

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SAFETY & WASTE MANAGEMENT
CABINET PANEL
THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2019 AT 10:00AM**



**ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS 'AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT' IDENTIFIED
IN HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE
AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) INSPECTION REPORT IN TO
HERTFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (HFRS)**

Report of the Director of Community Protection and Chief Fire Officer

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Chief Fire Officer (01992 507500)

Executive Member:- Terry Hone, Community Safety and Waste
Management

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present to members that action plan that has been developed to respond to the recommendations contained in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Report on Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (HFRS) which was published on 20 December 2018.

2. Summary

2.1 In summer 2018, HMICFRS inspectors undertook a number of visits to HFRS including a formal inspection week. A strategic briefing was also provided by officers prior to the formal inspection; a number of areas were highlighted during the briefing to the inspection team including the then ongoing proposal from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire to take over governance of the Fire and Rescue Service.

2.2 In the period prior to the inspection the possibility of a change of governance had delayed the development of a number of key documents which were both essential for the effective operation of the Service and also integral to the inspection process, this included the Integrated Risk Management Plan, a new version of which was published in December 2018 and is currently in the public consultation phase.

- 2.3 This governance uncertainty was only considered in a very limited way by the inspection team, the subsequent report has therefore judged HFRS harshly with little recognition of the context in which the Service has had to operate for almost two years.
- 2.4 The report and the 'areas of improvement' highlighted within, however, draws heavily on the strategic briefing provided by the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer to the inspection team prior to the formal inspection. There are no surprises within the published report which should provide reassurance to both members and the public that the Service is aware of the actions necessary to achieve improvement and indeed the majority of actions identified in the action plan attached at Appendix 2 are drawn from existing plans, a number of which are already approaching completion.
- 2.5 The letter accompanying the report invites a formal response from the Chief Fire Officer within 56 days, a proposed response is attached as Appendix 1.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Cabinet Panel is invited to note and comment on the report and recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet it:
- i. Approve the draft letter attached as Appendix 1 is approved as the Council's response to the report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services on Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service dated 20 December 2018 (the 'Report') and the Director of Community Protection and Chief Fire Officer is authorised to sign the letter. In finalising the letter the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Community Safety and Waste Management, may make minor amendments as appropriate.
 - ii. Approve the plan attached as Appendix 2 as an appropriate action plan to meet the 'Areas for Improvement' identified within the Report.
 - iii. Agree that progress on the action plan is monitored through regular reports to the Community Safety and Waste Management Cabinet Panel.

4. Background

- 4.1 Under Section 28 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services in England must prepare a framework setting out what inspections of fire and rescue authorities are proposed. The Home Secretary must approve that framework before inspectors can carry it out.

- 4.2 Fire and rescue services have, since the removal of the previous Fire Service Inspectorate, invited officers and members from other authorities to undertake peer reviews under the umbrella of the Local Government Association. However with the reintroduction of formal inspections, and the expansion of the HMIC to become HMICFRS, HFRS was inspected in summer 2018 as part of Tranche 1 of the current framework and these inspections, following an initial pilot of three FRS, are the first for over a decade.
- 4.3 The full inspection report can be found on the HMICFRS website here: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/hertfordshire-fire-and-rescue-service-report-2018-19.pdf>

5. Inspection Report

- 5.1 The HMICFRS Inspection Report was published on 20 December 2018 and the overall summary of the findings stated in the report is:

‘We [HMICFRS] are satisfied with some aspects of the performance of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure. But there are several areas where it needs to make improvements.

The service must improve its effectiveness. More specifically, it should understand better its risk and put in place a new integrated risk management plan (IRMP). There has been a delay because of uncertainty about its future governance model. However, since our inspection we note that the service has proceeded with developing an IRMP. The service should also improve its prevention work.’

Positively, we [HMICFRS] found it [HFRS] was good at:

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

The service needs to be more efficient. It should use its resources better and it should ensure it offers, and continues to offer, an affordable service.

The service needs to do better at looking after its people. It should improve the way it:

- promotes the right values and culture;
- gets the right people with the right skills;
- ensures fairness and promotes diversity; and
- manages performance and develops leaders.

Overall, we would like to see improvements in the year ahead.’

- 5.2 The action plan included as Appendix 2 is intended to provide members with assurance that the 'areas for improvement' identified in the HMICFRS report are receiving appropriate attention and that the Service understands what changes will be necessary and have the capacity and skills necessary to achieve improvement.
- 5.3 In summary there was very little within the HMICFRS report that was a surprise to managers and many of the areas were, and are, already areas of focus. Indeed some aspects, such as replacing the Integrated Risk Management Plan, have already been addressed.
- 5.4 In other areas there was mention of provision of risk information to firefighters on fire engines; at the time of the inspection tenders had been published for new mobile data terminals and new software to support these. The hardware is currently being installed on fire engines and the software is undergoing pre-implementation testing prior to going live before April 2019.
- 5.5 It is unclear why HMICFRS suggested that HFRS had been unable to attract sufficient recruits to a number of posts, this included operational positions. This has never been a challenge, in fact the number of applicants for operation firefighter roles regularly outstrips our requirements and 48 new recruits have already been offered places with the first 22 now in training having started in January 2019 on the most diverse course the Service has ever had.

6. Financial Issues

- 6.1 There are no specific financial issues arising from this report, however there is the possibility that it may increase the challenge to make savings under future Integrated Plans.

7. Equalities Issues

- 7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The

protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 7.4 There are no equalities issues resulting from this report or the action plan. The plan itself includes a number of areas intended to further improve a number of equalities aspects including workforce diversity, culture and inclusion, each of these will be the subject of individual equalities assessment as appropriate.

Background Document

The full inspection report can be found on the HMICFRS website here:
<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/hertfordshire-fire-and-rescue-service-report-2018-19.pdf>

Draft Hertfordshire County Council Response to HMICFRS Report

Proposed response (to be returned to HMICFRS within 56 days) based upon the email update to Members sent on 21st Dec:

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE: EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND PEOPLE 2018/19

The Authority welcomes the inspection report which was submitted to the Authority on 20 December 2018 (the 'Report') but is disappointed that it fails to take significant account of the challenges that the Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (the 'Service') has faced over the last 18 months, in particular the potential change of governance which created considerable uncertainty and resulted in delay to the development of key plans such as the Integrated Risk Management Plan ('IRMP').

Whilst the overall summary from the Report identifies that there are several areas that require improvement, closer scrutiny shows that many areas of the Service's work were singled out for praise. We are pleased that the Inspectorate has acknowledged the strength of the Service's emergency response arrangements and the skills and professionalism of our firefighters, our incident commanders and the training which goes on to ensure that we can continue to deliver a strong and effective emergency response. The Service's contribution to national response arrangements was also judged to be good, noting the quality of our specialist equipment and, once again, the expertise of our staff.

At a time when there is intense scrutiny on the safety of buildings and the importance of sound fire safety management arrangements, the conclusion that our team of Inspecting Officers in Fire Protection were performing well is also something which provides assurance. As our recently launched draft IRMP sets out, this will continue to be an area of our work to which we attach considerable importance. In short, in those areas of our work that directly affect the public we were judged as performing well. This appears to be supported by the public perception survey undertaken in the summer of 2018 of our effectiveness. This scored 85% which is broadly in line with the national figure.

Notwithstanding all of the above the Service recognises, and indeed highlighted during the inspection, the areas of our work where the Inspectorate felt we were performing less strongly. Throughout the time which the HMI team spent with us, we put an emphasis on transparency. In so doing, we were open and honest with the Inspectors about where we had identified problems and were already concentrating our efforts to deliver improvements and address those parts of the business which were impacting on our performance and efficiency. Many of the recommendations for how those weaknesses could be addressed were already underway and we continue to make steady progress on delivering those improvements. This is particularly true of our information technology which, in some areas, we have

acknowledged has not been performing as well as we would have liked. The draft IRMP sets out clearly how we intend to invest more in this area to realise efficiencies and increase our effectiveness across the service.

Indeed the draft IRMP addresses many of the areas identified in the Report, it will also provide a basis on which the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service will be improved for the benefit of the public and staff.

The Report expressed some concerns that the Service's wholesale review of risk in the county, and our plan for how the resources and innovations required to properly manage those risks which would be set out in a new IRMP, might not be progressing at the pace the Inspectors would have liked. With the draft IRMP now published it is proven that the confidence in the Service being able to produce a detailed and comprehensive document, before the year end was not misplaced. The draft IRMP addresses the Inspectorate's concerns about a detailed understanding of risk and sets out a range of important initiatives which will not only tackle their concerns expressed about efficiency but also ensure that the Service has a more agile, dynamic workforce whose training, welfare and well-being needs are also properly looked after.

At the time of the Inspectorate's visit, there remained a degree of uncertainty about the Service's future governance arrangements and their report has taken a view on their perceived lack of progress in some areas such as collaboration. It is pleasing, therefore, that with those governance issues now behind us the Service has been able to make strong progress since September on many of the areas of concern, notably our collaborative work with the police which has made rapid progress in recent months. A member-led Collaboration Board is now in place and met for the first time in January and our Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) Academy is eliciting strong, positive feedback from those that have benefitted from the joint training opportunities which this now provides. Once again, the draft IRMP sets out clear ambitions for widening and deepening this work in the future.

The Report identified that there is still much to do in further developing a workforce which properly reflects the community. It also acknowledges that the Service is not alone in that respect as it is something which many Fire & Rescue Services are wrestling with. Clearly this is not something which can be addressed overnight but it is pleasing to report that our next two cohorts of recruits will be the most diverse we have ever been able to attract to the service. This coupled with the changes we plan to implement in our on call workforce, as set out in the IRMP, should be seen as important steps in addressing this issue.

The Service recognises that the Report is also not about criticism of, or finding fault in, individuals or groups of our staff. Throughout the various visits undertaken we are proud that our staff acted with integrity and professionalism and that was emphasised in feedback that came back to us both during and immediately after the visits. The concerns were very much

linked to the quality of some of our systems and procedures and we have acknowledged that and are working hard to address these issues.

In noting the Inspectorate's observations about our culture, values and behaviours etc. it is pleasing to note that staff spoke highly of the Service's open leadership style, the senior leadership's commitment to delivering change and improvements and a perception of a positive cultural shift, though in some ways that did not appear to be reflected in the report.

In response to the Report we have now developed an action plan that builds on our identified strengths and captures all of the initiatives, many of which are already underway, to address the areas where we can deliver further improvement. We also want to ensure that this is not a uniquely 'top down' exercise and we will be continuing to engage staff to get their views on how we can best address those areas of our work where the Inspectorate judged us to be performing less well than we should be. This should also be, however, a time to reflect on the strengths of our organisation.

We are confident that we have the workforce which can use this report to help deliver the improvement that has been asked of us and will go on to deliver even more positive outcomes in the future. The draft IRMP sets out the ambition of what the Service will look like in the future and the Report coupled with our action plan, provides a useful stepping stone to help us deliver on those ambitions.

In summary, the Authority welcomes the Report but is disappointed that it fails to fully take account of the challenges that the Service has faced over the last 18 months, in particular the potential change of governance which has created considerable difficulty in developing key plans, in particular the IRMP.

Yours sincerely,

Darryl Keen
Chief Fire Officer
Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

HFRS Action Plan to Address ‘Areas for Improvement’ within HMICFRS Inspection Report – December 2018

Action	HMICFRS Report, Section Title	Area for improvement	Action	Responsible officer	Expected Completion Date
1	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	The service should put in place an effective integrated risk management plan. The plan should be based on a comprehensive use of data and an accurate understanding of risk, including the consistent use of operational data to test the risk profile.	Draft IRMP published for public consultation Dec 2018. Consultation period closes March 2019, final IRMP to be published July 2019.	Chief Fire Officer	Jul, 2019
2		The service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.	This is an important part of the IRMP and will be developed as part of the year 1 action plan it contains - IRMP Proposal 1.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Mar, 2020
3		The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.	Considerable work has been undertaken in the last 12 months to ensure that the Service has an effective process to collect risk information. In the last 6 months hardware and software has been procured to ensure that the collected information is readily available to firefighters. New mobile data terminals are currently being installed in fire engines and software is due to be rolled out prior to April 2019.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Apr, 2019
4	Preventing fires and other risks	The service should review and update its prevention strategy to take account of risks.	A new Prevention Strategy is being developed as part of the IRMP and links to IRMP Proposal 2.	Deputy Director	Jul, 2019

5		The service should assure itself it allocates the right resources and does enough of the right type of prevention work.	HFRS, as part of the Community Protection Directorate and HCC, undertakes a wide range of prevention work. However evaluation of this work has, in the past, been weak. Recent examples are positive, for example the evaluation of Fit, Fed and Read or Safe and Well, but this needs to be replicated more consistently. A proposed restructure of the Directorate is intended to ensure that capacity to undertake effective evaluation is available. More effective use of data is being assisted by a new link with ACS which will assist in identifying the most vulnerable in the community.	Head of Joint Protective Services	
6		The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.		Head of Joint Protective Services	
7		The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.		Head of Joint Protective Services r	
8	Protecting the public through fire regulation	The service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals').	It was recognised within the Report that the Service has a robust challenge process in place for all emergency calls (acknowledged in the HMI report) and our policy allows charging to be applied, however there is little value in charging other public bodies, such as hospitals who are often our biggest offenders, when this will simply result in an accountancy exercise with money being moved from one public body to another - we believe that this is better addressed by supporting the managers of these premises to improve. 'A project team has been established who have reviewed existing processes around unwanted fire signals. Going forward we are looking to take a more robust approach to repeat offenders with	Head of Joint Protective Services	Jul, 2019

			improved collaboration across Fire Control, Station Managers and the Fire Protection team. The next two yearly Risk Based Inspection Programme (19/20 & 20/21) will also have a particular focus on repeat offenders.		
9	Responding to fires and other emergencies	The service should ensure it can handle calls in a timely and consistent way to ensure public safety.	The Service has been working closely with the other partners within the East Coast Consortium. The next milestone is the replacement of the telephony system due to be delivered in April 2019. This will facilitate the next stage of the Programme allowing the other FRS in the Consortium to transition on to the Vision system.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	May, 2019
10		The service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.	This is addressed by the replacement mobile data terminals and associated software - see action 3 above.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Apr, 2019
11		The service should ensure it has effective systems in place to reliably understand resource availability, call handling and alerting of on-call resources to respond to incidents.	The Gartan project to replace the current Rappel On-call availability system has been delayed as a result of an ICT skills issue. This is now being addressed and plans are being developed to complete the introduction of the Gartan On-call module.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Jun, 2019
12		Responding to national risks	The service should ensure it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks. It should ensure operational staff and control room operators have access to cross-border risk information.	This is part of the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) project which will ensure that risk information can be effectively collated and then accessed as necessary by firefighters and control staff to support incidents. The hardware and software will be in use by Apr 2019, the review cycle supporting	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Response and Resilience

			<p>this is an on-going programme of regular re-inspections by operational crews and other FRS staff and so, understandably, this will continue as before. However the project will ensure that the information included on the MDT's will be the most up to date collected.</p>		
13	Making best use of resources	<p>The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities. This should be linked to risks and priorities set out in an up-to-date integrated risk management plan.</p>	<p>This is the purpose of the IRMP and in particular IRMP Proposals 1 and 2.</p>	<p>Chief Fire Officer</p>	<p>Mar, 2020</p>
14		<p>The service should ensure that its budget and resource allocation, and management of performance and projects, support the activity set out in an up-to-date integrated risk management plan and strategic priorities.</p>	<p>The IRMP currently in its consultation phase will provide a clear link to the HCC Corporate Plan and ensure that the resources necessary to deliver the Plan are allocated appropriately.</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</p>	<p>Mar, 2020</p>
15		<p>The service needs to ensure it effectively evaluates benefits and outcomes of its statutory duty to collaborate. Several collaborations with the police are on hold.</p>	<p>There are a number of collaboration projects that have already demonstrated benefits; for example Police use of the HFRS drone accounts for around 80% of calls, over 150 Police recruits have received their initial training at the HFRS Training Centre, Stevenage. Formal monitoring of future collaboration projects will be through the Hertfordshire Emergency Services Collaboration Board which met for the first time on 10th January 2019 and is jointly chaired by the Leader of the Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support</p>	<p>Complete</p>

16		The service should ensure that its testing and review of business continuity events include cyber-attacks on IT systems.	Security testing has been undertaken with the support of HCC technical advisors, this will identify future actions required.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Jul, 2019
17	Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	The service needs to ensure its new integrated risk management plan includes ambitious plans to make resources address priorities, and improvements offer value for money. It needs to improve its understanding of the financial challenges ahead, put in place efficient improvement plans, and reallocate resources to changing priorities or risks.	The new IRMP will consider resource disposition, this will be through IRMP Proposal 1 in particular. The financial pressures are clearly articulated in the HCC Integrated Plan and it remains perplexing that the inspectors were seemingly unable to recognise the differing governance and financial processes in which HFRS operates. A combination of the IP and IRMP processes will address this issue.	Chief Fire Officer	Mar, 2020
18		The service needs to accelerate its plans to improve ICT so that it makes best use of available technology to support operational effectiveness and efficiency.	Considerable investment has been made in the ICT team to ensure that the right skills and resources are available to deliver a far reaching IT Work Plan, where a number of systems are being replaced and new applications implemented. It is believed that no additional investment is required at this stage, however we will continue to monitor progress closely.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Dec, 2020

19	Promoting the right values and culture	The service should assure itself that staff understand and have confidence in the purpose and integrity of health, safety and wellbeing policies.	We have a range of Health, Safety and Wellbeing promotional literature, websites and indeed recourse to specialist help, we are in the process of establishing a webpage to bring all of these reference points together in one place. We will be doing more in the near future to advertise these resources. However we have a number of examples of staff who have expressed considerable gratitude for the Services support during challenging times for them as individuals, however given that these are situations where we are dealing with individual issues which, understandably, we cannot publicise widely. Much of the criticism in this area is perceived by staff who have never had recourse to the range of facilities on offer, whereas the positive stories remain 'hidden' due to their confidential nature.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Jul, 2019
20		The service should ensure its staff understand its values and culture.	This will be addressed through the People Strategy currently being developed. The recent HCC staff survey also reports positively on values and behaviours across the Community Protection Directorate and the results of this will drive actions incorporated within the People Strategy.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	

21		The service should assure itself that all managers are clear about their roles and demonstrate commitment to service values through their behaviours.	This is an on-going area of focus which will consider a range of interventions and support activities. These range from Managers Seminars to mentoring and coaching, all of which will form support for the implementation and delivery of the People Strategy.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	
22	Getting the right people with the right skills	The service should ensure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the integrated risk management plan.	The People Strategy is currently under development and will be the route through which all the actions within this section will be addressed.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Jul, 2019
23		The service needs to recruit to fill its establishment vacancies rather than the reliance on overtime to provide its core service. It should assure itself that it understands and can resolve these problems effectively.		Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Complete – 22 recruit firefighters started with HFRS on 7 th Jan 2019

24		The service should ensure its electronic system for recording and monitoring operational staff competence is accurate and accessible.	A new competency recording system, PDR Pro, is currently being implemented to replace the ageing Sophtlogic system currently in use.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Jul, 2019
25	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	The service should assure itself that staff are confident using its feedback mechanisms, so these help the service gather valuable information.	The recent staff survey has seen increases in responses from CPS staff over those in past surveys which will provide useful information to assist in both development of the People Strategy and areas of focus.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Complete with regards to the staff survey but will be an on-going requirement to encourage staff to provide feedback
26		The service needs to improve the diversity of its workforce. It has been slow to set clear leadership and direction in promoting equality and diversity.	This will be addressed through the People Strategy currently being developed. This will be assisted by the commencement of the most diverse firefighter recruit course that the Service has had which started in January 2019, this group demonstrates that the Service is having success in attraction applicants from diverse backgrounds.	Deputy Director	Jul, 2019
27	Managing performance and developing leaders	The service should put in place a system to actively manage staff careers.	This will be addressed through the People Strategy currently being developed.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	Jul, 2019

28		The service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is open, transparent and fair.	This will be addressed through the People Strategy currently being developed.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Support	
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