

Report of the Assistant Chief Officer/Director of Prevention

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

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the proposed actions relating to each area for improvement following receipt of the 2023 Inspection Report.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the draft Improvement Plan in response to the areas for Improvement highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report 2023 be approved.

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. Services are now measured against the 'characteristics of good performance' and are given graded judgements. HMICFRS have also expanded the previous four-tier graded system to include a fifth graded judgement of 'adequate'.
5. The report noted 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.
 - The Improvement Plan sets out actions to address the Areas for Improvement.
6. The 11 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) recommended are:

Assessment Area	Area for Improvement
Understanding fires and other risks	The Service should make sure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information
Preventing fires and other risks	<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
Protecting the public through fire regulation	The Service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of unwanted fire signals
Responding to fires and other emergencies	The Service should make sure it has an effective system to learn from operational incidents
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	<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.
Making best use of resources	The Service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity
Future affordability	The Service needs to make sure it has adequate plans in place to close its identified budget gaps
Promoting the right values and culture	The Service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure staff don't work excessive hours
Managing performance and developing leaders	The service should make sure it has processes in place to manage and develop talent within the organisation

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7. The Service has prepared an Improvement Plan containing actions which will address the Inspectorate's findings.
8. The draft Improvement Plan containing the proposed actions and expected timelines for their delivery is available for review at Appendix 2. Actions have been proposed following consultation with department heads and members of Strategic Leadership Board (SLB), with consideration given to the inspection report and HMICFRS's 'characteristics of good.'
9. The Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) have previously recommended the strategic direction for each AFI and designated tactical leads for the AFIs and the actions that will make up the next Improvement Plan.
10. The delivery of the Improvement Plan will be coordinated by members of the Performance and Information (P&I) team, who meet 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 actions carried out are fully evidenced and available for evaluation and audit.

Conclusion/Summary

11. Members are recommended to approve the HMICFRS Improvement Plan and the actions proposed by the Service to address the Areas for Improvement.
12. 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 HMICFRS Inspection Report highlights areas for improvement relating to effectiveness, efficiency and people. Resource implications will be considered as part of the Improvement Plan.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	The recommendations in the report directly link to delivery of the CRMP and the core strategies. Areas for Improvement with links to strategic policies will be considered as part of the Improvement Plan.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Any risks associated with the proposed actions will be assessed through the development of the Improvement Plan.

<p>Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>The publication of the inspection report involved the full participation of Senior Managers in relevant Service departments. The report is publicly available through HMICFRS and will be featured 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 personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)</p>	<p>Impact assessments will be completed as required for specific actions that are proposed in the Improvement Plan.</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – HMICFRS Inspection Report 2023

Appendix 2 – HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2024-25