

Item Number	Item 4 – Paper 1
Title of Paper	Business Update and Chairs Report
Decision or Information	For information and decision
Date of Meeting	2 July 2026
Presented by	Fire Standards Team
Attachments	Appendix A – Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard Review Report Appendix B – Timeline for 2026-27 Business Delivery Plan

Summary

This paper provides an update on the progress made in reviewing and maintaining the suite of Fire Standards. It also gives an update on the engagements undertaken by the Fire Standards Board Chairs and the NFCC Implementation Team.

The Board is asked to:

- note the contents of this paper;
- approve the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard to open to consultation

Exceptional and Periodic Reviews

- **Organisational Learning (New Fire Standard)**

Following approval from the Board to expand the Operational Learning Fire Standard to Organisational Learning, the FST has conducted workshops with subject matter experts from across the sector and from within the NFCC Organisational Learning team.

The draft Organisational Learning Fire Standard was consulted on throughout May 2026 and closed on 9 June 2026. A review of the feedback is scheduled to take place late June. Findings will be shared with the Board in August 2026.

- **Code of Ethics Fire Standard (Periodic Review)**

The revised Code of Ethics Fire Standard was published on 27 May 2026.

- **Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard (Periodic Review)**

Progress on this standard was delayed with the prioritisation of the handling of misconduct within fire standards. An initial workshop took place in December 2025 with an additional

workshop held in February 2026. At the December workshop there was some challenge to the purpose of the Fire Standard and its role in the wider suite, especially considering the recently reviewed Operational Preparedness Fire Standard. The working group has revised the Standard to address these issues.

When the requirement of the fire standard was challenged by some participants at the workshops, the FST was able to use the independent quality assurance report and accompanying data analysis from 2022 to provide an audit trail. This demonstrated the need for the standard and its role in ensuring that an FRS considers business continuity, emergency planning and external partnerships. The standard underpins the assurance that an FRS is able to respond to incidents and events on a national scale. Following this additional auditing work, the working group was reassured and able to provide additional support to the review.

The FST has completed its review and the post-review report can be found in Appendix A. The Board is asked to review the proposed amendments to the standard and confirm that it can be opened to consultation.

- **Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People Fire Standards (Exceptional Review)**

Following agreement at the December 2025 Board meeting, the proposed amendments to the Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People Fire Standards were opened for consultation between December and February 2026. A group of subject matter experts considered the feedback and agreed proposed amendments in March 2026.

As the Leadership Standards make numerous references to Organisational Learning, the Fire Standards Board Chair agreed to delay publication of the two standards until the Organisational Learning Fire Standard development is completed in August 2026. It is expected that reference to Organisational Learning within the Leadership Fire Standards will be revised.

Delivery Plan 2026-27

Following the March 2026 Fire Standards Board meeting, a delivery timeline has been produced outlining when agreed deliverables are expected to commence and complete. Please see Appendix B.

Communications and Engagement

Engagement with Representative Bodies

Following the December 2025 Board meeting, the Fire Standards Board contacted a number of representative bodies to propose closer engagement with their organisations in support of the development and review of Fire Standards.

Between March and July 2026, the FST has engaged with representative bodies to:

- Seek views on the proposed amendments to the Organisational Learning Fire Standard at consultation stage; and
- Follow up on feedback provided by Fire and Rescue Services Association on the Code of Ethics Fire Standard consultation.

The Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) responded positively to the consultations on the Code of Ethics, Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People Fire Standards.

The Fire Leaders Association (FLA) provided helpful and positive feedback to the peer review draft of the Organisational Learning Fire Standard.

Review of Chairs' Engagements

The Chairs attended the following engagements:

- Ministerial Advisory Group – 23rd March 2026
- Meeting with Peter Lee (MHCLG) – 19th March 2026
- Meeting with MHCLG on National Framework – 8th June 2026
- Meeting with MHCLG on Culture Task and Finish Group – 11th June 2026

Website Updates

A programme of website enhancements has been completed to improve usability, accessibility and content management of Fire Standards pages. Key updates include:

- introduction of HMICFRS Characteristics of Good on each Approved Fire Standard webpages as reviews are undertaken (these were previously located on a singular webpage)
- improved display of review and publication dates
- refined Fire Standard delivery timeline to ensure it reflects current activity
- general improvements to page structure and content presentation, including accordion features and updated download functionality
- streamlined page labelling, document downloads and navigation
- resolved formatting and content management issues identified in earlier webpage iterations

Some lower-priority items remain in progress, alongside planned future work to enhance the mailing list and site search.

Implementation Support Team Engagement

The NFCC Implementation Team continues to support services with embedding the Fire Standards through an ongoing programme of workshops. The following table shows the team's engagement with services between March-June 2026:

Engagements March 2026 - June 2026		Participant Numbers	Service Numbers
Fire Standard enquiries and engagements		237	46
Implementation team engagements		49	-
Fire Standards Implementation workshops x 9: • Operational Preparedness and Operational Competence x 2 • Protection • Data Management • Fire Investigation • Digital and Cyber • Core Code of Ethics • Procurement and Commercial • Internal Governance and Assurance		188	46

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE FIRE STANDARD REVIEW

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Purpose

This report contains information on the process in which the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard was reviewed, the findings and subsequent proposed amendments.

The report has been produced for the Fire Standards Board (FSB) to provide assurance and confidence in the approach taken.

Review Process

The review followed the agreed [FSB Maintenance Review Process](#). A working group was established with help from the NFCC Operational Response and Fire Control hub and two workshops which took place in December 2025 and March 2026.

The working group reviewed each section of the Fire Standard, considering the following:

- The currency of the content – e.g. did the standard cover the topic appropriately? As it was one of the first standards to be produced, were there lessons learnt from more recently developed standards that could be brought into this one?
- Was there any new legislation, guidance or qualifications that impacted the content within the standard?
- Were the benefits appropriate and measurable?

Working Group Members

The working group consisted of national resilience and business continuity leads from across Fire and Rescue Services within England. The services represented amongst the group were:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| • Hertfordshire | • Kent |
| • Manchester | • Suffolk |
| • Merseyside | • Surrey |

This work was also supported the Head of the NFCC Operational Response and Fire Control Hub, Kerry Blair and Operational Preparedness, Response and Resilience Committee Chair, CFO John Roberts.

Findings

The working group discussed each element of the standard in detail. They agreed that the Desired Outcome section should be adapted to better reflect the sector as it has matured since the initial publication of the standard.

Discussions took place on the difference between the Operational Preparedness and Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standards, noting that there were overlaps

between the two which were unclear. They agreed that the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard should adopt a greater focus on its capabilities to prepare for emergencies, working with partners and agencies to support this.

There was consensus that the standard provides an important assurance framework for individual services and without it services are in danger of failing to maintain their capability, process and organisational structure in which to deliver a major multi-agency response.

There was discussion about the role of services engaging with partner agencies (adoption of the JESIP joint doctrine) to build local, regional and national resilience. It was clear that there were still inconsistencies across services to which the standard should address.

The group concluded that the fire standard should direct services to take a strategic approach to preparedness and resilience through their CRMP.

The working group proposed making amendments to the standard to simplify its message, place greater importance on partnership working and to include learning and research it has gathered through NFCC committees from various incidents to improve business continuity and local, regional and national resilience.

Proposed Amendments to the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard

Following the review, the group agreed to the following proposed amendments (amendments can be found in bold):

Desired Outcome

- Amendment: A minor change of language to show place greater emphasis on engagement with partner agencies.
- Amendment: Change of process-based language to outcome-based language.

To Achieve This Fire Standard

What a fire and rescue service **MUST** do:

- New point 1 **“Have a strategic approach to resilience, aligned to its Community Risk Management Plan which provides assurance that it:**
 - **is prepared to respond to emergencies and disruptive incidents; and**
 - **complies with legislation and standards.”**
- Point 2 amendment: This point was simplified for clarity and points a-j were removed. The group felt this was a replication of the Cabinet Office National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) which were already referenced within the document.

- New point 3: **“have processes in place to review and maintain policies, procedures and plans”**
- Point 6 amendments: **“recruit, train, develop and maintain a competent and professional workforce to enable the service to carry out its role in preparedness, response, recovery and business continuity;”**
- Point 8 amendment: **“have business continuity plans (BCP) in place relating to all prioritised services and activities, that:**
 - demonstrate a clear procedure for invoking the BCP and set out the core of a response to **emergencies and disruptive incidents;**
 - are reviewed and exercised periodically; and
 - **maintain an effective response at all times”**
- Point 9 amendment: **“as part of the response to an emergency, contribute to the effective operation of a Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC) and Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) in line with National Resilience Standards #11 and #12 concerning strategic preparation, operation and activation”**
- New point 10: **“make specialist national assets available for deployment, when requested”**
- New point 11: **“adopt the principles of integrated emergency management to effectively anticipate and assess risks, and prevent, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies”**

What a fire and rescue service SHOULD do:

- New point 12: **“assist other fire and rescue services with conventional assets during regional and national incidents, when requested”**
- Point 13 amendment: **“evidence a clear rationale for the balance between generic and site-specific emergency planning for defined and emerging risks;”**
- Point 15 amendment: **“optimise the opportunity to gather learning, such as debrief outcomes following emergencies and disruptive incidents, training or exercises and share them on the available systems, such as Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and National Operational Learning (NOL);”**

Expected Benefits of Achieving the Fire Standard

The group were largely happy with the benefits outlined within the standard, and wished only a small number of minor amendments to improve language and clarity:

- Benefit 1: **“Increased public confidence in fire and rescue services because services are resilient, prepared, and able to maintain critical functions during disruptive events”**
- Benefit 2: **“Enables a more effective and coordinated multi-agency response to emergencies by using a standardised, nationally approved approach to emergency preparedness”**
- Benefit 3: **“Improved inter- and intra-operability because of collaboration and information sharing with other services and partners”**

Legal Requirements (mandatory duty)

Two pieces of legislation were removed as they are already covered in the [overarching legislation](#) section, which is referenced within the standard:

- Civil Contingencies Act
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards

No proposed amendments to this section

Guidance and supporting information

New guidance added:

- Supporting guidance for NCAF
- NFCC Organisational Learning: Good Practice Guide

Conclusion

The Board is asked to note the newly proposed additions to Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard.

The working group discussed the level of changes to the Fire Standards and agreed that the changes were substantive enough to warrant a full consultation.

The Fire Standards Team have carefully considered these comments and believe that the proposed changes to the Emergency preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard fall into the major change category and therefore recommend that the standard should go out to consultation.

The Board is asked to approve the proposal to put the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard out to consultation.

APPENDIX A

The below table shows the original Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard which was published in 2022 in the left column. The right column shows the proposed changes to the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard as a result of the workshop held in March 2026. Notable changes have been highlighted in red. Minor changes where text may have been moved have not been highlighted.

Desired Outcome	
A fire and rescue service that is prepared to respond to Major Incidents and Large-scale emergencies or Disruptive challenges (emergencies). It carries out effective risk-based preparations and emergency planning to meet its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act and to keep the public safe. It reduces, controls and mitigates the impact of emergencies through effective preparedness, response and recovery. A service that can continue to deliver critical services during times of emergencies. It is prepared to respond as a single service; working with other fire and rescue services or as part of a multi-agency response. It contributes effectively to national resilience requirements and has suitable and sufficient access to resources and assets to support response to local, regional and national scale emergencies. It collaborates with its local resilience forum (LRF) partners to achieve the LRF National Resilience Standards and to communicate effectively with the public in preparation for, during and after an emergency, building community resilience. It has in place arrangements for the sharing and receiving of information and intelligence with partners, contributing to effective decision making and enabling a coordinated response.	A fire and rescue service that has fully engaged with its partner agencies and is capable of responding to emergencies and disruptive incidents at a local, regional and national level. It carries out effective risk-based preparations and emergency planning to meet its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act and to keep the public, partners and employees safe. It reduces, controls and mitigates the impact of emergencies through effective preparedness, response and recovery. A service that can continue to deliver prioritised activities during times of emergencies. It is prepared to respond as a single service; working with other fire and rescue services or as part of a multi-agency response. It collaborates with its local resilience forum (LRF) partners to build community resilience through effective communication with the public in preparation for, during and after an emergency. It makes timely and effective decisions because it shares information and intelligence with partners to continually improve its multi-agency response.

It is an organisation that works with its relevant partners to continually learn and improve multi-agency response by de-briefing after training, exercises and emergencies, sharing and acting on the lessons identified.	
What is required to meet the Fire Standard	
A fire and rescue service must: 1. align to all relevant Cabinet Office National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) 2. have plans that enable it to prepare for emergencies and take preventative or pre-emptive actions as required, and that: a. are based on a robust risk assessment of foreseeable risks to the local area, informed by the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) and its Community Risk Registers; b. contain supporting materials which reflect and embed JESIP; c. align to other multi-agency plans, and where relevant meet legislative requirements. These plans may include those for Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH), Pipeline Safety Regulations (PSR) and Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (REPPPIR); d. have a clear activation and notification process for communicating with other Category 1 and 2 responders, organisations and the public, to enhance	A fire and rescue service must: 1. Have a strategic approach to resilience, aligned to its Community Risk Management Plan which provides assurance that it: a. is prepared to respond to emergencies and disruptive incidents; and b. complies with legislation and standards. 2. align to all relevant Cabinet Office National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) 3. have processes in place to review and maintain policies, procedures and plans 4. have plans that enable it to prepare for emergencies and take preventative or pre-emptive actions as required 5. collaborate with partners when developing site-specific emergency plans which are based on a shared and common understanding of local risks, associated planning assumptions and the NSRA; 6. recruit, train, develop and maintain a competent and professional workforce to enable the service to carry out its role in preparedness, response, recovery and business continuity; 7. have access to a suitable and secure system to enable it to share and make information available and accessible to partners and stakeholders, when

cross-border awareness and interoperability for preparedness, response and recovery arrangements; e. have robust, embedded and flexible recovery management arrangements in place as detailed in the Local Recovery Management National Resilience Standard #13; f. contain protocols aligned with the LRF protocols and guidance for leaders and practitioners about the establishment of recovery and coordination groups (RCGs) and managing activity between phases from response, recovery and to stand down; g. have clear, inclusive and agreed governance arrangements for both single-service and national resilience capabilities in line with the National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF), including defined roles and responsibilities; h. evidence assurance of its resilience capabilities, validated by regular testing using a risk-based exercise programme, either as a single service or with other relevant responder organisations at operational, tactical and strategic levels; i. are reviewed and updated periodically with relevant partners; and j. are classified in line with the Government Security Classifications dependent upon the nature of the plan and exist in a format that makes them accessible to relevant stakeholders when required.	required; 8. have business continuity plans (BCP) in place relating to all prioritised services and activities, that: - demonstrate a clear procedure for invoking the BCP and set out the core of a response to emergencies and disruptive incidents; - are reviewed and exercised periodically; and - to maintain an effective response at all times 9. as part of the response to an emergency, contribute to the effective operation of a Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC) and Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) in line with National Resilience Standards #11 and #12 concerning strategic preparation, operation and activation 10. make specialist national assets available for deployment, when requested 11. adopt the principles of integrated emergency management to effectively anticipate and assess risks, and prevent, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies; A fire and rescue service should: 12. assist other fire and rescue services with conventional assets during regional and national incidents, when requested 13. evidence a clear rationale for the balance between generic and site-specific emergency planning for defined and emerging risks; 14. develop plans which: - follow a common template, including use of action cards, diagrammatic instructions,
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3. collaborate with partners to develop site-specific emergency plans which are based on a shared and common understanding of Local risks , associated planning assumptions and the NSRA; 4. recruit, train, develop and maintain a competent and professional workforce to enable the service to carry out its role in preparedness, response and recovery to emergencies; 5. have access to a suitable and secure system to enable it to share and make information available and accessible to partners and stakeholders, when required; 6. have business continuity plans (BCP) in place relating to all critical functions, that: a. demonstrate a clear procedure for invoking the BCP and set out the core of a response to emergencies; and b. are reviewed and exercised periodically 7. as part of the response to an emergency contribute to the effective operation of a Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC) and Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) and in line with National Resilience Standards #11 and #12. A fire and rescue service should: 8. evidence a clear rationale for the balance between generic and site-specific emergency planning for defined risks;	detachable annexes and directories; and b. include an escalation process to request additional involvement and support, such as mutual aid and national resilience capabilities. 15. optimise the opportunity to gather learning, such as debrief outcomes following emergencies and disruptive incidents, training or exercises and share them on the available systems, such as Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and National Operational Learning (NOL); 16. have a process in place to act on any learning received from systems such as JOL and NOL to drive innovation and continuous improvement and enhance future performance; 17. maximise opportunities gained from supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) network by sharing learning and experiences, collaborating with others and contributing to the continual improvement of preparedness, response and recovery activities; 18. contribute and support appropriate national campaigns and initiatives, where resources are available. A fire and rescue service may: 19. share plans with other services or partners for independent peer review for continual improvement purposes.
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9. adopt the principles of integrated emergency management to effectively anticipate and assess risks and prevent, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies; 10. develop plans which: a. follow a common template, including use of action cards, diagrammatic instructions, detachable annexes and directories; and b. include an escalation process to request additional involvement and support, such as mutual aid and national resilience capabilities. 11. optimise the opportunity to gather learning, such as debrief outcomes following emergency response, training or exercising and share them on the available systems, such as Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and National Operational Learning (NOL); 12. have a process in place to act on any learning received from systems such as JOL and NOL to drive innovation and continuous improvement and enhance future performance; 13. maximise opportunities gained from supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) network by sharing learning and experiences, collaborating with others and contributing to the continual improvement of preparedness, response and recovery activities; 14. contribute and support appropriate national campaigns and initiatives, where resources are available. A fire and rescue service may:	
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15. share plans with other services or partners for independent peer review for continual improvement purposes.	
Expected benefits of achieving the Fire Standard	
1. The public are reassured that services are resilient, prepared and able to respond to emergencies and maintain its critical functions during a disruptive event 2. Effective contribution to multi-agency response to emergencies because of a standardised and nationally approved approach to emergency preparedness 3. Effective inter- and intra-operability because of collaboration and information sharing with other services and partners 4. Enables services and partners to identify and address potential capability gaps and areas of good practice	1. Increased public confidence in fire and rescue services because services are resilient, prepared, and able to maintain critical functions during disruptive events 2. Enables a more effective and coordinated multi-agency response to emergencies by using a standardised, nationally approved approach to emergency preparedness 3. Improved inter- and intra-operability because of collaboration and information sharing with other services and partners 4. Improves the ability of services and partners to identify capability gaps early and share areas of good practice, strengthening overall preparedness and performance
Legal requirements or mandatory duties	
This Fire Standard reflects only the most appropriate legislation to this topic. We recognise that fire and rescue services must comply with a broader list of legislation to undertake their duties, which would be applicable to all standards. View the legislation which applies to all Fire Standards. • Civil Contingencies Act • Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH)	This Fire Standard reflects only the most appropriate legislation to this topic. We recognise that fire and rescue services must comply with a broader list of legislation to undertake their duties, which would be applicable to all standards. View the legislation which applies to all Fire Standards. • Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) • Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order

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• Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order • Pipeline Safety Regulations • Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (REPIR) • Fire and Rescue National Framework for England	• Pipeline Safety Regulations • Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (REPIR)
Linked qualifications, accreditations or Fire Standards	
• Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard • Code of Ethics Fire Standard • Operational Preparedness Fire Standard • National Occupational Standards – NFCC	• National Occupational Standards – NFCC Fire Standards • Community Risk Management Planning Fire Standard • Code of Ethics Fire Standard • Operational Preparedness Fire Standard
Guidance and supporting information	
This list is non-exhaustive, and additional sources of guidance may be available beyond those outlined below. • National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) • Emergency preparedness – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) – restricted access via Resilience Direct • National Risk Register – public access • JESIP • Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Guidance • Emergency responder interoperability: lexicon – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	This list is non-exhaustive, and additional sources of guidance may be available beyond those outlined below. • National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) • Emergency preparedness – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) – restricted access via Resilience Direct • National Risk Register – public access • JESIP • Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Guidance • Emergency responder interoperability: lexicon – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • ISO 22301:2019 – Security and resilience — Business continuity management systems • NCSC Cyber Essentials Certification

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• ISO 22301:2019 – Security and resilience — Business continuity management systems • NCSC Cyber Essentials Certification • Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) • National Resilience Strategy (NRS) – link to be provided when available • National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) • The Business Continuity Institutes Good Practice Guidelines • The UK Government Resilience Framework – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • Government Security Classifications	• Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) • National Resilience Strategy (NRS) – link to be provided when available • National Coordination and Advisory Framework (NCAF) • The Business Continuity Institutes Good Practice Guidelines • The UK Government Resilience Framework – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) • Government Security Classifications • Supporting guidance for NCAF • NFCC Organisational Learning: Good Practice Guide
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APPENDIX B

The below table outlines the delivery timelines for the deliverables set out in the agreed 2026-27 business delivery plan.

	Q4 25-26		Q1 26-27			Q2 26-27			Q3 26-27			Q4 26-27		
	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Periodic Review	Emergency Preparedness and Resilience													
New Fire Standard			Organisational Learning											
Periodic Review						Fire Control								
Periodic Review/New Fire Standard Feasibility									Digital and Cyber/AI					
Periodic Review									Communications and Engagement					
New Fire Standard - Feasibility									Health, Safety and Wellbeing					
Evaluation	Evaluation													
Embedding and Implementation	Embedding and Implementation													
Communications and Engagement	Engagement across sector to support continuous improvement - e.g MAG													