

Status of Report: **Public**

Meeting: **Corporate Governance Committee**

Date: **18th November 2020**

Subject: **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Improvement Plan and COVID-19 Inspection**

Report by: **The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer**

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For: **Information**

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Governance Committee of how the Service is progressing with the implementation of the Improvement Plan which was developed in response to the inspection report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), following the report to the Committee in September 2020. This report also details the recent HMICFRS its COVID-19 inspection of the Service.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to note the progress of the Improvement Plan since the last update in September 2020 and also the recent HMICFRS COVID-19 inspection, the outcome of which is awaited.

Executive Summary

3. A report was presented to the Corporate Governance Committee in September 2020 showing progress made against the Improvement Plan. Work continues to complete the outstanding actions, with timelines being introduced to assist with monitoring progress. A further report to update on progress will be presented to the Committee at its meeting in March 2021.

4. HMICFRS has now completed its COVID-19 inspection and the Service is awaiting the outcome.

Background

5. Since the Improvement Plan was published in August 2019, the Service has been working hard to improve and address the feedback. In September 2020, it was reported to the Committee that 37 actions from the Improvement Plan had been completed and 51 more were being addressed. Work continues in all these areas.

6. During the week commencing 26 October 2020, the HMICFRS inspected the Service for their response to COVID-19. This is part of a national programme to

inspect all Fire and Rescue Services, which began in September and will run through to December.

7. The COVID-19 inspection has been conducted 'virtually', with Strategic Leads from the Service being interviewed by the Service Liaison Lead and another inspector. During the week, the Strategic Leads for Prevention, Protection, Response and Control, Finance and Human Resources took part in extensive interviews, providing evidence of how the Service responded and dealt with the initial impact of COVID-19 from April – July. Also interviewed was the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and the Chair of the Strategic Coordinating Group, a Deputy Chief of Police.
8. A large quantity of documents and reports have been provided as evidence to support the excellent work carried out by staff during the early stages of the pandemic. As well as the areas described above, HMICFRS also looked into business continuity, pandemic procedure, appliance availability, absences and how staff were used to support efforts to help the community. They also looked into how the Service supported the Tripartite agreement and the extra lengths utilised to support all elements of this. They further examined how COVID-19 risk was assessed by the Service and the measures in place to keep staff safe and well throughout this period.
9. The inspection outcome will be in the form of a public letter and will not be graded. This is expected to be released in December along with the annual 'State of Fire Report' by the HMICFRS. However, verbal feedback will be given to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer the week following the inspection.

Report Implications/Impact

10. 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.

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

The cost of delivering the Improvement Plan is factored into the agreed 2020-21 budget. Senior officers are responsible for improvements within their specific areas and any requirements for additional resources to deliver the Improvement Plan will need a business case to be created and approved by the Senior Management Team.

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

There is reputational risk to the Service if it fails to achieve improvement in areas that are identified in the Improvement Plan. The COVID-19 inspection is not graded by the HMICFRS but a negative review of the Service following this inspection could lead to negative media reporting and lower community confidence in the Service.

13. 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.

14. Environmental

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

15. Impact upon Our Plan Objective

Delivery of the Improvement Plan will positively contribute towards the aims and objectives of Our Plan 2020-24. The COVID-19 inspection by HMICFRS will demonstrate the Service's commitment to Safer People, Safer Places.

Background Papers

Report to the Corporate Governance Committee November 2019 – Agenda Item 11 - Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Improvement Plan https://leics-fire.gov.uk/my-calendar/?mc_id=147

Report to the Corporate Governance Committee 11 March 2020 – Agenda Item 14 - Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Improvement Plan <https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/decision-making/cfa-meetings/>

Report to the Corporate Governance Committee 16 September 2020 – Agenda Item 13 - Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Improvement Plan <https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/decision-making/cfa-meetings/>

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