

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer: Director of Prevention

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan 2023-25 – Q2 Update 2024-25

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and the progress made during Quarter 2 2024-25, following the inspection report dated 29 November 2023.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the actions to deliver the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and that notable progress has been made up to the end of September 2024 (Q2).

Introduction and Background

2. Between May and August 2023, HMICFRS carried out their third inspection of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The inspection report was published in November 2023 and can be seen at Appendix 1.
3. The report contains an assessment of the Service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people. HMICFRS measured the Service across 11 assessment areas which they hope will encourage Fire and Rescue Services to consider inspection findings as a whole.
4. The report shows in particular that:
 - Of the eleven assessment areas, the Service has achieved four ratings of 'good' and seven ratings of 'adequate'.
 - There were no areas rated as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'.
 - The report identifies eleven Areas for Improvement.
5. At the Fire Authority meeting on 13 February 2024, Members received a paper advising that the Service had developed an Improvement Plan to address the findings of [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\) inspection report dated 29 November 2023](#).

6. The Improvement Plan has now been updated to outline the progress made up to the end of Q2 2024-25. The report covers the 11 AFIs highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report and the 32 actions set out by the Service that will address those Areas for Improvement.

7. The 11 Areas for Improvement (AFI) are:

Ref	Area for Improvement	Assessment Area
AFI1	The Service should make sure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.	Understanding the risk of fire and other risks.
AFI2 AFI3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service should make sure staff carry out home fire safety visits competently. The Service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective. 	Preventing fires and other risks.
AFI4	The Service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of unwanted fire signals.	Protecting the public through fire regulation.
AFI5	The Service should make sure it has an effective system to learn from operational incidents.	Responding to fires and other emergencies
AFI6 AFI7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Service should make sure it has an effective method to share fire survival guidance information with multiple callers and that it has a dedicated communication link in place. The Service should make sure it has an overarching cross-border exercise strategy. The strategy should assure the service that exercise objectives are in line with community risk management plan risks and that learning is recorded, shared and actioned. 	Responding to major and multi-agency incidents.
AFI8	The Service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.	Making best use of resources.
AFI9	The Service needs to make sure it has adequate plans in place to close its identified budget gaps.	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future.
AFI10	The Service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure staff don't work excessive hours.	Promoting the right values and culture.
AFI11	The Service should make sure it has processes in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation.	Managing performance and developing leaders.

HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Progress Update

8. The delivery of the Improvement Plan is overseen by the Service Improvement Manager, who meets regularly with senior managers responsible for each area for improvement to prepare updates on actions proposed and completed. The P&I team also ensure that any actions carried out are fully evidenced and available for evaluation and audit. The latest update, covering up to the end of September 2024, is attached to this report (see Appendix 1).
9. The Improvement Plan includes 32 separate actions across the 11 Areas for Improvement (AFI) highlighted by the inspectorate.
10. The Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) have oversight of the Improvement Plan and receive quarterly updates on progress.
11. Further progress was made against plans in Q2. As of Q3 2024-25, the Service has completed 41% of the actions in the Improvement Plan, with the completed actions currently being within the 'effectiveness' assessment area. This includes all of the actions under AFI4 and AFI5. Meanwhile, the remaining 59% of the actions are in progress.
12. Progress against the actions set out in the Improvement Plan is currently as expected, with no areas being raised as a particular concern. Further progress is expected during quarter 3 which should see more actions and AFIs progressed to completion.
13. All target dates being met will mean that the service will achieve completion against all actions ahead of the next HMICFRS inspection, which is likely to take place in late 2025 to early 2026.

Conclusion/Summary

14. Members are recommended to note that the first update of the HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2023-25 shows that further progress has been made up to the end of September 2024 (Q2).
15. Quarterly updates on the progress of the Improvement Plan will continue to be provided to the Fire Authority.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The Improvement Plan highlights areas for improvement relating to effectiveness, efficiency and people. Actions to address these areas are likely to have resource implications, which will be considered in the Improvement Plan.
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<p>Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)</p>	<p>Actions proposed and developed through the Improvement Plan are directly linked to the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the Mid Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and core strategies. The actions contained in the Plan will all have a positive impact on delivery against the three Core Strategies and associated enabling strategies. All proposals will be assessed to ensure they meet the Service's overall Core Purpose and Vision.</p>
<p>Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)</p>	<p>The Improvement Plan contains actions that have been formulated in response to the inspection report. These actions may have implications on productivity and efficiency and will be continue to be considered in the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).</p>	<p>Any risks associated with proposals will be assessed through the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>Proposals to deliver the Improvement Plan have the full participation of Senior Managers in relevant Service departments. The Improvement Plan, when published, will be publicly available on the Service website.</p>
<p>Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>An EIA is not required for this report. EIAs will be completed as appropriate when preparing proposals through the Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personnel data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>Impact assessments will be completed as required for specific actions related to the Improvement Plan.</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2023-25 – Q2 Update

[Link to HMICFRS Inspection report](#)