

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

### HMICFRS – Inspection update

#### Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the HMICFRS inspection and the preparation of an improvement plan.
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#### Recommendation

***It is recommended that Members note the findings of the HMICFRS inspection and the proposed improvement plan template.***

#### Background

2. Members will be aware that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service was inspected by officers from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) during July 2018.
3. In March 2018, HMICFRS announced their intention to inspect all 45 fire and rescue services in England in three sets of services, beginning in summer 2018 and concluding in autumn 2019. The Service was inspected as part of the first tranche of fourteen services.
4. The inspection focused on three main questions:
  - a. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
  - b. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
  - c. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?
5. The inspection involved reviewing the Service's policies, plans and procedures, the submission of a Position Statement and Self-Assessment completed by the Chief Fire Officer, and a fieldwork phase during the week of 23 July 2018. During the fieldwork, inspectors visited every wholetime fire station and two on-call stations, held several focus groups with members of staff across the organisation and conducted interviews with senior managers.
6. HMICFRS have concluded their inspections of all fourteen services in the first tranche and their overall report has now been published along with individual reports for each service. The reports were published on 20 December 2018 and are available on the [HMICFRS website](#). The report for HWFRS is attached as Appendix 1.

## Findings

7. Using graded judgements against areas explored in the inspections, HMICFRS identified four categories:

- **outstanding** – where the service exceeds what is expected for good,
- **good** – the expected graded judgement for all fire and rescue services,
- **requires improvement** – where there are shortcomings, and
- **inadequate** – where there are serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance.

8. The following table lists the distribution of gradings awarded to the fourteen services inspected and Appendix 2 provides a summary of gradings against each service.

	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>People</b>
Outstanding	0	0	0
Good	10	8	3
Requires improvement	4	5	10
Inadequate	0	1	1

9. The overall summary of inspection findings for Hereford & Worcester FRS states:

*“We are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. But there are areas where the service needs to make improvements.”*

10. The individual gradings against the three areas examined were as follows:

**a. Effectiveness      Good**

*“The service keeps people safe from fire and other emergencies in an effective manner. It is good at:*

- *understanding risk;*
- *protecting the public through fire regulation;*
- *responding to fires and emergencies; and*
- *responding to national risks.*

*“But it does need to improve its prevention activity.”*

**b. Efficiency      Requires improvement**

*“(The service) needs to provide a more efficient service, particularly in the way it uses resources. But it provides an affordable service.”*

**c. People      Requires improvement**

*“The service needs to improve the way it looks after its people. This is particularly the case in these areas:*

- *promoting the right values and culture;*

- *ensuring fairness and promoting diversity; and*
  - *managing performance and developing leaders.*
- “However, it is good at getting the right people with the right skills.”*

11. The gradings were determined following analysis of detailed aspects of the Service, with any particular areas of good practice or requiring improvement highlighted in the inspection report. The findings for each area examined are summarised below together with a short commentary on the areas requiring attention.

### **Effectiveness**

12. In terms of effectiveness, the inspection found the Service to be good at understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies; protecting the public through fire regulation; responding to fires and other emergencies; and responding to national risks. In particular, the report highlights the work of the Multi-Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE) team as notable practice in successfully delivering a joint approach to enforcement against those in breach of fire safety regulations.
13. The report recommends that more needs to be done in terms of preventing fires and other risks, including more clarity in prevention planning, further training for staff and more evaluation of prevention activity. These are areas that the Service is already planning to address through the Community Risk Management Plan process, a review of training requirements relating to vulnerability and safeguarding, and an improved evaluation process to ensure the impact and benefits of our prevention work is better understood.

### **Efficiency**

14. The inspection recognises the Service’s good collaboration work with others including West Mercia Police, Shropshire FRS and other local authorities and its contribution to making sure the Service is affordable now and in the future. However, while the Service’s Medium Term Finance Plan is seen as good and based on sensible assumptions, the report considered that better use could be made of resources and roles within the workforce, and more effective monitoring of the benefits of working with partners.

### **People**

15. The report notes that the Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills in place and at making sure they are well trained. It also considers the Service good at making sure staff wellbeing is a priority. However, in common with most of the other services inspected, it also found that we could improve in other areas such as the promotion of the right values and culture; ensuring fairness and promoting diversity; and managing performance and developing current and future leaders within the organisation.

16. The report acknowledges that the Service was already aware of these issues having identified them in the Service's own self-assessment prior to the inspection and through a cultural review of the Senior Management Board carried out in early 2018. With the People Strategy in place, improvements are being pursued as a priority. This includes the work of the Service's Organisational Development Working Group and the Cultural Challenge Group exploring engagement and communication with staff and members of the public interested in joining HWFRS. New principles drawn up by the Promotion Process Group are being piloted in the Crew Commander promotion process, and staff from throughout the organisation will be involved in an upcoming Service Values consultation to ensure effective staff engagement and feedback in the process.
17. As with the other two areas examined, we will need to effectively monitor, review and evaluate the outcomes and benefits of changes made.

### **Improvement Plan**

18. The inspection report highlighted a number of areas for improvement and recommended that action be taken to address them. Therefore, the Service has prepared a draft Improvement Plan template, which focuses on the areas for improvement highlighted in the inspection report, but also adds a number of other areas, where further improvements can be made. The Improvement Plan will be owned by senior managers and will be regularly updated and published as progress is made throughout the year ahead.
19. The draft Improvement Plan template is attached as Appendix 3.

### **Conclusion/Summary**

20. The HMICFRS inspection report for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has been published. It found that we were effective in delivering our core service and have aspirations to achieve much more, but we need to make sure we can most efficiently balance limited resources to meet the prevention, protection and emergency response needs of our local communities, and how we can further support and develop our workforce.
21. The report highlighted a number of areas for improvement, which form the basis of an Improvement Plan to be delivered over the forthcoming year. Members will be given regular updates as the Improvement Plan actions progress.

### **Corporate Considerations**

<p><b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)</p>	<p>The whole report highlights areas for improvement in relation to effectiveness, efficiency and the Service workforce. Actions to address these areas are likely to have resource implications, and these will be considered through an Improvement Plan.</p>
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<p><b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).</p>	<p>Proposals developed through the Improvement Plan are likely to have an impact on both the CRMP and the MTFP. Proposals will also be assessed to ensure they meet the Service’s overall Core Purpose (“Keeping people safe from fire and other risks – responding efficiently and effectively to incidents and emergencies.”) and the ‘Saving More Lives’ Vision.</p>
<p><b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (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><b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)</p>	<p>None directly. Proposals developed through the Improvement Plan will consider any consultation requirements as necessary.</p>
<p><b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)</p>	<p>An EIA is not required as part of this report. EIAs will be completed as appropriate when preparing proposals through the Implementation Plan.</p>

**Supporting Information**

- Appendix 1: Fire & Rescue Service – Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19 – An inspection of Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, HMICFRS, December 2018
- Appendix 2: HMICFRS Inspection – Summary of Tranche 1 Judgements
- Appendix 3: HMICFRS Inspection – Improvement Plan 2018-19 template

**Background papers**

None

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