

Cabinet

9 November 2023

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service: HMICFRS Inspection Overview

Recommendations

That Cabinet receives the HMICFRS Inspection Report for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) (Appendix 1) and confirms its support for the Action Plan returned to HMICFRS regarding the Protection Cause of Concern. (Appendix 2), and the internal action plan developed to address the Areas of Improvement identified during the Inspection. (Appendix 3).

1. Key Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue's (WFRS) recent HMICFRS Inspection Report.
- 1.2 HMICFRS inspected WFRS in March 2023 over a 10-week period.
- 1.3 This was the third full inspection since the inspectorates' inception, the previous one being carried out 2021.
- 1.4 As a result of the inspection in 2021, WFRS were given 41 areas for improvement including 3 causes of concern.
- 1.5 Following the 2021 inspection WFRS were allocated £775K per year (for two years) to address the recommendations.
- 1.6 WFRS allocated the money to fund improvements which ranged from people to digital. A functional team was established to progress the areas for improvement.
- 1.7 Following our most recent inspection, WFRS have significantly reduced the number of Causes of Concern and Areas for Improvement.
- 1.8 The 2023 inspection concluded that WFRS have one Cause of Concern and 26 Areas for Improvement. These are outlined in Section 5 of the inspection report. The Cause of Concern is a continuation of a previous Cause of Concern, not a new one and is detailed in paragraph 2.2 below.
- 1.9 WFRS has also been recognised for innovative practise for some of the Leadership Work they have introduced.
- 1.10 The findings during the Inspection around EDI are positive, given the national context regarding Culture and Values within the wider Fire Service Sector. WFRS had its cause of concern regarding EDI discharged following this inspection.

2. Options and Proposal

2.1 WFRS has made significant progress since the last inspection, and this is reflected in the HMICFRS graded judgements. Two of our causes of concern have been discharged and our areas for improvement have reduced by almost 40%. There is more work to be done, but we have a clear direction of travel and robust plans in place which HMICFRS have commended.

2.2 In summary, HMICFRS are satisfied with some aspects of our performance and recognise that the service has made progress in most of the areas inspected. There is still more improvement to be made and concerns about the effectiveness of protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety remains. The principal findings from the assessment are highlighted below. The cause of concern summarised below is a continuation of a previous cause of concern.

2.2.1 Protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety

Cause of concern - The service hasn't done enough since the last inspection to determine its highest-risk premises to inform its risk-based inspection programme.

Recommendation/s

Within 28 days, the service should review its action plan, detailing how it will:

- develop a protection strategy with a resourced and prioritised risk-based inspection programme;
- review its risk-based inspection programme to make sure it identifies its highest-risk premises; and
- put in place a clear plan with time frames for improving its management of risk information.

2.2.2 **Productivity** - The service is taking steps to improve productivity, but more needs to be done to ensure that risk is driving activity and that staff are productive.

2.2.3 **IT Systems** – Plans for improvement are in place, however, current systems are still not resilient, accurate and accessible.

2.2.4 **Recording & Monitoring of Skills & Capabilities** – The service needs to be more effective at recording and monitoring the skills and capabilities of its staff.

2.2.5 **Evaluation of Operational Performance** - The service has failed to improve how it evaluates operational performance. There are inconsistencies in the learning that is identified and that the process is inefficient and slow.

2.2.6 **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion** - The service has improved its approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion and staff were positive about the new approach.

2.3 Our inspection assessed how well we have performed in eleven areas using the new HMICFRS gradings (Table 1 below) and our graded judgements are highlighted in Table 2. Further details on the assessment findings are provided in the full [HMICFRS “An Inspection of WFRS” report](#) and a summary of our areas for improvement are included in Appendix 1.

2.4 HMICFRS have included a new judgement grade, Adequate, during this round of inspections.

Table 1

Outstanding	The FRS has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance;
Good	The FRS has substantially demonstrated all the characteristics of good performance;
Adequate	The FRS has demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but we have identified areas where the FRS should make improvements;
Requires Improvement	The FRS has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance, and we have identified a substantial number of areas where the FRS needs to make improvements; and
Inadequate	We have causes for concern and have made recommendations to the FRS to address them.



2.5 It is not possible to make a conclusive comparison on graded judgements against WFRS’ last inspection due to the alterations made to grading judgements. However, it can be said that WFRS received no inadequate grades during this inspection, an improvement on the last inspection which resulted in one.



Table 2: WFRS Graded Judgements	
Assessment Area	Grade
Understanding fires and other risks	Adequate
Preventing fires and other risks	Requires Improvement
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Requires Improvement
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Adequate
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Adequate
Making best use of resources	Requires Improvement
Future affordability	Requires Improvement
Promoting the right values and culture	Adequate
Getting the right people with the right skills	Requires Improvement
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires Improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	Requires Improvement

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Understanding fire and risk	Preventing fire and risk	
		Responding to fires and emergencies	Public safety through fire regulation	
		Responding to major incidents	Best use of resources	
		Promoting values and culture	Future affordability	
			Right people, right skills	
			Promoting fairness and diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

2.5 It is possible to compare the number of Causes of Concern and Areas for Improvement from this inspection and the last one.

The table below shows the number of Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and Causes of Concern (CoC) following this inspection compared to the 2021 inspection.

CoC 2021	CoC 2023	movement	Direction of travel
3	1		

AFI 2021	AFI 2023	movement	Direction of travel
41	26		

2.6 In addition to the above, WFRS received an Innovative Practise note around some of the Leadership Development they have delivered.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 WFRS are committed to their improvement journey and will continue to work with IT and other areas for additional support, including programme management support, in order to continue its positive direction of travel.

4. Environmental Implications

4.1 None

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 WFRS has returned an action plan to HIMCFRS on the Cause of Concern. HIMCFRS will continue to monitor progress against the Cause of Concern.
- 5.2 WFRS will monitor progress against the Areas for Improvement at the formal Community Risk Management Board (CRMB). Each Area for Improvement has an assigned lead officer responsible for embedding improvement against each area and reporting progress at CRMB. Accountable Officer details are shown in Appendix 1.

Background papers

1. Appendix 1 – WFRS HMICFRS Inspection Report.
2. Appendix 2 – Cause of Concern Action Plan.
3. Appendix 3 – Areas for Improvement Action Plan.

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

Local Member(s): N/A This is a countywide matter.