

Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities	Ref No: SSC03 19/20
July	Key Decision: No
Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Plan	Part I
Report by Chief Fire Officer	Electoral Division(s): all
<p>Summary</p> <p>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. The report judges the service to require improvement in terms of both effectiveness and efficiency and to be inadequate in relation to people.</p> <p>WSFRS has developed an improvement plan to respond to the recommendations of the report and to ensure the Council can provide residents and communities with confidence in its actions (appendix 1).</p> <p>The report has recommendations for improvements that will require immediate, medium term and longer-term actions. The resources required to meet these challenges are set out. Further decisions will be needed to deliver the Improvement Plan. The Plan will be further developed in consultation with stakeholders and as the effectiveness of the plan is assessed.</p>	
<p>West Sussex Plan: Policy Impact and Context</p> <p>The elements of the plan which are engaged include many areas of activity which directly concern the WSFRS’s contribution to the Council’s priority for a strong safe and sustainable place.</p>	
<p>Financial Impact</p> <p>Budget commitments required to implement the plan as currently drafted are set out in detail in the plan and summarised at paragraph 3 of the report. The report also confirms the funds already committed. As the plan is developed the final budget requirements will be further detailed and taken through the necessary governance for its commitment.</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) endorse the Improvement Plan attached as appendix 1 to this report, subject to such changes as may be made as the Plan is further developed and delegates to the Chief Fire Officer authority to take such decisions as are required to implement the Plan; and (2) agree to secure and commit the resources needed to meet the requirements of the Improvement Plan and for these to be available to the Chief Fire Officer for the implementation of the Plan. 	

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 'pillars' are then judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate based on inspection findings 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 from Monday 26th November to Friday 30th November 2018, within tranche 2 of the inspection regime 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](#). 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.
- 1.4 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 resulting from the inspection. The County Council is determined to address the concerns that have been raised at a pace which reflects the seriousness with which the report and its findings are given within the Council.

2. Proposal

Improvement to date

- 2.1 The County Council is determined to drive improvements to the Fire & Rescue Service. An Improvement Board has been set up to develop an 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. The Chief Fire Officer retired in June and the County Council is currently recruiting his successor.
- 2.3 In order to make quick progress the County provided £380K as part of the year end outturn report to address the immediate concerns that were raised by HMICFRS with the Chief Fire Officer in January 2019. 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

2.4 We have developed an Improvement Plan with priorities which will deliver the improvement within the service and which address the findings in HMICFRS's report. The priorities in the 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.

2.5 The Council has 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:

- Cabinet Member for Safer Stronger Communities
- Senior Adviser to the Cabinet Member
- Nathan Elvery: Chief Executive and Senior Responsible Officer
- 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

2.6 The staff representative organisations are also to be engaged in the work of the Board and will be invited to indicate how such engagement can best work so that the views and interests of all staff affected by the plan are addressed and fully taken into account, how the work of the Board may be influenced by the views of staff and to establish how staff can be best kept informed of the work of the Board.

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

2.7 The draft Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix 1 of this report. It will be the subject of further development through the work of the Board and the attached draft is therefore presented as the first iteration of the output from the Board's work.

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 currently assessed financial impact of the plan is described in this report. Any financial adjustments required will be dealt with through the Total Performance Monitor and included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. 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. 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. Funding to meet the resources required will be identified as plans to deliver the Improvement Plan are further developed and finalised.

Factors taken into account

4. Consultation

4.1 There is no public or staff consultation required for the report. Staff engagement in the development and further work on the Improvement Plan will be achieved both through their involvement in the various elements of the Plan, through direct consultation as advised, specifically in the areas of focus required for those elements of the Plan addressing the needs and interests of staff (the 'people' pillar of the Report), and through their relevant staff representative bodies.

- 4.2 Service 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.
- 4.4 At its meeting on 10th July the Environment Communities and Fire Select Committee considered the draft Plan, heard evidence from a range of stakeholders and members were able to question the Cabinet Member, Leader, Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and others both in relation to the content of the Inspection report and in relation to the Plan. The Committee endorsed the draft Plan and supported the commitment to the resources it will need. A number of recommendations emerged from the debate and all of these have been considered. The value of staff representative involvement in the Improvement Board was recommended and will be pursued. The Committee also recommended that the Cabinet Member and Chief Fire Officer lobby Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services for fire and rescue services to be risk-driven rather than performance driven and this will also be followed up as will the issue of the future structure of the service as the Plan is further developed.
- 4.5 The Committee was also invited to consider how the Plan and the FRS service overall should be scrutinised within the County Council and how elected members can best be engaged to ensure that political involvement is most effective. It was agreed that options for be developed for consideration by the Governance Committee which has already commissioned a review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements. The resource implications of any new approaches will need to be considered.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Improvement Plan addresses the legal duties imposed upon the County Council as Fire and Rescue Authority.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 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 as part of the development of the Plan. Risks will be identified and managed in accordance with the Council's agreed risk management process.

7. Other Options Considered

- 7.1 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. Additional options will be considered as the Plan is further developed.

8. Equality Duty

- 8.1 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 (Appendix 1) is aimed at ensuring and enhancing compliance with the public sector equality duty.

9. Social Value and Sustainability

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

10. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 10.1 The FRS makes a significant contribution to a range of prevention measures and core service functions which support the County Council's obligations in relation to crime reduction, prevention and public safety and these obligations will be addressed in connection with the implementation of the Plan.

10. Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 The adoption of the Plan will have no direct implications but this will be reviewed in relation to the Plan's implementation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Improvement Plan