Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority
Full Authority
Member Briefing Report – 16 June 2020

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Update Quarter 4, 2019-20

Introduction and Summary

This report is to update Members on the progress in implementing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. The report confirms that despite the significant impact of severe widespread flooding across the Service area earlier in the year, and the significant impact currently being experienced due to the Covid – 19 Pandemic, sound progress is being made to discharge the requirements of the Plan.

Background

Introduction and Background

1.   At the Fire Authority meeting on 12 February 2020, Members received a copy of the Service's Improvement Plan drawn up to address the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspection report.

2.   The Improvement Plan has now been updated to outline progress made during Quarter 4 (Jan-Mar) 2019-20.   The report covers the 14 'areas for improvement' highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report.

HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Progress Update, Quarter 4 2019-20

3.   The delivery of the Improvement Plan is overseen by members of the Performance and Information team (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.   The fourth update, covering Quarter 4 (Jan-Mar) 2019-20, is enclosed with this report (see Appendix 1).

4.   The update shows that progress is being made in addressing areas identified within the three themes covered in the HMICFRS report; effectiveness, efficiency and people. However it should be noted that due to the major flooding incident in February 2020 and the current Covid-19 restrictions imposed upon the Service, certain actions have been delayed or postponed.

5.   Key points to note during Quarter 4 are highlighted below, with further details available in Appendix 1:

Effectiveness	
Area for improvement	*Q4 2019/20 - Update*
1. Access to relevant and up-to-date risk information	• 'Training the trainer' sessions for using the new Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) have been completed. • Installation of MDTs on fire engines is delayed following the Covid-19 outbreak.
2. Understanding and identifying vulnerability and safeguarding vulnerable people	• 77% of staff have now completed safeguarding training. • Safeguarding awareness is now assessed as part of the Level 1 Incident Command process and included in the station assurance process. • Domestic abuse awareness training: additional sessions are to be delivered in each District.
3. Evaluating prevention work to understand the benefits	• A monitoring and evaluation process is to be developed as part of the forthcoming Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25. • External evaluation of the Safe & Well Check and Dying2Drive initiatives are now complete and the findings are being used to improve delivery. • Internal surveys are also being completed for Fire Safety Audits and Safe & Well Checks.
4. Resourcing the risk-based inspection programme	• 766 complete audits at the end of Quarter 4. The target was 750. However, there have been more Intelligence Led audits and fewer Risk Based audits than planned for a number of reasons including staff departures, increased enforcement work and the impact of Covid-19.

Efficiency	
Area for improvement	*Q4 2019/20 - Update*
5. Workforce productivity - clarify the role of Watch Manager	• Complete – the new crewing system is in place, and the Service Delivery Management Day in January 2020 provided more information on the revised structure looking ahead to 2020/21.
6. Workforce productivity - prevention	• Revised Community Risk strategies have been drafted, but not yet finalised following the flooding and Covid-19 outbreak during the Quarter. • All vacant posts in the Community Risk department have now been filled, including

	an additional Watch Commander and two new Technicians.
7. Managing the replacement of faulty smoke alarms	• A report is being prepared to analyse 2019/20 data relating to faulty smoke detectors, including attendance by Watches and by Community Risk technicians.
8. Workforce productivity – protection	• To assist with inspecting premises, additional funding has been allocated to upskill operational Watch Commanders towards the National Fire Chiefs Council competence framework for inspection – postposed at present due to Covid-19 restrictions.
9. Benefits and outcomes of collaboration	• Annual Collaboration brochure has been updated and is due to be published in June 2020.

People	
Area for improvement	*Q4 2019/20 - Update*
10. Staff engagement – communication	• Ongoing engagement including Senior Management Board (SMB) visits and staff workshops on engagement and values has been planned, but delayed following the Covid-19 outbreak.
11. Staff engagement – culture and values	• As above.
12. Feedback mechanisms and change processes – ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	• Numerous Service Bulletin items covering a wide range of equality, diversity and inclusion issues continued throughout Quarter 4. • An Engagement and Wellbeing Officer and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer have been appointed. • A Positive Action Plan 2020-22 has been published and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-25 has been prepared. • Staff awareness sessions have also been held and a positive action plan has been agreed for the Wholetime recruitment campaign.
13. Supporting high-potential staff and aspiring leaders – appraisal process	• Staff appraisals, normally scheduled for January to April each year, have been affected by Covid-19 and an update was issued in the Service Bulletin.
14. Supporting high-potential staff and aspiring leaders – promotion process	• A Promotions Charter has been agreed following the completion of the Station Commander promotion process. • Promotion principles have been revised following a debrief on the process. The

	revised principles were used in the recent Group Commander promotion process and have informed the drafting of a new Promotion Policy.

Conclusion/Summary

6.   The fourth update of the HMICFRS Improvement Plan shows that some good progress has been made during Quarter 4, 2019-20, although delays have occurred due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place.

7.   Members are recommended to note the progress made in delivering the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. Further progress updates will be reported each quarter.

8.   Subject to any matters arising following your consideration, the update will be published on the Service website.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2018-19 - Update: Quarter 4, 2019-20