
Report to Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

1 October 2021

Priority Programme Update

Report by Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Electoral division(s): All

Summary

This report provides an overview of the priority programmes of work during Quarter 1 of 2021/2022. This includes progress against the People Action Plan, the Improvement Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan.

This is a standing item on the Work Programme for the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee.

Focus for Scrutiny

The Committee is asked to review the progress reported in relation to the priority programmes, which include the IRMP Action Plan, the Improvement Plan and the People Action Plan and provide any comments to the Cabinet Member.

Proposal

1 Background and context

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan

- 1.1 The Inspectorate identified four 'causes of concern', as well as ten additional specific areas for improvement that the Service needed to address.
- 1.2 It has been announced that the West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service HMICFRS round two inspection will start on Monday 20 September 2021.
- 1.3 The inspections are typically being held over an eight-week period with a mixture of online interviews and in-person meetings.
- 1.4 Preparations are underway for this and a self-assessment has been completed to ensure we are able to demonstrate the improved effectiveness, service efficiencies and support, engagement and focus on our people.

2 Cause of Concern 1 - Preventing Fire and Other Risks

- 2.1 The volunteer recruitment has now been completed and 15 volunteers were appointed concluding the final open action against this cause of concern. They have all received inductions with a schedule of supporting training. The ongoing training for volunteer development has all been written, with the support of the

Prevention Trainers and is reflected in the revised Standard Operating Procedure.

- 2.2 Volunteers have been out supporting fire safety events jointly with Protection and Response at some of our high fire risk buildings and have been conducting post fire support in areas where there's been a fatal or serious fire. As an additional benefit this has enabled the generation of a number of Safe & Well Visits and supplied fire safety advice to several households.
- 2.3 Volunteers have commenced sampling the quality of Safe & Well Visits by phone and will continue to do so for the rest of the year to ensure that the consistency and standard of these crucial interventions are maintained and we can identify any areas for improving this service. In addition, observed visits have just started to be undertaken by managers and trainers from the Prevention Team to further enhance the quality and feedback to those undertaking visits. A pilot has been commenced for Quality Assurance at all stages of the visits, assessing both Prevention core team and Response teams.

3 Cause of Concern 2 - Protecting the Public Through Fire Regulation

- 3.1 All actions have been completed with regards to this Cause of Concern and considerable work has been undertaken to enable us to recommence protection activity now that there has been a lift in the COVID restrictions. Crucially these areas of concern will form part of continuous internal monitoring to ensure standards are maintained and the effective targeting of risk is accomplished.

4 People Action Plan

- 4.1 There have been some key areas of focus this quarter relating to annual performance information as well as recruitment activity with associated positive action.
- 4.2 Whilst there has been significant staff engagement we acknowledge the cultural change aspects will take longer to achieve. Therefore in order to deliver this successfully we have ensured that the plan allows time for the appropriate staff engagement, feedback and evaluation to ensure long term, sustainable improvement.
- 4.3 A new Head of People & Organisational Development has now been appointed and has commenced the annual review of the People Action Plan as well as the current focus on the impending inspection. This will look at an Organisational & Learning Development Cycle approach to the work that is still to be achieved.
- 4.4 The Causes of Concern are addressed below, and a significant level of progress has been achieved.

5 Cause for Concern 3 - Promoting the Right Values and Culture

- 5.1 West Sussex Fire and Rescue (WSFRS) staff commenced Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) training as planned in Quarter 1 2021/22.
- 5.2 Managers are trained to investigate where behavioural issues have been identified in line with the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 and employment law, to establish facts and manage as necessary. We encourage informal routes and mediation where possible but will take through to a disciplinary process if necessary.

- 5.3 The Level 5 & 3 leadership and management development qualifications work continues, aimed at ensuring that our managers have the skills and knowledge to lead and manage teams effectively.
- 5.4 Recent Assessment Centres have required shortlisted candidates to have a good understanding of the Core Behaviour Standards and Expectations Framework and are able to demonstrate the values/behaviours for the role that they are applying for. This is ensuring that these behaviours are fundamental to the future leaders of the organisation and the golden thread continues to be embedded.

6 Cause for Concern 4 - Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity

- 6.1 A Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group has reviewed and supported the Diversity & Inclusion Advisor to achieve approval of the adoption of the People Impact Assessment process. This is now in place for all projects and decisions to ensure this lens is applied across all areas of the business.
- 6.2 The promotions Board has been replaced with assessment centres. The service has now undertaken a Station Manager Assessment Centre to ensure succession planning is completed in a timely manner and there has been positive feedback to date of the process.
- 6.3 A Dignity and Respect Framework was approved at the Executive Leadership Team meeting on 30 June and this has been aligned to the service and will be delivered and embedded. This is aimed at outlining the expectations of Staff, Managers and Senior Leaders.
- 6.4 A Shadow Board has been implemented, aimed at engaging a broad range of staff voices in organisational decisions. This has been a great success as those who are part of the board feel valued and that they are able to contribute to decision making and more importantly understand the rationale behind decisions.

7 Areas for Improvements updates

- 7.1 Performance and Assurance Framework has now been in place for a year and an annual review was undertaken of the measures to ensure they remain fit for purpose; a few measures have been amended and a few have been added through this review period.
- 7.2 Our Operational Assurance Project aimed to implement, build and deliver a more effective Operational Assurance process, including a team that identifies learning outcomes following incidents or exercises, influences change within the service, supports firefighter/personnel safety and supports the values and behaviours of WSFRS and the Council. This work is now near to completion.

8 Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018-22 (IRMP)

- 8.1 The 3F strategic partnership (West Sussex, East Sussex and Surrey) has initiated multiple projects under the Health and Safety Workstream. Each of these projects is tasked with providing collaborative outcomes and products to reduce costs and increase efficiencies between the 3F partners. West Sussex lead on the Control of Noise project on behalf of all 3 services.

- 8.2 Health and Safety Noise Assessments are now all complete and the project has been closed. The aim of the project was to align and complete noise risk assessments on equipment, vehicles and personnel to meet the requirements under The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 for each of the 3F partner fire and rescue services.
- 8.3 Our next Integrated Risk Management Plan will be known as a Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26, reflecting a national change in terminology introduced in the National Fire Chief Council Fire Standards. A consultation will be opened to shape the Fire and Rescue Service new four-year plan for making West Sussex safer, stronger and more resilient.
- 8.4 Community Risk Management Planning is a requirement under the National Framework, produced by the Home Office and supported by the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC). This is to ensure that all fire and rescue services produce, review and update their Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) in line with NFCC guidelines and in consultation with key stakeholders within their organisation and the community, making the plan accessible and publicly available.
- 8.5 Feedback from this consultation will be considered in the development of our new CRMP. This plan will identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect our community. Once we have identified these risks, we look at the resources we have in place and the activity we need to undertake to meet these risks and develop plans to improve safety.

9 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 9.1 Updated on priority programmes are agreed through the Work Programme of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee at each meeting.

10 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 10.1 Continuous consultation with staff and members on the work of the Fire and Rescue Service Priority Programmes, including discussion at each meeting of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee.

11 Finance

- 11.1 Most of the WSFRS's £26.8 million budget is invested in frontline services including firefighting, rescue operations and community safety activity. This is summarised as the following:

11.1.1 Firefighting and rescue operations:	£22,011,154
11.1.2 Community Fire Safety:	£4,352,772
11.1.3 Fire Service Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience	£390,071

12 Risk implications and mitigations

- 12.1 None

13 Policy alignment and compliance

- 13.1 This report has positive implications for the community, and it supports the benefits of an effective Fire and Rescue Service to all residents in West Sussex.

13.2 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.

Sabrina Cohen-Hatton

Chief Fire Officer

Contact Officer: Caroline Boniface, Performance Manager, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. Tel: 0330 222 3199

Appendices: None

Background papers: None