

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
18 October 2018
Item No. 11

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: HMICFRS INSPECTION UPDATE

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Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) of the recent activity involved in delivering Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection process in 2018.

RECOMMENDATION

That the FRA acknowledges the content of the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of the 45 Fire & Rescue Services in England. Between December 2017 and February 2018 HMICFRS ran a public consultation on its proposed methodology for inspection of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), which Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) responded to with the FRA support. The framework is based on the core measures of effectiveness, efficiency and workforce.
- 1.2 Three tranches of inspection will take place through 2018-19, in groups of 15, after each tranche there will be a reporting process. BFRS were selected to be inspected in the first tranche in summer 2018.

2. Communications and engagement

- 2.1 Exploration – informal visits to the Service have been made throughout the year. Our Service Liaison Lead (SLL) Kathryn Bloomfield, and other members of the HMICFRS team, initially visited in May 2018. Our SLL changed in June 2018 and Jerry Kirkby, an established HMICFRS inspector, and Matt Reavill, a SLL for the north east of England, were appointed. This required us to revisit 'exploration' to enable both Jerry and Matt to understand our FRS prior to the formal inspection process. Two further days were dedicated to this.
- 2.2 Exploration provided opportunity to meet with many staff, including operational personnel at Dunstable, Woburn and Leighton Buzzard. This included observing exercise 'Storm Deborah' which provided us an opportunity to showcase how we are able to deliver effective multi-agency command simulations.
- 2.3 A series of management briefings have provided staff with regular update on our preparations for the inspection process. The event in May 2018 was a workshop session to better understand the demands and successes within BFRS. Approximately 60 managers took part in this activity. The event in July 2018 provided opportunity for Principal Officers to

present the Strategic Briefing in advance of HMICFRS and take any comments. The event also included group work to appreciate what staff were proud of.

- 2.4 On 30 May 2018 DCFO Andrew Hopkinson, Cllr Coleen Atkins and Cllr Paul Downing attended a 'Chiefs and Chairs' briefing event, hosted by HMICFRS. At this event the inspectorate provided feedback on the three pilot events and released the final versions of the methodology and judgement criteria.
- 2.5 On 6 June 2018 SOC Andy Peckham, Karen Daniels and Thomas Warner attended a briefing event, hosted by HMICFRS, for Service Liaison Officers and staff engaged in delivering the inspections within Services.
- 2.6 A number of Blue Bulletin articles have been included to update all staff. A total of 10 updates have been provided to date.
- 2.7 Copies of our self-assessment and position statement have been made available on SharePoint, promoted in the Blue Bulletin and printed copies sent to workplaces for staff awareness.
- 2.8 Recent CMT engagement with all stations and work departments includes an update on the inspection process which enables a more detailed understanding for all staff.
- 2.9 A Data Pack was provided by HMICFRS on 20 July 2018. This pack provides BFRS with information collated from a number of sources, including data returns made to HMICFRS, CIPFA and Home Office national statistics. A review was carried out by BFRS to ensure that the data contained was accurate, enabling any matters of accuracy to be addressed. It was used to inform the inspection team within Fieldwork.
- 2.10 Recent communications have involved sharing with all staff detail of HMICFRS' Reporting Line and their staff survey access, both of which will help inform the final inspection report.

3. Timeline for Inspection

- 3.1 **Data submissions** – an initial request was made in May 2018 and was provided on time. A total of 1200 data cells were completed. In July 2018 a second request was made with a total of 600 data cells. The next data request is expected in October 2018.

- 3.2 **Document Submission** - three weeks were provided for a return of a document request, self-assessment and position statement. These were submitted on time in May 2018. More than 200 documents were provided to HMICFRS (e.g. minutes of meetings, terms of reference, action plans etc.).
- 3.3 **Self-assessment** – this document explained how we are delivering against the 11 diagnostic areas that support the core elements of *effectiveness*, *efficiency* and *people*. It had a word limit of 300 words per diagnostic area. All CMT members were engaged in developing this.
- 3.4 **Position Statement** – this document demonstrated where we see our successes and our challenges, and what our priorities are for the year ahead.
- 3.5 **Discovery** – took place for one week commencing 18 June 2018. During discovery, the inspection team visited a number of specific areas within the Service, such as Control, speaking with specific individuals and teams, and hosting telephone interviews with some of our partners.
- 3.6 **Strategic Briefing** - took place on Wednesday 18 July 2018. This was attended by four inspectors and HMI Zoe Billingham, and ran from 12:00hrs to 16:00hrs. This was preceded by interviews with representatives from both Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Fire and Rescue Service Association (FRSA, formerly RFU), and concluded with interviews with CFO and FRA Chair.
- 3.7 **Fieldwork inspection** - commenced on Monday 30 July and concluded on Friday 3 August 2018. This was led by Jerry Kirkby, assisted by Matt Reavill and included a total of twelve inspectors. A verbal debrief was provided to Principal Officers on Friday 3 August. No critical areas of concern were raised.
4. Resourcing
 - 4.1 The number of hours that inspection requires from the Service is being maintained so that this can be quantified at the end of the process.
 - 4.2 To date, across all areas of the inspection process, this is approximately 1,200 hours (150 days, or 30 weeks).

5. Further Evidence

- 5.1 Data requests will continue, with further requests in October 2018 and January 2019, moving to bi-annual in 2019-20 and beyond.
- 5.2 The debrief provided a summative position of the outcomes from the fieldwork week, which will be built on by HMICFRS through further triangulation and review of the wider discovery, data and document evidence, prior to a draft final report being made available to us for the purpose of checking for factual accuracy. We will not be able to influence the narrative of the report.
- 5.3 The final report is expected early December 2018. All 15 tranche one FRS will have their reports published at the same time. Following the publication of these reports, HMICFRS will publish a 'state of the nation' report which covers findings from across all tranche one Fire and Rescue Services.
- 5.4 Following receipt of the published report, FRA members will be updated on both findings and the Service intent based on any recommendations that it contains.
- 5.5 Our evidence that has been collated and used to support this inspection process will be reviewed, categorised and maintained for future processes.

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