**08th August 2022**

Firstly let me introduce myself; I’m Steve Topham, Director of Emergency Response with Humberside Fire and Rescue Service and Chair of the National Fire Chief’s Councils (NFCC) PPE and Clothing Committee, which I hope you are aware of through your regional representatives to that committee.

You may have already seen the attached letter from NFCC Chair Mark Hardingham recently sent to your Chief; the purpose of my communication is to build upon this communication so that you are aware of the detail that sits behind the project and most importantly how to get involved.

Now more than ever following the recent heatwave and the expectation that climate change will continue to make our working environments more challenging; and in addition to other concerns which built the business case behind the research funding application (which can be viewed here), it is clear that this is the right time to look forward at the evolving nature of our operational services and consider how we approach this challenge to ensure firefighter safety is maintained and improved.

Dstl will undertake this important research and will be arranging interviews with your regional representatives, whom should be inviting you to these interviews as the relevant ‘single points of contact’ we have on record for your service. It is important that if you cannot attend the meetings then a replacement should attend in your absence, as your Chief’s have all highlighted their wish to participate in the process. Other interviews will take place with relevant staff organisations, who are all represented on the NFCC PPE and Clothing Committee (PPE/C).

The interviews will be semi structured and maybe either virtual or face to face. The interviews are likely to start relatively soon and will continue into the New Year. We are expecting the report from dstl in March 2023 and this will allow the project to move into phase 2 in 23/24. The next phase will use the information collated to develop concept designs.

The cost of this first phase of research is significant and I would urge you to ensure that you are truly representing the views of your service. This may require you to undertake some internal research and speak with strategic managers to ensure you have the right information that can be passed to dstl.

The vice-chair of NFCC PPE/C, Brett Egan-Briers, is co-ordinating this research on behalf of the sector and is happy to be contacted about the project and can be contacted at brett.egan-briers@kent.fire-uk.org. Additionally, the NFCC National Procurement Hub will have a specific webpage dedicated to this project:

[https://www.nfcc-procurementhub.org.uk/the-future-fire-fighters/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nfcc-procurementhub.org.uk%2Fthe-future-fire-fighters%2F&data=05%7C01%7CBrett.Egan-Briers%40kent.fire-uk.org%7Ce761113823e44ff6781d08da6e573155%7C2bd1b71251b14e0ea3b481bfa47b30c3%7C0%7C0%7C637943618004706838%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2Q3oerzsNAy60aTu%2FgzOnChD%2F4qmfx5swWiBlNs8zOo%3D&reserved=0)

Can I also remind you that NFCC PPE/C also has a dedicated page:

[NFCC PPE & Clothing Committee | National Fire Commercial Programme (nfcc-procurementhub.org.uk)](https://www.nfcc-procurementhub.org.uk/who-we-are/nfcc-ppe-clothing-committee/)

We look forward to working with you on this incredibly exciting and important project

Regards

Steve Topham

**NFCC PPE/Clothing Committee Chair**

**Director of Emergency Response with Humberside**