



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

ADOPTION OF NATIONAL FIRE STANDARDS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 04 February 2021

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to Members on the work of the National Fire Chiefs Council Fire Standards Board and to outline the Service's strategic intent and progress on adoption of National Fire Standards.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members endorse the Service's approach to the adoption of National Fire Standards.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire Standards Board (FSB) has been established by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to oversee the identification, development, and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England.
- 1.2 Standards are produced in consultation with fire and rescue services and cover a variety of activities including strategic, cultural, enabling and service delivery elements.
- 1.3 To date eight standards have been produced, with a further seven standards planned to be released in 2022.
- 1.4 Adoption is not mandatory however the standards are considered to be best practice and the expectation from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is that Services are using them as a tool to promote continuous improvement. The standards have been, and will continue to be used as part of the inspection criteria.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Fire Standards Board released the first standard in February 2021. To date eight fire standards have been published covering the following areas:
 - Code of Ethics;
 - Community Risk Management Planning;
 - Emergency Response Driving;
 - Operational Competence;
 - Operational Learning;
 - Operational Preparedness;
 - Prevention;
 - Protection.
- 2.2 Initially standards were released as stand-alone documents, however following feedback the FSB has developed an implementation tool for each standard to support Services to undertake a self-assessment and identify the actions required to be compliant against the standard.
- 2.3 As with a number of other NFCC products, the Fire Standards provide a high-level outline of what Services should be doing to maintain professional standards, however it is for individual Services to determine the best way to achieve the desired outcomes.
- 2.4 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has taken the strategic decision to adopt all fire standards. It has identified that central monitoring and reporting of progress is required and reports are now produced for scrutiny by the Chief Fire Officer at Performance and Programme Board on a six-monthly basis.

- 2.5 The first progress report was presented in September 2021 and provided a summary of progress relating to three fire standards. The outcome of the self-assessment indicated the Service was broadly compliant with the standards examined, with six actions identified in total to achieve full compliance. Performance and Programme Board will assume responsibility for monitoring completion of actions, with priority being given to those actions that present the greatest improvement opportunity to the Service.
- 2.6 The standards are designed to complement legal and other requirements placed on the Service, and it is therefore unlikely that significant high-risk gaps will be identified throughout the self-assessment process.
- 2.7 Although the initial progress report to Performance and Programme Board has centred around three standards, Members should be assured that work is progressing against all of the published standards.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is likely that financial implications associated with adoption of some Fire Standards will arise. Any significant finance or resource implications will form part of the ongoing business planning process, with reports provided to Members where appropriate for scrutiny and monitoring.
- 3.2 The trial self-assessment process with the three standards which has taken place has not identified any significant implications beyond those already identified as part of routine business planning and development activities.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

A number of the standards have human resource and learning and development implications. Where there are new activities which arise as part of the GAP analysis process, these will be addressed by the Strategic Leadership Team.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the Fire Standards themselves are subject to an equality impact assessment as part of the development and consultation process.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A number of Fire Standards align with legal duties which the Service must comply with. These include duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act, Driving Standards Legislation and duties under the Fire and Rescue Services Act.
- 7.2 Although the Fire Standards are not a legal duty in their own right, they will form the basis of sector good practice, and therefore act as a measure of reasonableness for the standards the Service is expected to maintain.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The HMICFRS inspection process is evolving to use the Fire Standards as the benchmark against which Services will be inspected. Effective self-assessment and centralised governance and reporting structures enables prioritisation of activities and ensures effective organisational awareness of compliance against standards and areas for development.
- 8.2 Fire Standards will form the basis of what is considered reasonable for Fire and Rescue Services. Failure to comply with Fire Standards may have implications on the expectations of the Inspectorate.
- 8.3 There is an expectation that Services will seek to meet sector defined standards. There is a reputational risk both to public, partners, and other stakeholders of failing to do so.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Fire Standards are being developed in collaboration with the fire sector. NFRS will actively participate with stakeholder groups and consultations to ensure the Service is able to influence and shape the standards before they are released.
- 9.2 There may be collaboration and shared learning opportunities that arise as Fire Standards are adopted. These will be managed locally by departmental managers as part of their sphere of responsibility and Service's collaboration framework.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members endorse the Service's approach to the adoption of National Fire Standards.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER