



Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

## Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

**Report reference number: 046 /21**

**Government security classification: Not protectively marked**

**Title of report: Code of Ethics – Adoption and Launch**

**Area of county / stakeholders affected: Service wide**

**Report by: Colette Black, Director of People Services and Assistant Chief Executive Officer**

**Date of report: 13 December 2021**

**Enquiries to: Colette Black, Director of People Services and Assistant Chief Executive Officer**

### 1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of the report is to provide an update and confirm the Authority's approach to the launch of the NFCC Code of Ethics.

### 2. 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 Code of Conduct attached as Appendix B has been updated to embed the Code of Ethics and should be approved.
3. The launch will take place in December 2021 with
  - 'Inform' activity leading up to launch,
  - 'Implement' activity from January to April 2022 and
  - 'Embed' activity on an ongoing basis,

4. Actions highlighted in the gap analysis (Appendix A) will be incorporated into our People Strategy Action Plan.

### 3. Benefits of the proposal

The code builds on our existing principles and behaviours and with these ethical principles at the heart of the Service we can ensure we share a common code with the wider fire and rescue profession which will ensure consistency.

Expected benefits of achieving the Fire Standard:

1. Achieves greater consistency in ethical and professional behaviour throughout the Service.
2. Generates a more positive working culture, which embraces learning and is transparent and accountable.
3. Improves trust in and reputation of the Service.
4. Enables all those who work for, or on behalf of the Service, to challenge inappropriate behaviour and hold others to account for their actions.
5. Improves the recruitment and retention of a workforce that is representative of the community it serves.
6. Improves governance and leadership of the Service.

### 4. Background and proposal

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.

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/included:

#### 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
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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  Core Code and Fire Standards will be included in Induction for all new joiners  Core Code question-set will be developed to use for all new recruitment and promotions  Online training available to all	Executive Support (Alison Brewster)  L&D Kay Shelley)  Recruitment (Katherine Hill)  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	Chief Fire Officer /SLT

	importance of the Core Code and visibly role model and reinforce the standards.	
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.

**5. Alternative options considered and rejected**

Option 2: Do nothing

The Core Code is a new Fire Standard and as such there is a requirement for the Service to adopt and embed the Code to demonstrate that the Service is fully committed and compliant at both an individual and corporate level. This Fire Standard and the Core Code underpin all Fire Standards. The decision to not do this would put the Service outside of the national Fire Standards and is not recommended.

**6. Strategic priorities**

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.

**7. Operational implications**

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.

**8. 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.

**9. Legal implications**

There are no legal implications.

**10. 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.

## 11. 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		

Continuous improvement in terms of conduct and behaviour has the potential to incur a positive impact.

## 12. Risks

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 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.'*

## 13. Governance Boards

Service Leadership Team

Strategic Governance Board 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 where a general discussion was undertaken about the Code of Ethics and then again on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 where this Decision Report was tabled and discussed.

## 14. Background papers

[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


Appendix B – Code of Conduct

**Decision Process 046/21**

**Step 1A - Chief Fire Officer Comments**

(The Chief Fire Officer is asked in their capacity as the Head of Paid Service to comment on the proposal.)

.....I support this recommendation.....

Sign: .....  ..... Date:.....15/12/21.....

**Step 1B – Consultation with representative bodies**


(The Chief Fire Officer is to set out the consultation that has been undertaken with the representative bodies)

Consultation has taken place with each representative body through phase 6 of ‘working well together’.

**Step 2 - Statutory Officer Review**

The report will be reviewed by the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority’s (“the Commissioner’s”) Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the Commissioner or their Deputy.

Monitoring Officer Sign:  .....  
Print: ..Darren Horsman - Deputy MO  
Date: 24.01.2022.....

Chief Finance Officer Sign: .....  .....  
Print: .....Neil Cross.....  
Date: ..... 15/12/21 .....

**Step 3 - Publication**

Is the report for publication?      **YES**

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'none' if applicable)

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If the report is not for publication, the Monitoring Officer will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

**Step 4 - Redaction**

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

- |   |                   |    |
|---|-------------------|----|
| 1 | Of Decision Sheet | No |
| 2 | Of Appendix       | No |

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

.....  
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Date redaction carried out: .....

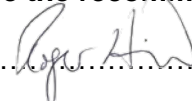
If redaction is required, the Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer are to sign off that redaction has been completed.

Sign: .....      Print: .....

Date signed: .....

**Step 5 - Decision by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign:  ..... (PFCC)

Print: Roger Hirst

Date signed: 25 January 2022