

FIRE INVESTIGATION POLICY**REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER****For Information****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the changes to our internal Fire Investigation Policy, attached as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members note the changes to the policy, attached as Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB), as with all fire and rescue services across the UK, has a duty to investigate all fire related incidents that it attends in order to, where possible, identify the origin and cause of the fire.
- 3.2 These investigations are conducted in a proportionate manner, taking into account the size, severity and complexity of the incident.
- 3.3 The National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Competency Framework sets out two 'tiers' of fire investigation and the levels of training required to complete each.

4. PURPOSE

- 4.1 The purpose of the policy and procedure is to support Cleveland Fire Authority's requirements regarding Fire Investigation.

5. CHANGES

- 5.1 The review contained a number of changes, which have been set out below:
- The main update relating to this policy surrounds to the 'levels' of investigation and the responsibilities placed on the investigator at each level.
 - The previous version of this policy identified three levels of fire investigation. However, the NFCC Competency Framework alongside national guidance within the community now only recognises two tiers of fire investigation.
 - The two tiers are identified as Tier 1 and Tier 2 investigations.

- Tier 1 investigations are conducted by the on scene officer in charge, normally a Crew or Watch Manager, and are non-complex investigations where the origin and cause are readily available. These investigations are generally conducted to fulfil the requirements of national recording.
- Tier 2 investigations are conducted when the origin and cause are not readily available, when the incident and subsequent investigation are likely to be prolonged, when the incident involves a criminal element or when serious injury or fatality occur. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.
- The new structure places a responsibility of the investigator, regardless of tier, to identify if the investigation is within their level of training and competence and if not, to seek assistance and advice.
- The policy refers to the activities required with regard to certain investigations and the requirement of the investigator and brigade to work alongside Cleveland Police.
- This policy also makes mention, for the first time, of the Fire Investigation Manager and their responsibilities within the structure.
- An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the policy and no issues were identified.
- Associated documents, FI1 – Fire Investigation Procedure, FI2 – Triage and Tasking and FI3 – Private Dwelling Access For Post Fire Investigations, are available on the Operations Information and Guidance SharePoint site and should be read in conjunction with this policy document.

5.2 At the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Policy Meeting on 24th of June 2025, the papers were presented and discussed, with the outcome being that ELT approved the recommendations in their entirety.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 All relevant staff will be informed of the decision and our internal department procedure note as well as information held within our Mobile Data Terminals for operational crews will be updated.

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