

Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee

10th July 2019

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service:

West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS Improvement Plan 2019-2020 – (FRS New Foundations 2019-2024)

Report by Neil Stocker, Chief Fire Officer (Acting)

Summary

In November 2018 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspected West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS). The report was published on 20th June 2019.

WSFRS have developed an improvement plan to effectively respond to the recommendations of the HMICFRS and to ensure we can provide our residents and communities with confidence in our actions.

The report is detailed and has a number of recommended improvements that will require immediate, medium term and longer-term actions. The resources required to respond to these challenges are set out to support delivery of these improvements. A number of decisions will need to be made in future to deliver aspects of the Improvement Plan.

The Focus for Scrutiny:

- **Note** the outcome of the recent HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service;
- **Note** the progress of improvement for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services as at 10th July 2019;
- **Comment on** and **endorse** the Improvement Plan for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services;
- **Comment on** and **endorse** the priorities for the next 6 months as identified in the Improvement Plan;
- **Comment on** and **endorse** the resource requirements to achieve the improvements for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services;
- **Comment on** options for the arrangements for future scrutiny of the Fire and Rescue Service;
- **Make** any further recommendations to improve the outcomes for West Sussex Fire & Rescue Services for the communities of West Sussex; and
- **Note** that an update on progress will be provided to the ECF Select Committee at the 13th January 2020 meeting or sooner if requested by the Select Committee, recognising the importance of these services to the communities of West Sussex.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The new [Fire and Rescue Service inspection regime](#) was launched in 2018.
- 1.2 The Fire and Rescue Service assessments are an annual inspection programme of services in England. HMICFRS assess services on their effectiveness, efficiency and how well they look after their people. These are then judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate on these categories (or pillars) based on inspection findings, analysis and Her Majesty's Inspectors' (HMIs') professional judgment across the year. Each pillar comprises specific questions that focus on core areas of FRS work.
- 1.3 West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services from Monday 26th November to Friday 30th November 2018, within tranche 2 which included 15 other Fire & Rescue Services. The full Inspection Report for West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service was published on 20th June 2019 is available on the HMICFRS website [here](#) and at Appendix 3 of this report.
- 1.4 This is one of 16 fire and rescue services which have been inspected as part of the second tranche of HMICFRS inspections nationally.
- 1.5 The report looks at how well the Service is protecting the public, preventing and responding to fires and other emergencies, and how well we look after staff.
- 1.6 The report found that **effectiveness** of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service "requires improvement", **efficiency** "requires improvement" and the way it looks after its **people** is "inadequate". There is no overall rating for West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service resulting from the inspection.
- 1.7 The County Council takes the report very seriously and is determined to address the concerns that have been raised at a pace which reflects this level of concern.

2. Proposal

Improvement to date

- 2.1 The County Council, as the Fire Authority, is determined to drive improvements to the Fire & Rescue Service. An Improvement Board has been set up to develop the improvement plan and ensure the actions identified in the plan are implemented in order to effectively address the recommendations of the report.
- 2.2 A restructure of the senior management of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service took place on 20th May 2019, with the Chief Fire Officer reporting

directly to the Chief Executive. Gavin Watts, the previous Chief Fire Officer, retired in June and West Sussex County Council is currently recruiting for his successor.

- 2.3 In order to make quick progress and implement the recommendations, the County provided for £380K as part of the year end outturn report to address the immediate concerns that were initially raised by HMICFRS with the Chief Fire Officer in January 2019.
- 2.4 We have also made a number of operational and process improvements since the inspection and publication of HMICFRS's report:

| Inspection Theme | Issue | Update |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| EFFECTIVENESS | Backlog of over 500 "high risk safe and well visits | Backlog cleared, 3 new safe and well visit advisers recruited to ensure a new backlog does not build |
| | Risk-based inspection programme methodology differs from nationally recognised guidance | Re-aligned the methodology for our risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) based on nationally recognised guidance |
| EFFICIENCY | Out of date and inefficient IT system | Business case and funding for new IT solution for prevention and protection approved as part of the Fire Control 2020 programme, programme management structures, disciplines and resources in place to manage the implementation |
| PEOPLE | Education and training regarding Bullying and Harassment Staff Engagement – minority groups | Recruited a new Equalities and Inclusion Officer. Employers' Network for Equality and Inclusion has carried out two pilot workshops as a prelude to an extensive engagement programme with all FRS staff |

Improvement Plan

- 2.5 We have developed an Improvement Plan with clear priorities which will deliver the improvement within our service. The priorities we propose

address the findings in HMICFRS's report. The priorities in our Improvement Plan for the next 6 months are:

- Ensure that home fire safety check activity targets those most at risk
- Ensure the number and frequency of high-risk premise audits are carried out as set out in our inspection programme
- Ensure firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information
- Ensure it addresses the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals')
- Ensure there is effective monitoring, review, and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration
- Have effective measures to ensure that staff are productive in using their time efficiently to deliver the priorities in the IRMP
- Ensure that resources are allocated appropriately and activities which address risks identified in the IRMP are prioritised.
- Improve communications between staff and senior managers, so concerns are responded to in a timely and appropriate way.
- Ensure that the Service effectively engages with staff, including minority groups.

2.6 We have established an Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Executive with senior representatives from across the Fire and Rescue Service and the County Council, to ensure that we can improve at pace. The Board will monitor progress against the Improvement Plan. The full membership of the Board is:

- Nathan Elvery: Chief Executive and Senior Responsible Owner
- Neil Stocker: Acting Chief Fire Officer
- Jon Lacey: Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Steve Clack: Area Manager, People
- Jez Beard: Area Manager, Risk and Improvement
- Adrian Murphy: Area Manager, Protection
- Jon Simpson: Area Manager Response
- Nicki Peddle: Head of Prevention
- Paul Mace: County Fleet Manager
- Lorna Kennedy: Senior HR Business Partner
- John Edwards: Senior Finance Officer
- Jane Vickers: Acting Head of Communications

2.7 The Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities will provide regular updates at Full Council on progress against our Fire and Rescue Improvement Plan, and regular updates will also be provided to ECF Select Committee.

2.8 The draft Improvement Plan is attached Appendix 1 of this report.

3. Resources

Resources required to implement the Improvement Plan

3.1 As set out in paragraph 2.3, £380K was set aside to address immediate concerns as part of the outturn position in 2019/20.

- 3.2 A draft resourcing plan is being developed setting out the resources required to deliver the Improvement Plan and the financial impact of the plan will be included in the decision report by the Cabinet Member, reported through the Total Performance Monitor and included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The draft resourcing plan is attached as Appendix 2 of this report. A summary of investment required is shown below:

| Revenue Resources | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 |
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Staffing | 1,450,711 | 1,446,455 | 1,368,080 |
| Equipment | 200,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| Training | 132,750 | 137,000 | 137,000 |
| Other | 22,500 | 22,500 | 22,500 |
| Total budget Required | 1,805,961 | 1,705,955 | 1,627,580 |
| | | | |
| Budget Already allocated | 380,000 | 380,000 | 380,000 |
| | | | |
| Additional Budget Required | 1,425,961 | 1,325,955 | 1,247,580 |
| | | | |
| One Off Funding | 556,025 | 78,375 | 0 |
| Ongoing Funding | 869,936 | 1,247,580 | 1,247,580 |

- 3.3 The £1.8m shown as the 'Total budget required' in the table above represents all resources required to deliver the Improvement Plan, however officers are continuing to work on how much can be delivered by prioritising existing resources to deliver the outcomes required. As a result of this work the actual additional requirement may be less than outlined in the table and funding to meet the resources required will be identified once plans to deliver the Improvement Plan are finalised.

Scrutiny arrangements for West Sussex Fire Authority

- 3.4 If our improvement journey is to be successful, it will need more detailed Member engagement and scrutiny of our performance. Options for this will need to be considered and the Committee's views on this are invited. Any proposed changes to the Council's governance arrangements relating to scrutiny require endorsement by the Governance Committee and approval by the County Council. Options may include establishing a standing scrutiny panel, which is a mechanism proposed in the new Statutory Scrutiny Guidance and which the Governance Committee has expressed support for and will be considering as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function.

Resource implications of any new approaches will need to be taken into account.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

- 4.1 There is no public or staff consultation required for the report.
- 4.2 Key teams within the Fire and Rescue Service and County Council have been consulted.
- 4.3 The Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities has been consulted during the preparation of this report.

5. Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 There is a reputational risk for the Fire and Rescue Service and the County Council if the action plan fails to deliver the required improvement in performance. A full risk review will be carried out shortly. Risks will be identified and managed in accordance with the Council's agreed risk management process.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 It is essential to address the issues identified by HMICFRS in their report. The Improvement Plan has been developed to ensure these are delivered at pace.

7. Equality Duty

- 7.1 There were a number of issues related to equality and diversity which HMICFRS identified in their report. Planned activity under the People section of the Improvement Plan is aimed at positively impacting and enhancing compliance with our equality duty.

8. Social Value

- 8.1 Procurement activity required to enable delivery of the Improvement Plan would be subject to social value requirements.
- 8.2 In terms of environmental sustainability, the IRMP makes clear the Authority's commitment to reducing the environmental impact of its operations and provides an indication of work done to date and in the future.

9. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 9.1 No impacts in this area.

10. Human Rights Implications

10.1 No Impacts in this area.

Neil Stocker

Chief Fire Officer (Acting)

Contact: neil.stocker@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1: Improvement Plan

Appendix 2: Resource Plan

Appendix 3: HMICFRS Inspection Report for West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service