflected any distinctions between them.

JF noted that the CPO needed to review the language used to describe all governance models across each Fire Standard. NR noted that the CRP were developing a glossary of definitions and terms to support a more consistent use of terminology and language in all documents and guidance.

SMcC asked if the CRMP Fire Standard and guidance would have links to Prevention. NR explained that the project was working with Neil Odin (Head of Prevention) to develop guidance and the Prevention Fire Standard would be linked to the guidance produced within the CRP.

Action FSB-A062: CPO to review language relating to governance models across all Fire Standards

NR left the meeting.

Delivery Plan Progress for Fire Standards

JF introduced the progress update on those Fire Standards in phase one of the delivery plan and summarised the highlights in the report.

JM congratulated the Board and team for making such progress in producing the Fire Standards listed in the paper in such a short period of time.

Phase Two Fire Standards Proposals

JF introduced Appendix C to the paper which summarised the approach taken in determining the Fire Standards to be included in phase one Fire Standards delivery plan. She advised the Board of the priorities which would need to be considered in planning phase two of the Fire Standards delivery plan. This included learning from the response services gave to the COVID pandemic and the ongoing Grenfell Inquiry.

JF stressed that a final delivery plan could not be agreed until full analysis of the learning was done. However, the paper gave an indication of what Fire Standards might be included in the next phase for the Board's consideration.

AS asked about the relationship of the Prevention and Fire Protection Fire Standards in phase one and those in phase two. JF advised that the Fire Standards in phase one would be two overarching Fire Standards defining what a good Prevention function and a good Fire Protection function would look like. She went on to explain that in the completion of this development work, further related Fire Standards for both Prevention and Protection were likely to be clarified. Work in both areas concentrating on research and scoping was underway.

JB said that the Minister's priorities were People, Professionalism and Governance. Therefore, he recommended that the next phase of Fire Standards should be linked to improvements in those areas.

AS observed that governance existed within the Activity Framework and, as the Board previously said, Standards would point to sound governance standards that currently exist. This would allow the Board to explain governance differences and nuances in one place. There might be an opportunity to clarify links between governance and the operating environment.

All Board members supported the suggested phase two Fire Standards in principle accepting the need to review priorities in light of new learning.

Decision FSB-D019: The Board noted the developments made on the Leadership Fire Standards, agreed the approach to the two overarching Leadership Fire Standards (Appendix A and B) and approved the revised timeline for the well-led organisation Fire Standard.

Decision FSB-D020: Proposals for the Fire Standards which would be included in the phase two delivery plan were agreed (Appendix C), subject to verification against priorities.

Item – Paper – Fire Standards for Sign-Off

CPO

JF introduced the Fire Standards for sign-off. She highlighted the major change in the process of developing these Fire Standards with the development teams. Specifically, this was a growing understanding of what *must* means in the context of achieving the desired outcome within the Fire Standards. A priority for all Fire Standards was to have an increased number of activities that services “must” do to achieve a Fire Standard with a smaller amount of activities services “*should*” and “*may*” do. The Fire Standards being presented for sign off had been amended considering this feedback with more activities identified as “*must*”.

JF clarified that responses from consultations to date had identified a need to create more clarity about how services could achieve the Fire Standards.

JF also noted that many consultation responses proposed links to additional legislation, some of which would be relevant to all Fire Standards such as the Fire Services Act 2006. She proposed that when the Fire Standards were published on the website, it would be made clear the legislation that related to all Fire Standards and that which was relevant only to specific Fire Standards on their respective website pages.

JF explained that for each Fire Standard, the CPO team would draft a version of the consultation reports provided to the Board that could be circulated to consultation responders. This report would outline general responses provided and what changes had been made to the respective Fire Standards as a result.

Operational Response Fire Standards

Referencing the desired outcome statement on the Operational Learning Fire Standard, JM noted that the use of the term “*non-operational activities*” with regard to where learning came from and said that this suggested a move into organisational learning which could cause confusion. She suggested a review of the terminology to clarify and proposed “*other relevant activity*” as an alternative. JF said that she would refer to the development team and review the feedback on why the terminology was used before making any change. She said that she would provide JM and the Board with an update.

JB thanked the CPO and the development team teams for the hard work which had gone into the Fire Standards. JB also noted the consultation responses received by representative bodies and asked

whether the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) had responded. JF said that the FBU had not provided a formal consultation response to the Operational Response Fire Standards. However, they were generally supportive of the National Operational Guidance and sat on a number of forums with that team with whom they were in regular dialogue.

The Board agreed to sign off the three Operational Response Fire Standards and for them to proceed to QA.

Decision FSB-D021: The Board reviewed the three Operational Response Fire Standards for sign-off and agreed to sign-off each and for them to proceed to QA.

Action FSB-A063: CPO to review the wording of the Operational Learning Fire Standard as per JM's proposal (non-operational activities) and consider a revision to the wording and then feedback to the Board.

Emergency Response Driver Fire Standard (ERDFS)

SMcC noted that there was an action outstanding for the NFCC ERDFS Lead and the Chairs to draft a response to the Department for Transport (DfT).

JF explained that the legislation which had impacted on making progress with this Fire Standard had been proposed for many years. The DfT's position was that services had time to prepare for the changes required and the ultimate priority was to assure the public that the emergency services were training drivers to a minimum standard.

The FSB Chairs and the NFCC Lead were in agreement with the position taken by the DfT and this allowed this Fire Standard to progress. The NFCC Lead would be writing to all Chiefs to communicate the discussion that had taken place with DfT and the outcome of that discussion.

The Chair said that a reply to the DfT would be drafted to confirm the position taken.

Decision FSB-D022: The Board agreed the Emergency Response Driver Fire Standard and for it to proceed to QA.

Action FSB-A064: A reply to the DfT stating the conclusion reached in response to their letter would be sent by the FSB Chairs.

SMcC confirmed that the Board had been invited to provide a response to the *Fit for the Future* (FfF) consultation which set out a longer-term improvement pathway for fire and rescue services. She proposed that the Fire Standards Board, as a key stakeholder, should provide a collective response in line with the draft at Appendix A of the paper.

She thought that it was important for the Board to participate in this consultation, which was addressing issues relevant to the ongoing continuous improvement of services.

The Board agreed that the Board should respond to the *Fit for the Future* consultation in accordance with the proposed draft. JF proposed that any amendments to the letter in Appendix A be sent to her.

Decision FSB-D023: The Board agreed that a Board collective response to the *Fit for the Future* should be sent in accordance with the proposed draft.

Action FSB-A065: A letter in response to the *Fit for the Future* consultation should be sent on the Board's behalf. Board members should send any comments on the proposed letter which will send the response on the Board's behalf.

Any Other Business

Chair

There was no other business.

Next Meeting: 16th February 2021

Actions & Decisions

Action Log				
ID	Date	Action	Action Owner	Status
FSB-A054	09/12/2020	CPO to produce a paper for the February Board meeting with input from JM, to describe how benefits are developed, measured, and realised.	CPO	Work has initiated and is on track
FSB-A055	09/12/2020	CPO to invite Zoe Billingham from HMICFRS to attend the next Board meeting to discuss both the measurement of benefits and learning from COVID.	CPO	

Action Log				
ID	Date	Action	Action Owner	Status
FSB-A056	09/12/2020	CPO to plan for a website review in December 2021 to ensure it remained fit for purpose and to identify any changes required	CPO	Scheduled in CPO diaries for December 2021
FSB-A057	09/12/2020	NC1 and JM to arrange a meeting to discuss the longer-term relationship between the LGA and APCC and the joint endorsement of future Fire Standards and supporting guidance.	NC1 / JM	To be confirmed
FSB-A058	09/12/2020	CPO to liaise with BB to coordinate professional proof editing of the final draft documents and ensure alignment of language.	CPO	
FSB-A059	09/12/2020	CPO to relay NC1's comments regarding leaders acquiring political awareness as a skill to the Leadership project team for consideration within the Developing Leaders Fire Standard.	CPOI	Issued to the Leadership Project team
FSB-A060	09/12/2020	CPO to relay the suggestions made by JM to the Leadership Project relating to learning that could be drawn upon from PFCC's, such as the policing protocol and the involvement of HMICFRS in the Developing Leaders Fire Standard development.	CPO	Issued to the Leadership Project team
FSB-A061	09/12/2020	CPO to set up meetings with representatives from all governing bodies to agree stakeholders and NFCC Lead for the well-led organisation Fire Standard development acknowledging the suggestion made by JB.	CPO	Update to be provided at next board meeting
FSB-A062	09/12/2020	CPO to review language relating to governance models across all Fire Standards	CPO	Update to be provided at next board meeting
FSB-A063	09/12/2020	CPO to review the wording of the Operational Learning Fire Standard as per JM's proposal (non-operational activities) and consider a revision to the wording and then feedback to the Board.	CPO	Update to be provided at next board meeting

Action Log				
ID	Date	Action	Action Owner	Status
FSB-A064	09/12/2020	A reply to the DfT stating the conclusion reached in response to their letter would be sent by the FSB Chairs.	FSB Chairs	Update to be provided at next board meeting
FSB-A065	09/12/2020	A letter in response to the <i>Fit for the Future</i> consultation should be sent on the Board's behalf. Board members should send any comments on the proposed letter which will send the response on the Board's behalf.	CPO	Update to be provided at next board meeting

Decision Log		
ID	Date	Decision
FSB-D019	09/12/2020	The Board noted the developments made on the Leadership Fire Standards, agreed the approach to the two overarching Leadership Fire Standards (Appendix A and B) and approved the revised timeline for the well-led organisation Fire Standard.
FSB-D020	09/12/2020	Proposals for the Fire Standards which would be included in the phase two delivery plan were agreed (Appendix C), subject to verification against priorities.
FSB-D021	09/12/2020	The Board reviewed the three Operational Response Fire Standards for sign-off and agreed to sign-off each and for them to proceed to QA.
FSB-D022	09/12/2020	The Board agreed the Emergency Response Driver Fire Standard and for it to proceed to QA.
FSB-D023	09/12/2020	The Board agreed that a Board collective response to the <i>Fit for the Future</i> should be sent in accordance with the proposed draft.