

Status of Report: *Public*

Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee

Date: 15 March 2023

Subject: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Plan for Improvement

Report by: Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

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For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of how the Service intends to react to Areas for Improvements (AFIs) and other development areas identified within the latest HMICFRS Inspection Report.

Recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to note the progress made to date and the content of this report.

Executive Summary

3. The HMICFRS inspection was completed in May / June 2022. The Service received the final report in January 2023 and has achieved the overall grades of: **Good** for Effectiveness, **Requires Improvement** for Efficiency and **Good** for People. There were eleven sections within the summary report, LFRS received a grade of **Good** in nine of those sections, which was an increase from four in the last inspection.
4. The report was very positive and has been welcomed by the Combined Fire Authority, Senior Leadership Team and staff alike. The report has identified 13 AFIs. A number of other comments were also made, which the Service will consider and progress.
5. A new HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2023 has been created and made easily accessible on the Service's internal SharePoint system. The Improvement Plan contains a dashboard showing all the numbered AFIs with links to separate spreadsheets for recording achievement progress.
6. Following analysis, any 'negative' comments contained within the inspection report relating to individual AFIs have been added to the criteria by converting them into sub-tasks. Where relevant, activities highlighted in an initial post inspection interim report have also been migrated to the new Improvement Plan.

7. The Business Assurance department within the Service Assurance Directorate will review and monitor progress in delivering the improvements and continue to provide updates to the CGC.
8. Any activities identified as not being a specific AFI will be managed by either including them as tasks in relevant department plans or by linking them to Fire Standards deliverables.

Background

9. The report identifies 13 AFIs. There are approximately 35 other comments contained within the report relating to areas requiring consideration.
10. To ensure improvement and progress, it is important that the Service accepts the AFIs and comments, and integrates them into future plans, working hard to continue to close any gaps and deal with issues found by HMICFRS.
11. The Improvement Plan put together by Business Assurance deals purely with the AFIs. These are highlighted areas for the Service to improve prior to the next inspection. It is however equally important that the significant improvements made to date in many other areas are also maintained.

12. The 13 AFIs are:

AFI1 - The service should put in place a plan to address the backlog of home safety checks received from partner referrals.

AFI2 - The service should provide training to partners to make sure they are receiving quality home safety check referrals.

AFI3 - The service should make sure it quality assures its prevention activity, so staff carry out home safety checks to an appropriate standard.

AFI4 - The service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what works.

AFI5 - The service should make sure it allocates enough resources to respond effectively and in time to statutory building control consultations.

AFI6 - The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.

AFI7 - The service should review its response standard to ensure it is based upon an up-to-date assessment of risk.

AFI8 - The service should assure itself that all processes in place to support performance management are effective.

AFI9 - The service should make sure it has appropriate business continuity arrangements in place which are regularly reviewed and tested that take account of all foreseeable threats and risks.

AFI10 - The service needs to assure itself that it is maximising opportunities to improve workforce productivity and develop future capacity through use of innovation, including the use of technology.

AFI11 - The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded.

AFI12 - The service should fully evaluate personal development discussions to ensure they are effective to manage staff development and performance.

AFI13 - The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

Report Implications/Impact

13. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The HMICFRS inspection programme is the governmental check that fire and rescue services are carrying out their statutory duties as laid out in the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework contained within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. By embracing the inspection process and by detailing an Improvement Plan, the Service is committed to showing progress and diligence in its function in carrying out these duties.

14. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

The costs of delivering the Improvement Plan are factored into the budget. Where Strategic Leads identify a requirement for additional resources to deliver their responsibilities within the Improvement Plan, they will create and submit the necessary requests for approval.

15. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

There is reputational risk if the Service fails to achieve improvement in areas that are identified as Areas for Improvement. This could lead to negative media reporting and lower community confidence in the Service.

16. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

The actions contained within the Improvement Plan may require prioritisation against other work-streams. In some areas, it may increase workload for departments.

17. Environmental

None

18. Impact upon Our Plan Objective –

Delivery of the Improvement Plan will positively contribute towards the aims and objectives of Our Plan 2020-2024.

Background Papers

None.

Officers to Contact

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