

Report title: Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee	
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Date: 21 September 2021	For: Noting
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to brief the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee on the content of the new Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services, and the steps taken and planned by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA) and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) to ensure its implementation locally.

2. Recommendations

That the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee notes the content of the report.

3. Context / Summary

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 Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (attached at Appendix A) on 18 May 2021. The launch document confirms that the Core Code:

“...is designed to guide all Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) employees in their day-to-day conduct, providing professional standards of practice and behaviour to carry out business honestly and with integrity and to underpin organisational culture. It provides the expectations for how employees should behave in any given situation, to assist with decision-making.

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and FRSs will strive to conduct all our activities efficiently, to the highest ethical standards and in compliance with legal obligations.”

Suzanne McCarthy, Chair of the Fire Standards Board (FSB) states that:

“The Code of Ethics Fire Standard adds to the suite of professional Fire Standards now well underway which are being designed to help drive service improvement. They will also form

the basis of future inspection judgements arrived at by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services in England.

The development of this standard was a priority for the Board as it recognised that ensuring the application of ethical principles across services was imperative and critical to achieving a more positive working environment and greater professionalism by those who work for, and on behalf of, the services."

It is recommended that the Core Code is adopted by all fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England. To achieve adoption of the Code locally, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA) and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) have agreed the following steps:

1. Adopt the Core Code - We will engage with stakeholders, including our representative bodies, with a view to adopting the Core Code (attached as Appendix A) and work towards adopting the recommendations in the associated Fire Standard (attached at Appendix B).

2. Gap Analysis - We will use the Core Code to undertake a gap analysis relating to existing behavioural frameworks, values, and cultural approaches. Progress in addressing any identified gaps will then be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. This is to ensure that the principles within the Core Code are evident and incorporated within all existing as well as new associated documentation.

3. Planning – As part of the People Strategy Action Plan, we will draft a plan which outlines how we will embed the principles of the Core Code in all that we do. This will include training and support to staff.

4. Launch – We will work with stakeholders to launch the Core Code and the five principles which are contained within. This is planned for December 2021.

5. Designate a senior leader –We have designated the Director of People Services (who has responsibility for people, values and culture) as the senior leader with responsibility for promoting the Code and ensuring that all those who work for or on behalf of ECFRS know and understand what is expected of them.

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

4. Appendices

Appendix A: Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services

Appendix B: National Fire Standard – Code of Ethics