

## Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28 February 2018

### Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS): Further update on inspection arrangements and preparatory work being undertaken.

#### Recommendation

That the Resources and Fire and Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive and note the latest information with regards to the HMICFRS inspection arrangements and the preparatory work being undertaken.

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 sets out that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will inspect and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue authorities in England. Their vision is to promote *'improvements in policing and fire and rescue services to make everyone safer'*.
- 1.2 The new inspection regime being introduced for Fire and Rescue Services is in keeping with the current approach for the Police. The onsite inspection programme is due to commence in April 2018 and the detailed framework, methodology and dates for inspection are still in development. Draft inspection criteria have been shared and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) have carried out an initial desktop review to assess its current position.
- 1.3 At a Fire and Rescue Services Inspections conference on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, HMICFRS confirmed that the inspection process will be a rounded inspection with 'no surprises' and will cover effectiveness, efficiency and people (pillars) focusing on the following core areas:-

Effectiveness	Efficiency	People
How effective is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	How efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	How well does the FRS look after its people?

- 1.4 At the point of writing this report, the three pillars are underpinned by 67 sub diagnostic questions which have formed the basis for the desk top review discussed in this report. However, it should be noted that the final wording of the diagnostics is still to be confirmed and is subject to change. Since carrying out the desktop review, HMICFRS has issued a proposed inspection programme and framework, including a revised set of diagnostics, and the Home Office has shared a new Fire and Rescue National Framework for consultation. These documents give further context and an indication of increased Government expectations regarding the Fire and Rescue Service. The draft National Framework is a pivotal new consideration for all fire and rescue authorities and is attached to provide added context in Appendix A. It is highly likely that the inspection diagnostics, when agreed, will clearly align to the contents of the National Framework that is due to take effect in April 2018. A further national meeting is planned by HMICFRS on 31 January 2018 to help services prepare for the inspections.
- 1.5 HMICFRS has confirmed that there will be a focus on; a) operational service delivery covering prevention, protection, resilience and response, b) efficiency focusing on value for money, matching resources to meet demand and collaboration, and c) organisational effectiveness: your people focusing on leadership, training, diversity, values and cultures.
- 1.6 Fire and Rescue Services will be subjected to the same judgement framework as used by the HMICFRS for Police. Fire services will be assessed and given graded judgements against the following categories:-
- Outstanding
  - Good
  - Requires Improvement; and
  - Inadequate
- 1.7 Each pillar (effectiveness, efficiency and people) is broken up into a number of core questions. Each pillar and core question will be graded using the graded judgement set out above.
- 1.8 It is our understanding based on the arrangements for the current Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspections that:-
- The starting point for arriving at an overall pillar judgment is to aggregate the core question judgments. For example, two core questions judged as Good and one as Outstanding would normally result in an overall pillar judgment of Good.

- The judgment will then be adjusted to reflect the following:
  - If one or more core questions within a pillar are judged as Inadequate, the overall pillar judgment will be no higher than Requires Improvement.
  - If one or more core questions within a pillar are judged as Requires Improvement, the overall pillar judgment will be no higher than Good.
  - The overall pillar judgment will reflect how close core question judgments are to the edge of the grade boundaries.

1.9 The criteria by which the pillars and the core questions will be judged is currently being developed by HMICFRS with the expert reference group and task and finish groups. Fire and Rescue Services will see and contribute on the criteria in advance of the inspection.

1.10 At the time of writing this report, limited information has been circulated as to the proposed criteria as to what 'Good' looks like in relation to using resources to manage risk, preventing fires and fairness and diversity.

1.11 At this stage in the development of the inspection framework, HMICFRS have indicated that governance will not form part of the inspection process but this may change given the differing governance arrangements for unitary, metropolitan and combined fire authorities. We await final confirmation but, regardless of this, we recognise the need to ensure that the 'WFRS in Context' piece in the self-assessment outlines our own governance arrangements clearly and succinctly.

1.12 **Timetable of inspections:** HMICFRS have now confirmed that there will be three tranches of 15 services inspected over 18 months starting in April 2018 with three pilot inspections in the spring of 2018. WFRS will be in the first tranche in the summer of 2018.

Activity	Jan to April 2018
Publish Inspection Programme	March 2018
Pilot inspections (Suffolk, Staffordshire, West Yorkshire)	Spring 2018
1 <sup>st</sup> tranche of 15 inspections	Summer 2018
2 <sup>nd</sup> tranche of 15 inspections	Autumn/Winter 2018
3 <sup>rd</sup> tranche of 15 inspections	Spring 2019

- 1.13 WFRS will need to prepare a comprehensive self-assessment of its current performance against the criteria and submit it 5 weeks prior to the inspection on site visit. The inspection team will carry out a substantial amount of pre inspection work including data collection, detailed review of the self-assessment, desktop review, staff surveys and key lines of enquiry.
- 1.14 Similar to previous inspection regimes (CPA, CAA etc.) and peer reviews, the inspection itself will last for a week with a team of 8 to 10 inspectors on site. The fieldwork will focus on reality checking the pre inspection work, holding focus groups and interviews from across the service including partners and other key stakeholders as well as providing daily updates and a post fieldwork debrief.
- 1.15 The inspection team will produce a draft report for factual accuracy checking and the final report and press notice will be presented to the Service under embargo ahead of its formal publication. Alongside the final report, an action plan and recommendations for follow up will also be produced.
- 1.16 Subject to the outcome of the inspection WFRS may not then have another inspection for two to three years, but HMICFRS may request further inspections on thematic areas as required.
- 1.17 **Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service: Becoming Inspection Ready:** In preparing for the HMICFRS Inspection, WFRS is not starting from scratch. There is plenty of evidence on our current position on certain areas, including the outcome of the second Peer Review undertaken in November 2016 which highlighted a number of the areas that the HMICFRS Inspection will also focus on, including:
- **Community Risk Management** and a need to refresh the prevention strategy.
  - **Collaboration** at service delivery level, corporately, and with other emergency services.
  - **Business Planning** to ensure clear priorities for WFRS, and a 'Plan, Do, Review' cycle.
  - **Organisational Risk Management** to be strengthened.
  - **Governance** relating to the duty for emergency services to collaborate under the Police and Crime Act 2017.

- 1.18 Evidence will also be drawn from other areas not just the recent peer review. Action plans will need to be overlaid with the key findings from the desk top review to determine a) work already underway to respond to any recommendations from the action plans where they directly correlate to areas for improvement identified and b) areas not covered by the action plans but need to be looked at in more detail. This is important as we do not want to duplicate work already underway.
- 1.19 In becoming inspection ready, WFRS has already begun preparations but this will now have to accelerate following confirmation that WFRS is in the first tranche (summer 2018). The focus of this work will need to ensure WFRS is ready, including identification of how the resultant improvement work activity will be resourced following the inspection.
- 1.20 One of the key elements of the inspection ready work is to set realistic expectations as to the likely outcome for WFRS in the first round of inspections. There is a sense that HMICFRS may be challenging in their judgements as they and the new inspection process will also be under a great deal of scrutiny.

## **2.0 Work undertaken to date (October – January 2018)**

- 2.1 Members of the Service Improvement Team WFRS with support from WCC Performance Business Unit have facilitated the work undertaken to date and provided a critical friend/challenge approach to support the process.
- 2.2 Work to date has focused on undertaking a programme of pre-inspection desktop reviews against the pillars, core areas and draft sub diagnostic questions in order to understand areas of strength, areas for development, any gaps and to propose suggestions where further work may be required.
- 2.3 **Desktop Review:** As part of the desktop review over 20 interviews with key managers and staff have been undertaken to date. These have been primarily within WFRS but more are planned in early 2018, in particular with WCC colleagues where there is corporate responsibility for finance, HR, legal and property services.
- 2.4 At interview, managers were asked to consider the Service's position against the range of draft sub diagnostic questions relating to the functional areas for which they are responsible. Managers were asked to answer honestly and identify the evidence (policies/procedures/ documents etc.) to support and justify their assessment.

- 2.5 The key findings from the desktop review alongside local and national benchmarking information have enabled the review team to identify areas that are strong, moderate or need development. Suggested improvement activity is also being prepared for consideration by WFRS Brigade Command Team in terms of priority, resource requirement and timescale.
- 2.6 The information received to date from the Expert Reference Group regarding the definition of 'Good' for the diagnostics has been limited, but has been used in evaluating the findings from the desktop review. We await the commentary around what outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate look like and will review and modify the outcomes from the desktop review as more information becomes available.
- 2.7 A Communication Strategy and Action Plan has also been developed, which includes a detailed stakeholder map identifying internal and external partners to be engaged with as both part of the ongoing work to becoming inspection ready and during the inspection itself.
- 2.8 Some areas have been identified where further development is needed and some recommendations have been proposed. These have been grouped together under a number of themes to help facilitate action plans going forward. These areas are currently being absorbed within the WFRS business planning process for 2018/19.
- 2.9 Based on our initial review of the draft sub diagnostic questions (67), we have assessed 19 areas as strong, 42 as moderate, and six needing development. As further information is made available from HMICFRS we will revisit this assessment to determine if the position has changed. It follows that the areas currently assessed as "moderate" could realistically be graded as either "good" or "requires improvement" under the inspection gradings depending on the final diagnostic criteria. At this stage it is felt that there is insufficient clarity to give reliable judgements until further information is received.
- 2.10 **Areas of strength**, based on current evidence, include the following:
- **Prevention:** WFRS can show good practice in its prevention, community safety and safeguarding work, supported by a temporary increase in funding to focus on those most at risk. There is also effective work with partners to tackle fire setting behaviour.
  - **Site specific response plans for high risk premises:** WFRS works with partners to identify high risk sites and follows a risk based process in developing its plans.
  - **Joint training and exercising:** WFRS trains with other agencies, such as through the Local Resilience Forum, and makes improvements where needed.

- **Plans to address risks in the IRMP:** WFRS is delivering action plans to ensure the delivery of its IRMP, and there is evidence to show planning is based on sound planning assumptions.
- **Track record of achieving savings:** WFRS is a very lean organisation and can show an impressive track record of achieving savings, including £2.4 million delivered in the first phase of the One Organisational Plan (2014-18).
- **Internal Culture and wellbeing:** WFRS continues to see progressive improvements in its internal culture. Acceptance and implementation of change is largely positive and the visibility and trust in senior management is generally high. WFRS has a range of ways of understanding the wellbeing needs of the workforce including staff surveys, Occupational Health support, fitness assessments and a staff forum.
- **Culture of learning and improvement:** WFRS has invested in this area, including its project management approach, use of systems thinking and Lean Six Sigma techniques, a staff forum and leadership development. The improvement in staff engagement is also helping address workforce concerns.

2.11 **Themes of areas needing development** that are emerging include the following:

- **The IRMP** and National Guidance are not a straight fit and require interpretation. In WFRS, the IRMP has been written as a strategic document supported by a detailed risk profile and action plans. Close attention will be paid to the IRMP as the questions discuss risk at a strategic level. Further work will be undertaken to look at the national guidance and any emerging gaps for WFRS, particularly in light of the new draft National Framework that has just been issued by Government for consultation.
- **Capacity** has been a consistently emerging theme across all areas of WFRS for a long period of time. There is a sense that WFRS makes the best use of available resources and draws on other areas/expertise as required. However, there is further scope for improvement in a number of areas, including the approach to business planning. We are working to ensure that support functions are effectively aligned to specific Fire & Rescue requirements, e.g. local delivery of national developments and Home Office requirements.
- **Culture and Leadership:** There is clear evidence of senior management led improvements in culture, communication and leadership in recent years which have had a positive impact and are felt at all levels of the Service. However, there are inevitably still areas for improvement to embed this and to ensure a consistent approach given the traditions, structures, and dispersed locations of the workforce. **Note:** We are expecting that this will be a key area of scrutiny for HMICFRS.

- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** The evidence to date suggests that WFRS could improve its approach to some areas, for example in service delivery to strengthen partnership data sharing when addressing community vulnerability. There is a need for improvements in workforce planning, especially given the reliance on internal movements to provide staff capacity to resource various work streams. The implementation of much leaner operational structures require a better focus on recruitment forecasting and associated links to budget management

### 3.0 Next Steps and Timescales

- 3.1 Following the outcome of the desktop review there are a number of activities that WFRS now plan to undertake. It must be noted that this activity will not be done independently from other areas of activity that are currently or will shortly be underway, notably:
- Outcome of the Budget setting process in February 2018
  - New draft Fire and Rescue National Framework
  - Impact of significant other national fire service issues, e.g. Grenfell Tower
  - Ongoing transformation/improvement/collaboration activity
- 3.2 The Service is now identifying and progressing improvement activity following the desktop review. This is to either i) identify where additional activity is required to understand the Service's position against the draft sub diagnostic question; or ii) where activity has been proposed to address any gaps that have become apparent at this stage. Officers are considering the resourcing of this activity.
- 3.3 WFRS intends to focus on the key areas assessed as needing development to determine what could be done to strengthen the Service's position before inspection within the limitations of resources. Several of these will rely on dialogue with other WCC departments and a meeting structure to communicate these clearly has been established.
- 3.4 The desktop review has also identified a number of areas where the Service is strong. WFRS intends to continue to communicate and promote these strengths as part of the ongoing communication and engagement in relation to the inspection process.
- 3.5 Looking beyond the Inspection itself there is a clear need for a strong and strategic focus on how whatever improvements the Inspection result will require from the Service are assessed and resourced, especially given future years savings requirements.
- 3.6 We will ensure that members are suitably briefed as we better understand what members role will be within the inspection and improvement process.



3.7 The following table sets out the high level plan of activity to be undertaken in January / February 2018. More information on the timeline is also shown in Appendix D.

Activity	Who
Focus on areas identified as needing realistic development in order to determine what could be done to strengthen the Service's position before inspection.	Brigade Command Team and key support functions
More detailed 'deep dive' review of recommended improvement activity to group areas where appropriate including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further interviews with colleagues across WCC</li> <li>• Collect further evidence where available e.g. benchmarking</li> </ul> Review assessments against what 'good' looks like when further information is released by HMICFRS	Service Improvement Team
Consider response on HMICFRS consultation on the proposed inspection programme and framework – by 19 <sup>th</sup> February 2018	Service Improvement Team
Draft self-assessment including governance arrangements	Service Improvement Team
Develop administrative arrangements for the collection of evidence including approach for keeping this up to date	Service Improvement Team / Performance Business Unit
Detailed stakeholder mapping including external partners	Service Improvement Team / Communications
HMICFRS Data Collection request – expected Spring 2018	Service Improvement Team / relevant WFRS Staff & Performance Business Unit
Refine and implement Communication & Engagement Action Plan	Service Improvement Team / Communications

## Supporting Documents

Appendix A Fire and Rescue National Framework for England – Government Consultation

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	AC David Pemberton	<a href="mailto:davepemberton@warwickshire.gov.uk">davepemberton@warwickshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01926 423231
Head of Service	CFO Andy Hickmott	<a href="mailto:andyhickmott@warwickshire.gov.uk">andyhickmott@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Strategic Director	Monica Fogarty	<a href="mailto:monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk">monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Portfolio Holder	Howard Roberts	<a href="mailto:howardroberts@warwickshire.gov.uk">howardroberts@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Portfolio Holder for Fire and Community Safety  
Fire and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee