SUBJECT: **FIRE STANDARDS BOARD UPDATE**

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Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report or a reference to the relevant paragraphs in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	
Risk Management	Yes	The Fire Standards tool to be added as a corporate risk register control measure
Legal Implications	No	
Privacy and Security Implications	No	
Duty to Collaborate	No	
Health and Safety Implications	No	

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	Yes	People Impact Assessment completed. No negative impacts identified
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	Yes	A communication and engagement standard are due for release in September 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with progress with the gap analysis and integration of Fire Standards into Business as Usual (BAU)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee continues to support the project and approves the regional approach.

1. **Summary**

1.1 Clear progress is being made in understanding what action we need to take to adopt fire standards. A governance framework is in place together with a clear approach for gap analysis and their sign off. Over 900 hours have been spent on working on fire standards to get us to this point.

1.2 The HSSA (Head of Strategic Support and Assurance) oversees the adoption of Fire Standards at Corporate Management Team (CMT). The Fire and Rescue Authority's Audit and Standards Committee is the Authority's ultimate governance overseer.

1.3 The most progress has been made with emergency response driving, Safeguarding, and Ethics. Work on the gap analysis for Emergency Preparedness and Resilience, and Operational Learning has only just started due to capacity pressures.

1.4   Some gaps in adopting all standards relate the 'may' elements of the requirements, and in systematically embedding approaches, for example in embedding ethical standards in our day-to-day work; and ensuring operational learning is systematically shared with partners.

2.   **Background**

2.1   The development of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England is a key element of the UK government's fire reform programme. These standards provide a benchmark for what is expected of services working for their communities, and what they need to do to achieve those expectations.

2.2   At present there are 14 published fire standards with 2 under consultation closing in February 2023. Each Fire Standard describes -

- What is required to meet the standard
- What the benefits are of achieving the standard
- Legal requirements
- Linked qualifications, Accreditations or Fire Standards
- Guidance or supporting materials

Fitting it all together.....
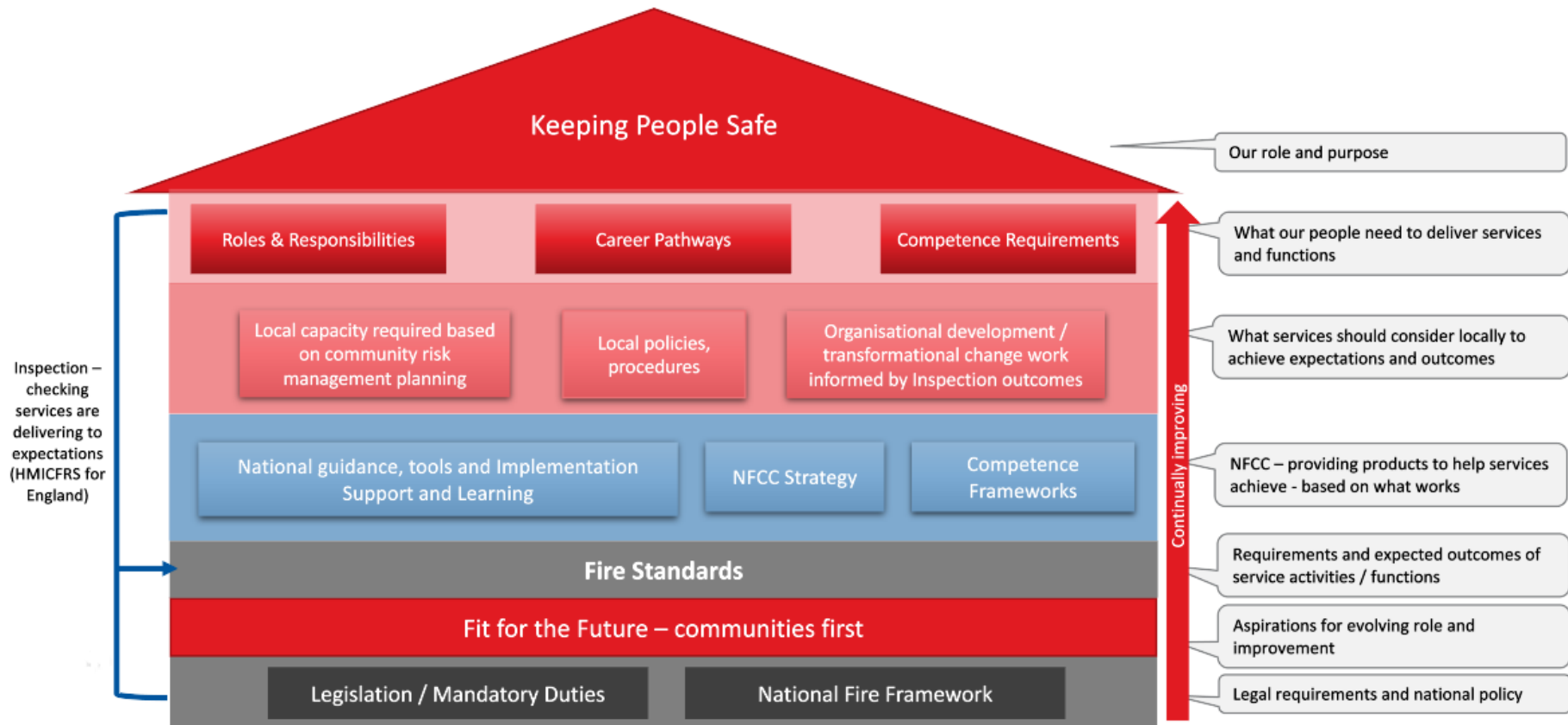
2.3 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service's characteristics of a 'good' service relating to Fire Standards says: *"1.4.1 The FRS (Fire and Rescue Service) understands what action it needs to take to adopt fire standards and national operational guidance, including joint and national learning. The FRS is implementing a plan to achieve this."*

3   **Objectives**

3.1   The Fire Standards Board objectives are to:
- Improved safety, health, and wellbeing of communities
- Maintain trust in and uphold reputation of the service
- Continuously improves the quality of service provided to the public
- Consistent application enhances professionalism and improves competence - decreases organisational risk
- Enable services to collaborate effectively with others, across borders or nationally
- Generate a more positive working culture

3.2   Our main objectives in adopting fire standards are twofold:
- Adopt and localise the appropriate standards in line with our community risk management plan; and
- Ensure time taken to understand and adopt standards delivers value for money.

4.   **Governance**

4.1   The HSSA is the single point of contact (SPOC) for all Fire Standard Board (FSB) matters moving forward. This will include leading the acceptance and internal actioning of any new or updated Fire Standards to be released from Feb 2023 onwards. To date, 5 new Fire Standards are scheduled for release in 2023.

4.2   When FSB release a standard, BFRS (Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service) Fire Standard Implementation Team updates the FSB tracking document to include the new standard. The initial gap analysis is then assigned to a suitable subject matter expert (SME) and respective head of section.

4.3   Each subject matter experts will utilise implementation tools provided by the Fire Standards Board to complete a gap analysis identifying the required actions for the service to meet compliance against the standard. This process is supported by both the Fire Standard Implementation Team and the appropriate Head of Section.

4.4   Once complete, the initial gap analysis is reviewed by all parties then signed off by the assigned Head of Section (HoS). This forms the service action plan to enable full adoption of the Fire Standard. The action plan is the progressed to completion, led by the HoS and SME with full support provided by the service Fire Standard Implementation Team.

4.5   Upon completion of the action plan, Head of Section presents the completed action plan to the Fire Standards Implementation Team lead who confirms and updates the Fire Standard tracker.

4.6   The Fire Standards Implementation Team presents the completed action plan at the next available CMT meeting for approval and sign off. Sign off is recorded in the meeting minutes and FS Tracker updated. Ongoing management of this process and the Fire Standard review cycle will be handed to Operational Assurance department and service's Fire Standard SPOC.

4.7   Following a recent Chief Executives Forum, BFRS have agreed to create and host an Eastern region Fire Standards forum to assist services with the implementation of Fire Standards. The group will consist of Fire Standard leads from the 6 Fire and Rescue Services in the Eastern Region. The main objectives of the forum will be to improve shared situational awareness across the region on Fire Standards, identifying opportunities for collaboration around gap analysis and implementation and to avoid duplication. The first meeting of the Eastern region Fire Standards forum will be held on the 23rd of February 2023.

4.8   Functional leads for each of the 14 current fire standards are:

Standard	BFRS Functional Lead	Launched
Code of Ethics	Head of Training and Asset Management	18th May 2021
CRMP	Head of Strategic Support and Assurance	18th May 2021
Data Management	Head of ICT & Programmes	2nd August 2022
Emergency Preparedness and Resilience	Head of Strategic Support and Assurance	31st May 2022
Emergency Response Driving	Head of Training and Asset Management	16th February 2021
Fire Investigation	Head of Prevention & Protection	31st March 2022
Operational Competence	Head of Training and Asset Management	16th February 2021
Operational Learning	Head of Training and Asset Management	16th February 2021
Operational Preparedness	Head of Response	16th February 2021
Prevention	Head of Prevention & Protection	30th July 2021

Protection	Head of Prevention & Protection	3rd September 2021
Safeguarding	Head of Prevention & Protection	31st January 2022
Leading the Service	Head of Training and Asset Management	21st December 2022
Leading and Developing People	Head of Training and Asset Management	21st December 2022

5. **Progress made to date**

5.1   A guide and training for Subject Matter Experts and Progress tracking dashboard has been developed. The Strategic Support Fire team have received training and the HSSA attended a good practice workshop in November 2022 hosted by the NFCC at Dorset and Wiltshire FRS.

5.2   How the Service will understand, localise, and adopt all Fire Standards has been integrated into all functional strategies for 2023-27 in line with our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

5.3   Each gap analysis is now considered in turn:

Code of Ethics

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) has full compliance with Embedding the Core Code within Service Professional Behaviours, Corporate Management Team (CMT) terms of reference, and has engaged with employees on ethical behaviours

The Service has more to do to fully embed the Core Code and Professional Behaviours within all Policy, job descriptions, and fire and rescue authority meetings.

Community Risk Management Planning

The Service has full compliance with Staff and community engagement, stakeholder consultation, People Impact Assessment, conceptualization of risk and community risk analysis.

The Service has more to do on Agreeing the community risk appetite, and development of a balanced scorecard of key performance indicators for 2023-27.

Data Management

The Service has full compliance with having a data governance framework in place, and policies and procedures relating to data-related organisational risks.

The Service has more to do – in order of priority on Establishing consistent data sharing arrangements between the service and all key partners, and on exploring opportunities to enhance our technical data capability by utilising advanced analytical techniques

Emergency Preparedness and Resilience

The initial discovery phase of gap analysis finds we have full compliance with: aligning to relevant Cabinet Office National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs), collaborating with partners to develop site-specific emergency plans, having business continuity plans (BCP) in place relating to all critical functions, and gathering 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)

The Service may have more to do – in order of priority - on having a systematic and consistent 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. We have yet to share plans with other services or partners for independent peer review for continual improvement purposes.

Emergency Response Driving

The Service full compliance with: Complying with national legislation and guidance, adopting, and aligning with NFCC Emergency Response Driver and Instructor Framework, QA, record keeping, and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) of instructors.

Fire Investigation

The Service has full compliance with Investigating the cause and origin of fires and complying with the appropriate codes of practice and conduct. Embedding these into both Tier 1 and Tier 2 investigations and providing analysis reports in a timely manner. Workforce and succession planning to clarify the resources required to maintain a fire investigation capability. Collaborating with other fire and rescue services to deliver efficient and effective fire investigation (Tri County fire service collaboration agreement on FI). Aligning all training to the NFCC Fire Investigation Competency framework.

Building a comprehensive fire investigation data risk analysis process. Building and managing a BFRS local risk profile against fire investigation trends. Reviewing the ways in which information is shared with interested parties. Reviewing our current quality assurance model for tier 1 and tier 2 fire investigations.

Leading the Service

The initial discovery phase of gap analysis suggests we have full compliance with Consulting on and adopting a clear vision and strategic objectives for the service for 2023-27. We have a strategic approach to communication, engagement and consultation which includes clear principles about how the organisation will communicate with its audiences, linked to the values of the service and the Code of Ethics Fire Standard. We engage regionally and nationally with peers, partners, and stakeholders, collaborating where appropriate. In addition, we have provision for accessing legal and other specialist advice to inform the day-to-day operation of the service

Leading and Developing People

The Service's initial discovery phase of gap analysis thinks we have full compliance with systems, policies, and processes regarding workforce, and have in place or access to mechanisms which enable feedback from employees to be captured and responded to.

The Service may have more to do on developing and implementing a variety of entry routes into the service to attract and recruit a diverse and professional workforce to meet its identified workforce requirements, and in delivering training and peer support through working collaboratively with others.

Operational Competence

The Service demonstrates full compliance with: Health and Safety documented risk assessments detailing the hazards, risks and control measures for operational activities, active monitoring, health and safety training, and accident and near miss reporting.

The Service has more to do – in order of priority on Adoption of all National Operational Guidance in full.

Operational Preparedness

The Service has full compliance on how the service reviews and structures resources to provide emergency cover across the county and nationally. We have a good understanding of our responsibilities and are well prepared to deliver response. We have completed a review of the service and operational functions which has confirmed our ability to support our operational preparedness.

The Service has adopted a regional approach to National Operational Guidance (NOG) which will naturally align procedures locally with other services in the region. The service needs to adopt the ERPG training and OIN products as part of this process. The service will also create and introduce service specific OINs to ensure that locally specific incidents are catered for.

The Service is in the process taking ownership of the local resilience forum, this process will need to be completed to gain compliance.

Prevention

The Service has full compliance with utilising and sharing accurate data and intelligence from a variety of sources to support decision making and the deployment of appropriate resources for prevention activities and contributing to national campaigns.

The Service is identifying those who are most at risk in its community and targeting prevention activities through its community risk management planning, investment into safeguarding training is required, we must develop a prevention strategy to proactively respond and adapt to the changing needs of its community, to establish and maintain a competent and professional prevention workforce of which are trained in safeguarding.

The Service will need to continuously demonstrate inclusivity by providing equality of access, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of prevention activity, generate a culture which embraces national and organisational learning allowing it to identify and capture feedback from a range of sources

The Service will evaluate, share, and act upon findings to drive innovation and continuous improvement and enhance future performance, contribute to the continual improvement of prevention activities coordinated through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) network

Protection

The Service has full compliance with planning and delivering effective protection activities to reduce the risks identified through its community risk management planning. The service can respond to statutory and non-statutory consultations, where the service is a regulator, in a timely and appropriate way.

The Service has fully adopted the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators (the framework) and has records in place to support this. Competent people are in place to offer support to others in the organisation where needed.

The service can demonstrate how it monitors and evaluates the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of its protection activities. The Prevention department contributes and supports national campaigns and initiatives.

The Service will continue to invest in digital fire safety management solutions such as the fire data risk warehouse project and digital Basic Fire Safety Check App.

Work is underway to create a Fire Safety Inspector Rota to provide continuous cover of FSIs. There will be a succession plan with an appropriate number of qualified people to cover future deficiencies.

The Service will plan and deliver engagement with those who are responsible for keeping premises safe to provide advice and collaborate with fire and rescue services and other partners to deliver protection in the most efficient and effective way possible. The service will maintain a culture which embraces national and organisational learning allowing it to identify and capture feedback from a range of sources; evaluate, share, and act upon it.

Safeguarding

The Service has appropriate people trained and an appropriate policy in place to govern safeguarding, there are agreed systems, standards, and protocols to maintain effective and efficient information sharing and data is made available to all those who need it, in accordance with national and local guidelines.

The Service contributes to the improvement of safeguarding by communicating, sharing learning and experiences with the NFCC network of fire and rescue service safeguarding leads

The Service will only use accredited persons to provide safeguarding training and should educate, train and support employees, relevant to their role, in the need to safeguard in a way which aligns to NFCC Guidance.

The Service will implement appropriate processes that minimise the risk of recruiting people who may be unsuitable to work with those who are at risk of harm, we should demonstrate inclusivity by providing equality of access utilising tools such as translation services.

The Service is yet to complete some of the work set out in the NFCC Safeguarding Guidance for Children, Young People and Adults including the Self-Assessment Toolkit.
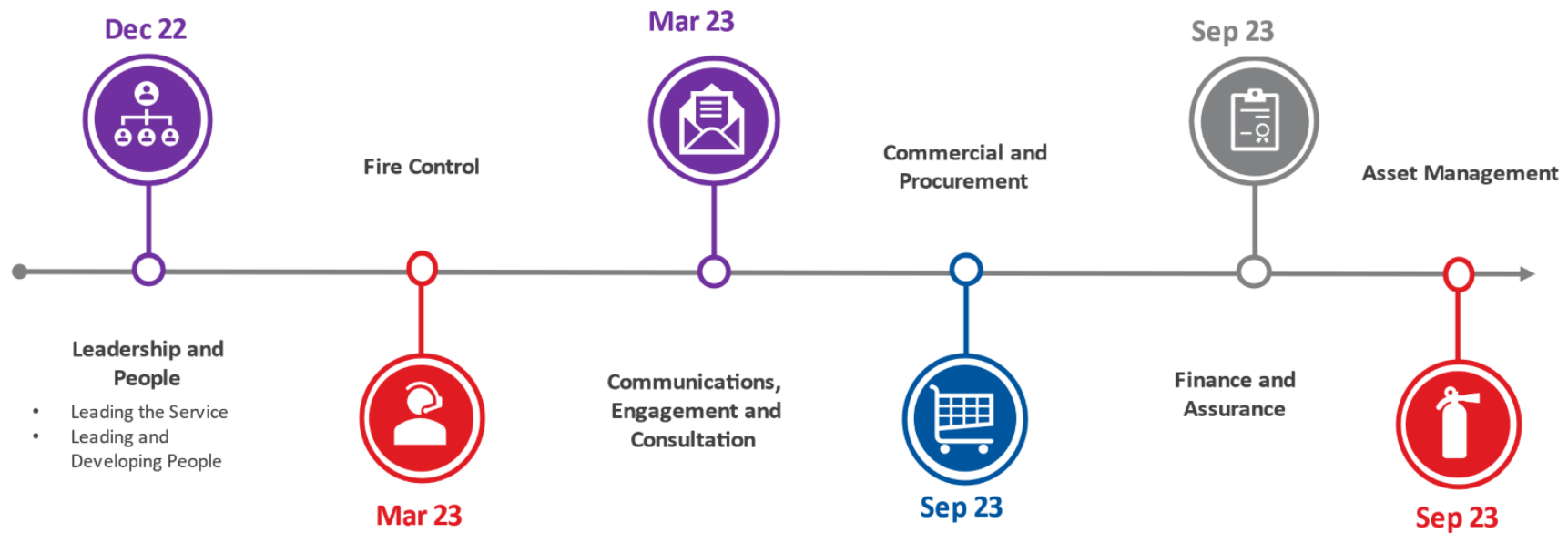
6. **Regional Approach**

6.1 Due to the common issues many FRS are facing around Fire Standard implementation, at the recent Regional CFO (Chief Fire Officer) meeting, National Fire Standard Implementation was discussed, and it was subsequently agreed that BFRS would facilitate a regional forum to assist with services implementation of the National Fire Standards.

6.2 Advantages of a regional approach include avoiding duplication, sharing gap analysis, comparing approaches to RAG ratings, and discussing opportunities for collaboration. Each CFO provided contact details for Fire Standard service leads and as a result we contacted Norfolk, Suffolk, Herts, Essex, and Cambs.

7 **Forward plan and estimated timescale to project completion**

7.1 Our timescales are as follows:

- Provide quarterly updates and an annual report to CMT and the FRA (Fire and Rescue Authority) Audit and Standards Committee;

- Complete all gap analysis by April 2023;

- Identify common strengths, weaknesses, and conduct risk assessment of gaps line with CRMP priorities;

- integrate actions into functional plans in 2024-25;

- Include the overall implementation tool as a corporate risk register control measure;

- Continue to communicate and engage SMEs (Subject Matter Expert) and stakeholders in the process;

- We indent to have adopted all current standards by the end of the 2023-27 CRMP process.

Fire Standards in development - Proposed Publication Dates

Dec 22

Fire Control

Mar 23

Commercial and Procurement

Sep 23

Asset Management

Leadership and People
- Leading the Service
- Leading and Developing People

Mar 23

Communications, Engagement and Consultation

Sep 23

Finance and Assurance

Sep 23

8.   **Risks**

8.1   Risks associated with adopting fire standards are:

- Lack of management capacity to conduct gap analysis effectively and complete the implementation tool.

- Reliance on national prescription on standards and guidance can be a significant barrier to staff empowerment

- The way that some standards are written may drive service managers into silo working.

- Policy writing and general writing skills are a challenge for new managers/commanders

- Length and readability of text and guidance are barriers to people with Neurodiversity challenges as identified in our People Impact Assessment

- HMICFRS negative commentary if there is a perception of lack of progress

9.   **Recommendation**

9.1   That the Committee supports the project and approves the regional approach.

STEVE FRANK
HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE