

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	19 FEBRUARY 2024
Report of	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Report Sponsor(s)	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Subject	FIRE REFORM WHITE PAPER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The consultation paper “Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service” was published in May 2022 to seek views on the Government’s ideas for reform of the sector, building on lessons from independent inspection, national reports and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

In December 2023, the Government published its response to the consultation. This paper briefs members on the contents of this response.

The areas considered for sector reform are:

- People
- Professionalism
- Governance

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the fire reform white paper

CONTENTS

Main Report

Appendix A - Government response to the fire reform white paper

BACKGROUND

1. The consultation paper “Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service” was published in May 2022 to seek views on the Government’s ideas for reform, building on lessons from independent inspection, national reports and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
2. Following consultation, the Government published a response in December 2023, which covers three areas - people, professionalism and governance.
3. The Home Office said evidence gathered during the consultation stage, and a number of key reports and events, provided further insight into the issues set out in the White Paper, which have informed its strategy for reform.
4. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) provided its own response to the consultation, following workshops with middle managers and Fire Authority members.

HEADLINE CHANGES

5. A College of Fire and Rescue will be introduced to raise standards and strengthen leadership, potentially with statutory legislation to help it lead the profession.
6. The Government will develop provision for operational independence for fire chiefs, to help separate strategic and operational decision making.
7. The National Joint Council will be tasked to review the pay negotiation mechanism in early 2024, with the Home Office exploring other options if this results in no meaningful change.
8. Action will be taken to improve integrity and culture through improved training, more open recruitment practices and working toward a statutory code of ethics for fire and rescue employees.
9. The Government will not however take forward the mandatory transfer of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) functions to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), Mayors or single elected individuals at this stage. This had been proposed in the consultation draft. Instead, the Home Office will encourage PCCs and Mayors who want to take on fire governance functions, where the areas are coterminous, to step forward.

NEXT STEPS

10. SYFR is keen to work with Home Office, National Fire Chiefs’ Council (NFCC), representative bodies and other partners to help shape the areas of change, outlined in the White Paper, where possible.
11. We will also need to consider the proposed areas of reform as part of our existing plans, strategies and service improvement work.
12. There may be some risks to the government delivering some areas of reform listed, as parliamentary time is limited ahead of the general election in 2024.

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all

- Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

CONTRIBUTION TO SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

- [HMICFRS Inspection Framework e.g. Diagnostic area and/ or diagnostic questions](#)
- [SYFR Inspection report Areas for Improvement \(AFIs\)](#)
- [Fit for the Future Improvement Objectives](#)
- [Professional Standards for Fire & Rescue Services in England](#)
- [SYFR Service Plan 2023-24 Priorities](#)
- [SYFR Community Risk Management Plan 2021-24](#)

The themes of the Fire Reform White Paper form part of existing sector improvement work.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- Yes
- No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

We expect opportunities for collaboration at a national level and to learn from similar reform in other sectors, e.g. policing

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no business continuity implications associated with this report.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

- No
- N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EqlA is not required/is outstanding:

We expect Equality Impact Assessments to be completed as new initiatives are implemented at a national level

HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

- Yes
 No
 N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

We expect health and safety risk assessments to be completed if required, as and when specific proposals are progressed.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

14. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision *is required / *has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power Yes
 No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

D: Legislation
D2: Consultations

IMPLICATIONS

15. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
Reforming Our Fire & Rescue Service https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657888bc095987000d95df2a/E02947034_Fire Reform Consultation Resp Accessible.pdf		
Report Author:	Name:	Zander Mills, Corporate Communications Manager
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