

Item Number	Item 6 - Paper 4
Title of Paper	Fit for the Future – response to consultation
Decision or Information	For decision
Date of Meeting	9 December 2020
Presented by	Chair and CPO
Attachments	Appendix A – draft consultation response

Summary

This paper provides the Board with a proposed response to the recent consultation on *Fit for the Future* for consideration and agreement.

Fit for the Future proposes a common vision for the future of fire and rescue services in England. It has been developed through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) the National Employers (England) and the Local Government Association (LGA).

As a key stakeholder, the Board was invited to respond to the consultation.

Recommendations and decisions required

The Board is asked to:

- Consider and agree the response to the consultation attached as a draft in **Appendix A**.

Background Information

Board members will be aware and may have responded to the consultation from the perspective of their own organisations.

As Fire Standards represent a key element of establishing a national benchmark for the first time in over 10 years, driving continuous improvement and being a fundamental part of any reform agenda, the Chairs feel it appropriate for the Board to respond.

As we have not had the opportunity to discuss *Fit for the Future* at Board before the consultation closed, a holding note was sent to those collating consultation responses requesting that the Board be allowed to submit its response after this Board meeting.

A draft response is attached at Appendix A. The Board is invited to review the letter, make any comments, or propose amendments to it and, if content, agree to it being sent on the Board's behalf.

Appendix A – Draft response to the Fit for the Future Consultation

From: Fire Standards Board

Date: Agreed on 9 December 2020 [can amend date if required]

The Board welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *Fit for the Future* consultation, which it discussed at its meeting on 9 December 2020.

The Board acknowledges the consultation's important references to the Fire Standards Board's creation and how the Fire Standards it produces will assist in making the service as a whole and services individually "fit for the future". This it feels recognises the significant importance of the most influential key stakeholders working together to contribute to the future direction of fire and rescue services.

Whilst it is accepted that the consultation's proposals have been developed in partnership (and this is made clear on the website), the Board feels it is essential that all key stakeholders are referenced and therefore should include explicit reference to the Association of Police Crime Commissioners (APCC).

Improvement Objectives

The Board feels the Improvement Objectives (IOs) set appropriate priority areas, and it notes and appreciates the specific references in some of them to the Fire Standards and the Board itself. However, it recognises that the IOs are unlikely to remain static given the dynamic nature of the sector and the impact of a variety of external influences and events such as the COVID pandemic, the likely public sector funding challenges and the continued learning from incidents such as Grenfell Tower.

The Board notes that there appears to be an opportunity to strengthen the links between the IOs and the Fire Standards by referencing the Community Risk Planning Fire Standard in IO1 where the NFCC Programme aim of a 'consistent structure of IRMPs across the country' is referenced.

Similarly, with the clarity now reached about the two overarching Leadership Fire Standards, reference to them in relation to IO9 seems appropriate.

The Board would appreciate the opportunity to ensure that the Fire Standards are referenced across the range of IOs which also link to the NFCC Programmes of work to emphasise the connections between the work and parties involved as well as gaining wider support for them. It is clear that in moving forward collaborative working will be key.

The context information presented was extensive and useful in explaining the background and journey to date and which areas should be the focus of change and to some extent why. The introductory section could benefit from perhaps setting the expectations of reader about what they will find in the proposals and what they will not. An explanation that the proposals and IOS are, at this stage, aspirational setting out a future state rather than a plan stating who and how they will be delivered would be helpful.

In terms of presentation, the Board felt that the layout and presentation of the document online was good and very much helped its readability.