

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
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Item No. 7

REPORT AUTHOR: ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

SUBJECT: HMICFRS 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		

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

PURPOSE:

To update Members on the progress made against the HMICFRS Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge the progress made against the action plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2017 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) gained the statutory responsibility of the inspection of Fire and Rescue Services in England and Wales and became Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This was the first time that Fire and Rescue Services have had an inspectorate in over a decade.
- 1.2 HMICFRS initial inspection of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England was split in to 3 tranches. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) was inspected in Tranche 1 with the main fieldwork carried out during August 2018. All Fire and Rescue Services have now been inspected and the Tranche 3 reports being due in December 2019, along with a 'State of the Nation' report reflecting on the first full round of inspections.
- 1.3 The inspection framework is built around 3 key questions:
 1. How **effective** is the Fire and Rescue Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 2. How **efficient** is the Fire and Rescue Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 3. How well does the Fire and Rescue Service look after its **people**?

No overall grading is given for the Service as a whole. Separate grading's are given for the 3 key inspection areas. BFRS was graded as 'Good' for effectiveness and as Requires Improvement for efficiency and people.

- 1.4 In addition to commenting on a number of strengths and achievements by the Service. HMICFRS identified 23 areas for improvement (AFI) within the report. These AFI's were developed into an action plan to drive Service improvement.

2. Progress against the action plan

2.1 The following AFI's are completed:

Action #	Core Area	Diagnostic	Area for Improvement	Actions Taken
9	Effectiveness	Responding to fires and other emergencies	The Service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.	The Operational Debrief Working Group action plan has been made more evident on the intranet by having it linked to the homepage of SharePoint. A new operations focused newsletter the 'Red Bulletin' was launched in June 2019 following staff engagement. This presents operational learning in both print and electronic formats. Publication will be quarterly.
10	Effectiveness	Responding to National Risks	The Service should ensure it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks.	This action relates to a comment from HMICFRS regarding Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) call handling. E-learning has been delivered to control staff and Prompt cards have been developed for 'Run Hide Tell' to support Joint Operational Procedure (JOPs) implementation, which are available to control in the mobilising system and on laminated sheets. Instructions are also on the mobilising system for mobilising and communications, which extends to mobilising of Specialist Assets for responding.

2.2 Many of the areas of improvement have influenced the 2019/20 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) action plan. The following AFI's are now being progressed in their entirety through the CRMP and therefore no actions are required within the HMICFRS action plan:

Action #	Core Area	Diagnostic	Area for Improvement
14	Efficiency	Making best use of resources	The Service should ensure its workforce's time is used efficiently and effectively. This relates specifically to the use of wholetime and fire control resources, and the potential use of on-call staff in the strategic reserve system.
21	People	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	The Service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures.

2.3 BFRS has led on the establishment of an NFCC Eastern Region HMICFRS Forum. This group met for the first time in September and is seeking to implement a peer assurance process in early 2020. Another method of assurance for the Service is the Staff survey; the 2019 survey is currently open. The following actions are complete subject to the completion of assurance work:

Action #	Core Area	Diagnostic	Area for Improvement	Actions Taken
8	Effectiveness	Responding to fires and other emergencies	The Service should ensure staff know how to command fire Service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents.	Level 1 incident command e-learning package has been reviewed and level 1 incident commanders have completed the course. Active monitoring forms reviewed and updated. The Service have recently been accredited by Skills For Justice for the delivery of Level 1 Incident Command, a programme has been developed for the delivery of these courses.
11	Effectiveness	Responding to National Risks	The Service should ensure operational staff have good access to cross-border risk information.	All Services are now providing their risk information to BFRS. Internal Communication Campaign has been delivered to highlight that over the border risk information is available on the mobile data terminals.
12	Effectiveness	Responding to National Risks	The Service should arrange a programme of over-the-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.	The Station Plan template has been updated to include a section on over the border exercises.
20	People	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the Service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the Service, led by chief officers.	Internal communications delivered on the benefits of diversity. A review of training materials has been completed.

2.4 The Service continues to progress the other Areas for Improvement. The progress made so far is summarised below:

Action #	Core Area	Diagnostic	Area for Improvement	Actions Taken
1	Effectiveness	Understanding the risk from fire and other emergencies	The Service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive risk profile	<p>A Community Risk Analysis (CRA) was developed to inform the 2019 – 2023 Community Risk Management Plan. Consultation with the community was conducted and concluded in march 2019. FRA approved plan at full meeting on 28/03/19.</p> <p>The Services Mosaic profiling data has been integrated in to the Safe & Well Database. This allows managers to run reports detailing the number of visits to each Mosaic Group. Additionally equality monitoring and other key data can now also be reported on in the same way which provides enhanced ability to analyse and evaluate delivery of Service.</p>
2	Effectiveness	Preventing fires and other risks	The Service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.	<p>Operational personnel have been provided with information on Mosaic Group 1 (less affluent social renters) and Group 3 (transient young singles) addresses for targeted activity. Alongside Group 2 (elderly singles reliant on state support) (already being targeted), these are the most at risk households in our community. This informs the Service target for S&W activity in year.</p> <p>Development work has been completed on Beds Fire Alert that enables crews to use the new smart phones on the fire appliance to identify the nearest target addresses.</p>
3	Effectiveness	Preventing fires and other risks	The Service should ensure staff carry out prevention work competently. This includes understanding how home fire safety checks help keep people safe. The Service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard	<p>A round of sample monitoring of Safe and Well delivery by operational personnel against a checklist of quality criteria has taken place. Findings were reported in May 2019. This provided significant assurance that operational crews are delivering S&W visits competently and are identifying vulnerabilities and making referrals where appropriate. A range of development needs have been identified which will be addressed in the supervisory manager training sessions</p>

			vulnerable people.	scheduled for October 2019.
4	Effectiveness	Preventing fires and other risks	The Service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better	A round of sample monitoring of S&W delivery by operational personnel against a checklist of quality criteria has taken place.
5	Effectiveness	Protecting the public through fire regulation	The Service should ensure it makes better use of its specialist resources in implementing its risk-based inspection programme.	The Service is continuing its work to implement a new Protection Data management system.
6	Effectiveness	Protecting the public through fire regulation	The Service should assure itself that its enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk. It should also include appropriate monitoring and evaluation.	Preliminary work has begun to research Risk Based Inspection Programmes (RBIP) in use by other FRS. Regional Collaboration in this area Suffolk FRS have been assigned as lead for RBIP.
7	Effectiveness	Protecting the public through fire regulation	The Service should assure itself that its operational staff carry out fire safety audits competently.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and improve quality assurance process for fire safety audit.(CRMP 10) <p>An active monitoring quality assurance form has been formulated with a procedure on capturing information from the audit process. This is in the process of being trialled by FSIO's and feedback attained to adapt the process and formulate a service policy is in progress. It is anticipated that the completion of the QA process will be Q4 2019</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Review operational training for fire safety audit with consideration to national guidance outcomes from Hackitt review (CRMP 14) <p>A review of training has been undertaken with updates in guidance on properties of 3-5 floors, Learnpro updates on conformation of evacuation strategy and the stay put policy and external cladding.</p>

13	Efficiency	Making best use of resources	The Service should ensure it is making best use of its transformation reserve to improve how the Service works.	The £250k Transformation Reserve in 2019/20 has been fully allocated to a number of initiatives, such as ICT and system developments. The £250k Transformation funding has also been budgeted across the medium term to drive forward transformational initiatives. £1m Transformation funding has been directly allocated towards the new Mobilising System.
15	Efficiency	Making best use of resources	The Service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any initiatives. This should include collaboration.	The Service has established an NFCC Eastern Region HMICFRS Forum and is engaging with regional colleagues to identify best practice in evaluation.
16	Efficiency	Making the fire and rescue Service affordable now and in the future	The Service needs to secure an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in future. Its future budget gap is increasing, but it has no plans to address and reduce it other than to use reserves. This is not sustainable.	<p>The current Medium Term Financial Plan balances the next six financial years, so to 2024/25. The 2020/21 financial settlement is key, as with the Spending Review, Business Rates Retention and Formula Review, much could change with our financial assumptions and forecasts. The action will be addressed each year at the budget setting time, as well as in year, for example via Budget Monitoring.</p> <p>Due to a one year settlement for 2020/21, there will be a delay until 2021/22 when the Authority will hopefully be informed of a medium term funding position. The one year settlement does not assist with medium term financial planning. The savings/efficiencies will still be reviewed, with new items introduced, including the forthcoming Operation Response Review, as well as Collaborative initiatives, some of which that will generate new income.</p>
17	Efficiency	Making the fire and rescue Service affordable now and in the future	The Service needs to make better use of technology to improve bureaucratic frontline working practices that rely on paper-based processes.	A draft Digital and Data Strategy has been released for CMT to critique. The final version of the strategy will be presented to CMT in November for final approval. Within the strategy is a statement advising our move to Microsoft Office 365 to unlock the digital tools necessary to transform our key paper based processes to e-forms with automated workflows.

18	People	Promoting the right values and culture	The Service should ensure its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation.	<p>The Service has continued to deliver the Moving Forward Together plan.</p> <p>Following consultation with staff the new Services values are in the process of being finalised.</p> <p>BFRS has begun to adopt the NFCC Leadership Framework. The process of embedding this framework into our processes is included in our CMRP 2019 – 23 Action Plan.</p>
19	People	Getting the right people with the right skills	The Service should assure itself that its requirement for competent on-call staff who join as wholetime to complete a probationary training course is value for money and the best use of resources.	Candidates successful at the WT FF selection 2018/19, that were current On-Call FF, have not attended the Fire Service College for foundation training or enter the L3 apprenticeship. A skills gap analysis was undertaken to determine training and development need. This provides efficiencies, recognises prior experience and delivers new Whole Time firefighters earlier. Training commenced in July 2019.
22	People	Managing performance and developing leaders	The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.	<p>FRS is working with regional FRS colleagues to consider further opportunities for identifying and supporting high-potential staff.</p> <p>The Service has committed to extra resources for Workforce planning job description.</p>

23	People	Managing performance and developing leaders	The Service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.	<p>The Service is working towards the implementation of the NFCC Leadership Framework.</p> <p>The forthcoming Group Manager promotion process utilises the Framework and candidates will be assessed against the four levels of leadership, based on personal behaviours and values.</p> <p>The revised structure for selection, development and promotion is overseen by a moderation panel that will ensure consistency, and provide openness and transparency throughout. Regardless of how far each candidate reaches within the process all will be offered constructive feedback and a development pathway.</p>
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3 Conclusion and Recommendation

- 3.1 The Service has made considerable progress against the 23 Areas of Improvement identified by HMICFRS. The Service will continue to progress the actions with progress monitored through the HMICFRS Report Action Plan and the CRMP Action Plan.
- 3.2 The Service will review the 'State of the Nation' report due to be published by HMICFRS in December following completion of the first round of inspections with a view to update and amend the action plan if necessary to address any relevant national issues identified
- 3.3 It is recommended that Members acknowledge the progress made against the action plan.

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