

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Considerations for a response Public Consultation—Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

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1. Q1: What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?

- 1.1 The proposed approach follows a similar format to recent inspection programmes within the Police. Whilst a common approach provides clarity and consistency, it is welcome that HMICFRS have previously acknowledged the differences between the two Services and are engaging with the sector to develop a methodology specific to Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs).
- 1.2 It is reasonable to expect that the public would want to know about the effectiveness and the efficiency of their emergency services. The three, core focus areas of effectiveness, efficiency and people offer opportunity to demonstrate performance.
- 1.3 Capacity to be able to meet the demands of the inspection programme is an important area of consideration.

2. Q2: Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?

- 2.1 It is a reasonable expectation that the initial inspections would look to cover all elements of the proposed programme.
- 2.2 The breadth of the inspection and reporting process requirements are likely to have direct relationship with the amount of resourcing required by an FRS.

3. Q3: Are there any other areas of Fire and Rescue Services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?

- 3.1 There are no specific areas of activity identified for inclusion above those already detailed within the consultation document.

4. Q4: Does the draft inspection methodology (annex A) include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?

- 4.1 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) has been engaged with colleagues from HMICFRS, where invitation was made to consider the question areas and how FRSs might be able to support evidence toward

these. This has been welcomed and supports the engagement with the sector mentioned in the Foreword of the consultation document.

4.2 It is understood that a separate data request process will be required which has not been provided within the consultation process.

5. Q5: How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of Fire and Rescue Services and of risks to public safety?

5.1 The range of methods proposed to gather information to support the inspection is welcomed. The use of data that has already been submitted by an FRS in advance of an inspection would likely reduce the impact.

5.2 It is important that the public perception of their FRS forms part of the overall assessment.

6. Q6: What, if any, new or emerging problems for Fire and Rescue Services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?

6.1 At this time BFRS has not identified any specific new or emerging problems that HMICFRS should take into account.

7. Q7: What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its Fire and Rescue Service assessments as fair as they can be?

7.1 The resources available to develop and deliver a response to an inspection programme will differ between FRSs. The length of time given to prepare effectively will be important.

7.2 HMICFRS should continue to engage with FRSs to develop inspection processes and to provide clarity and notice on their involvement within the process.

7.3 The Technical Advisory Group is seen as positive as it includes key stakeholders and will be used to develop the appropriate methods of data collection.