ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

Meeting	Performance & Resources Board	Agenda no.	12
Meeting Date	27 October 2021		
Report Authors:	Jenny Smith / Colette Black		
Presented By	Colette Black		
Subject	NFCC Code of Ethics - Update		
Type of Report:	Decision		
Action Point No.		For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC), Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) have worked in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Sector to create and launch a Code of Ethics.

The following recommendations are made:

1. The Code of Ethics will be launched and embedded via the Code of Conduct,
2. The launch will take place in December 2021 with
   o 'Inform' activity leading up to launch,
   o 'Implement' activity from January to April 2022 and
   o 'Embed' activity on an ongoing basis,
3. Actions highlighted in the gap analysis (appendix A) will be incorporated into our People Strategy Action Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Code of Ethics was released on 18 May 2021 as a new Fire Standard. We have engaged with our representative bodies through Phase 6 of our 'Working Well Together' approach to agree to adopting the recommendations in the associated Fire Standard.

This builds on the Code of Conduct which we agreed with our representative bodies as part of Phase 2 of our 'Working Well Together' approach. We are recommending that we embed the Code of Ethics into our Code of Conduct and launch together in December 2021.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

We will follow the Code of Ethics guidance document to ensure that we are implementing and embedding the Core Code effectively. Our initial launch of the Code includes:

INFORM

Month	Activity	Owner
October	Finalise engagement with representative bodies Engage with Staff Networks	HR (Hannah Phipps)
November	Prepare launch materials for formal December launch	HR (Jenny Smith)/Corporate Comms
December	Formal launch of the Core Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct Launch to include communication from our Commissioner, Managers Briefing, livestream, the Shout and Workplace	HR (Jenny Smith)/Corporate Comms
January	Ensure cascade via multiple communication channels, including podcasts to run over 6 weeks (overview plus 1 theme per week)	HR (Jenny Smith)/Corporate Comms

During the next 12 months we will undertake the following review of policies and procedures which will address gaps highlighted in the gap analysis (see Appendix A)

We will also ensure that the Core Code of Ethics is specifically referred to within the following key documents:

- Code of Conduct (as part of this launch)
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy

IMPLEMENT

Month	Activity	Owner
January	SLT (Service Leadership Team) papers will include a Core Code review section incorporated into PIA (People Impact Assessment) section	Executive Support (Alison Brewster)
	Core Code and Fire Standards will be included in Induction for all new joiners	L&D Kay Shelley)
	Core Code question-set will be developed to use for all new recruitment and promotions	Recruitment (Katherine Hill)
	Online training available to all	L&D Kay Shelley)
February	Run a culture and behaviours session with senior teams	SLT supported by L&D (Kay Shelley)
March/April	Run manager workshops to explore scenarios, focussing on how the Core code can guide effective decision making	L&D (Kay Shelley)
Ongoing	Review policies in line with policy schedule to ensure the Core Code is fully reflected in all that we do	HR (Hannah Phipps)

We believe these actions will ensure that the principles contained within the Code are embedded within everything that we do.

On an ongoing basis we will continue to promote the five principles by:

EMBED

Month	Activity	Owner
Ongoing	We will include Learning with particular focus on the Senior Leaders requirement our development pathways learning	L&D (Kay Shelley)
Ongoing	We will 'Lead from the Top' - our CFO (Chief Financial Officer) and senior leadership will continue to describe the importance of the Core Code and visibly role model and reinforce the standards.	Chief Fire Officer /SLT
Ongoing	Review to ensure our colleagues continue to understand importance, know how to feedback professionally, assess feedback loops to identify any remaining barriers	Line Managers via HR (Lead People Partners)
To support colleagues in feeling confident to address behaviour that breaches the Core Code we will:		
Ongoing	Enable understanding and agreement - provide a range of communications and approaches so that the 'golden thread' connecting Fire and Rescue Plan, IRMP (Integrated Risk Management Plan) Annual Plan and Personal Objectives ("What we do") is contextualised with our expectations against the Core Code of Ethics ("How we do it")	Corporate Comms
Ongoing	Provide feedback loops - ensure a range of feedback loops, tools and avenues are in place, accessible and promoted so that employees can feel confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour at all levels, regardless of rank, role, or level.	Line Managers via HR (Lead People Partners)

Delivering the activities through the key stages identified at each stage set out above we will ensure that we are working towards adopting the recommendations in the Fire Standards:

Fire Standards Recommendations

[Code of Ethics | Fire Standards Board](#)

A **fire and rescue service must:**

1. Adopt and embed the Core Code to demonstrate that the service is fully committed and compliant at both an individual and corporate level.
2. Ensure the attitudes, professional behaviours and conduct described within the core code are reflected in its decision-making, policies, procedures, processes,

and associated guidance that govern how the service manages and supports its workforce.

3. Provide training and support to all those who work for, or on behalf of, a service to achieve their understanding of the Core Code and an appreciation of their responsibilities in adhering to it.
4. Not detract from the Core Code.

Those who **lead services and those who work for, or on behalf of, the service must:**

5. Understand, respect, and follow the principles of the Core Code and demonstrate this by their commitment to it and their responsibility for upholding it.
6. Conduct themselves in accordance with the Core Code.

Those **responsible for the governance of fire and rescue services, whilst complying with their own ethical codes must:**

7. Hold the Chief Fire Officer to account for the implementation of the Core Code at a local level.
8. Play a proactive role in challenging behaviour inconsistent with the Core Code; and
9. Ensure strategies, policies and performance measures are in place to promote and embed a positive and inclusive culture.

A **fire and rescue service should:**

10. Designate a senior leader who is responsible for promoting the Core Code throughout the service and ensuring that all those who work for, or on behalf of, the service understand its contents and what is expected of them.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

Adoption of the Core Code of Ethics is an additional control measure for risk SRR150019:

'There is a risk that due to the absence of a positive and supportive culture the Service fails to provide a safe and inclusive culture which ensures the well-being of staff and contributes to attracting a diverse workforce.'

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

This links to our aspiration contained within the Fire and Rescue Plan to promote a positive culture in the workplace, and additionally, supports our aspiration to ensure a fair and accessible whistleblowing and grievance policy is in place for all.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with adopting the Core Code. Any activities necessary as part of launching the Code will be incorporated into the People Strategy Action Plan and will be undertaken within budget.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

The code builds on our existing values and behaviours rather than a message that we are removing our own in favour of the code, we felt this would be less confusing for colleagues.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

We have considered whether individuals with protected characteristics will be disadvantaged as a consequence of the actions being taken. Due regard has also been given to whether there is impact on each of the following protected groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010:

Race	*No*	Religion or belief	*No*
Sex	*No*	Gender reassignment	*No*
Age	*No*	Pregnancy & maternity	*No*
Disability	*No*	Marriage and Civil Partnership	*No*
Sexual orientation	*No*		

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no health and safety implications.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

This is a new Fire Standard which we have an obligation to adopt. We have engaged with our representative bodies on the way in which it is to be adopted.

FUTURE PLANS

There is a further opportunity to review the Service Values in 2022 once the Core Code of ethics is fully embedded as they will have been in place for 5 years at that point.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England)
Core Code of Ethics Guidance
Core Code of Ethics Fire Standards Board

Appendix A – Gap Analysis