

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 6TH JULY 2022
REPORT OF: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
AUTHOR: GROUP MANAGER AARON COLLIS

SUBJECT: HMICFRS ACTION PLAN – ROUND 2
INSPECTION (2021)

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on the formulation of an action plan to address areas for improvement and other suggestions contained in the HMICFRS inspection report following its 2021 inspection of the service.

Recommended: That

- [1] the action plan is noted and agreed for use; and
- [2] The proposed process for internal monitoring is agreed to ensure the action plan is successfully implemented.

Background

2. During Spring 2021 the service was inspected by HMICFRS against its three pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people. This formed part of the second full round of inspections of all English fire and rescue services to be completed by the inspectorate.
3. As part of the inspection process each pillar is graded as either 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires Improvement', or 'Inadequate'.
4. The report for Cheshire was published in December 2021 which encouragingly provided gradings of 'Good' against each of the three pillars. Below the three pillars the service is graded against 11 'diagnostics'. It achieved a 'Good' grading in 10 of the 11 diagnostics. One area was deemed to 'Require Improvement'; how well the service develops leadership and capability in its people.
5. Inspections are delivered nationally in each round using three groups (known as 'tranches'). Of the 12 services inspected in the same group as Cheshire last year, only three other fire and rescue services achieved a 'Good' grading across each pillar.

6. Within an inspection report, HMICFRS will formally identify 'Areas for Improvement' where it believes the service needs to take action to improve performance and deliver a better service to the public. It may also make suggestions in the narrative of the report which are of a lesser significance but are still notable reflections of the evidence gathered during the inspection. HMICFRS identified nine 'Areas for Improvement' in the latest inspection.

Information

7. To provide a structure and process for monitoring progress against these areas, Heads of Department have developed an action plan which outlines how the service will respond to the HMICFRS Report and improve its performance. The Action Plan is attached to this report as Appendix 1. Members will see that it is split into two sections: one dealing with the Areas for Improvement; the other dealing with the suggestions identified in the HMICFRS Report.
8. Intelligence from HMICFRS suggests that a third round of national inspections is likely to commence in early 2023. It is therefore possible that the Service will be inspected again within the next 12 months.
9. As part of the next inspection the service will need to demonstrate sufficient progress against the identified Areas for Improvement. To assist in this, the Organisational Performance team will undertake an audit of the Action Plan with action owners in July 2022 and again in October 2022. This will be completed using the HMICFRS judgment criteria. The service will aim to complete all actions in advance of the next inspection by HMICFRS.

Financial Implications

10. There are no direct financial implications from the creation of the Action Plan. Specific financial requirements arising as a result of delivery of the actions will be managed at a departmental level.

Legal Implications

11. None

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. None

Environmental Implications

13. None

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE