

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	3 JULY 2019	REPORT NO:	CFO/040/19
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	DEB APPLETON
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX 1:	HMICFRS MFRS INSPECTION REPORT
	APPENDIX 2:	REPORT
	APPENDIX 3:	NATIONAL TRANCHE 2 REPORT
	APPENDIX 4:	COMPARATIVE JUDGEMENTS INSPECTION ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE
	APPENDIX 5:	PRESS RELEASE

Purpose of Report

1. To request that Members note the content of the Service’s inspection report by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Recommendation

2. That Members;
 - a. note, the HMICFRS inspection report (Appendix 1), national tranche 2 report and comparisons with other fire and rescue services (Appendices 2 and 3)
 - b. note the findings of the inspection report and the areas of strength identified.
 - c. note, the steps being taken to address any areas for improvement including the intention to create an action plan (Appendix 4).
 - d. note the Chief Fire Officer’s proposals to acknowledge the positive outcomes of the inspection.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will be aware that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) was inspected by HMICFRS in late 2018. This was part of the tranche two inspection process. The process began with the submission of a self-assessment in September, a Discovery week in October, a Strategic Briefing in November and a Fieldwork week in December. Alongside this, officers dealt

with a document request and several data requests (which are now a twice yearly requirement).

4. The inspection focused on answering the three main questions below:
 - How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe from fires and other risks?
 - How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe from fires and other risks?
 - How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?
5. The full HMICFRS report is attached at Appendix 1, having been published by HMICFRS on 20th June. A national report was also published on the same day; that report deals with the themes and results arising from the whole of tranche two of the inspection process (Appendix 2).
6. The overall outcomes for MFRS are very positive with the Service receiving judgements of Good for each of the three main themes. The Service was recognised as Outstanding for two of the 11 sub themes, with only one judgement of requires improvement, the remaining 8 sub themes were judged as Good. MFRS received no judgements of Inadequate.
7. MFRS compares very well against other services in tranche 2. A full table of comparison is attached at Appendix 3. Only two other services received a judgement of Outstanding (West Midlands and Oxfordshire). No other service received two Outstanding judgments. By way of context, only one FRS received outstanding in tranche 1 against one sub theme, with only two services being defined as Good across all three main themes.
8. The details for Merseyside are presented below:

Effectiveness	Good
Understanding the risk of fires and other emergencies	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	Outstanding
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Good
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Good
Responding to national risks	Outstanding

Efficiency	Good
Making best use of resources	Good
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	Good

People	Good
Promoting the right values and culture	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	Good

9. The Chief Fire Officer feels that overall, the judgement is a fair assessment of the organisation and that the high number of Good judgements reflects that the fact MFRS is a high performing service with committed and professional staff.
10. The two Outstanding judgements relating to Preventing Fires and Other Risks and Responding to National Risks (National Resilience) reflect the national significance of the Service's sector-leading role in these areas, and in the case of Prevention, a decade of commitment to reducing fires deaths and injuries.
11. Some key comments that illustrate why the Inspectorate has found the Service to be Good overall and Outstanding in parts are quoted below. These reflect the wide range of high levels of professionalism, commitment and expertise displayed by the Service's staff:

Effectiveness:

"We found the service has a good understanding of local and community risk"

"[The service] consistently meets [its attendance] standard"

"[The service] is being innovative in having more fire appliances available during the day, to match the higher levels of operational demand...during this time"

"This doesn't compromise the response standard and maximises staff availability during the day. This is when they can most easily interact with businesses and the public and maintain essential training skills"

"It clearly prioritises fire safety in the home and arson reduction"

"The service fully involves operational firefighters in its prevention strategy"

"The service is proactive in engaging with under-represented groups...most notable is the engagement work with the Muslim community"

"The service is on track to deliver its risk-based [Protection] inspection plan"

"the service clearly demonstrated its commitment to working with other organisations following the Grenfell Tower fire."

"The service has introduced a variety of duty systems that take account of local demand and risk...they ensure the service is able to respond to large and protracted incidents and send assets to national incidents".

"The service is assuring itself that...incident commanders are competent through assessing them at operational incidents and regular exercises"

"Control staff are confident in their ability to give fire survival advice"

“We saw good evidence that the service gathers operational learning and feeds this back to staff.”

“We found strong evidence that the service can add to its own resources during large scale incidents”

“Senior managers are able to successfully deal with and command a major incident.
“

“The service is highly effective at working with other fire and rescue services nationally”

“[the service] is a valued and active member of the local resilience forum”

Efficiency

“[the service is] good at managing its budget...has made significant savings over the last seven years [and] has a good plan for using its reserve money.”

“[the service makes sure it gets good value for money from a wide range of contracts.”

“The varied shift patterns will help it provide the cover it needs to keep the public safe.”

“The service has made a consistent commitment to ensuring it provides its services in a productive manner. The changes it has introduced are for the benefit of the public.”

“Resilience contracts...ensure the service has competent, trained staff to deploy during periods of industrial action”

“The service is discharging its legislative duty to collaborate with other blue light partners...it has strong oversight and...collaboration is reviewed and evaluated to ensure it delivers benefits to the public and provides value to the service.”

“The chief officer is committed to continuously reviewing duty systems to provide the most efficient service to the public”

People

“The service is making excellent provision for the wellbeing of its staff”

“[The service] has an excellent understanding of its current workforce skills and capabilities”

“The service has robust health and safety arrangements”

“The service has a clear set of behavioural values”

“Managers have listened to [areas of concern] and have then implemented changes in order to respond”

“The service has a good relationship with each [representative body] and has robust systems in place to consult and negotiate with them”

“The service runs positive action campaigns to encourage applications from under-represented groups”

“[The service] has strong systems in place to develop leaders”

“[Promotion systems] are fair and open and it promoted those who performed the best”.

12. The areas defined as Outstanding reinforce the way in which the Service has led national practice in these areas, delivering very positive outcomes for communities over a number of years. The Requires Improvement judgement for one aspect of Ensuring Fairness and Promoting Diversity is disappointing as the Chief Fire Officer is committed to improving the culture of the organisation and Members have already received a presentation in this regard. As Members will see from the quotations included above in this report, there are also many highly positive comments within the report about the Service’s approach to looking after its people and the Chief Fire Officer will continue to work with staff on plans for the future as is reflected in the report with the following comments:

- “We found that staff respect him [The CFO] and [he is] visible across the organisation and models the behaviours that the service expects”
- “[The CFO is engaging [staff] with his future vision for the service.”

13. The Chief Fire Officer will create an action plan to address areas for improvement raised in the inspection report. The actions will form part of the existing planning and performance management structure of the Service and a blank action plan template is attached for information at Appendix 4. All staff will be included in this process.

14. Members can be assured that as the Chief Fire Officer was already in the process of addressing the areas for improvement identified (having identified them at the self-assessment stage of the inspection process), the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan supplement approved by the Authority on 28th February contained plans related to some of the areas for improvement, notably by:

- Increasing Protection resources
- Improving cross-border information exercising

- Improving cross-border information training
15. The Principal Officers have already spoken to all staff during the “PO Talks” to explain that steps are being taken to improve the organisational culture and to ensure that all staff feel that MFRS is a fulfilling and welcoming place to work. To date, that has included seeking staff feedback on the appropriateness of the organisation’s Ground Rules for behaviour and further work is planned including engaging with staff to determine appropriate reward and recognition strategies and providing equality, diversity and inclusion training for all staff. This will be linked to the People Strategy Implementation Plan objectives.
 16. The Chief Fire Officer believes that the outcomes from the inspection are worthy of celebration and social and traditional media have already been used to highlight the Service’s successes (Appendix 5).
 17. The CFO has sent an email to all staff thanking them for their contribution to the successful inspection and is considering other ways in which the Service can recognise the way in which the excellent work of staff has contributed to the highly positive outcome.

Equality and Diversity Implications

18. There is no Equality Impact Assessment required for this report, but individual EIAs will be completed for specific projects and initiatives as required.
19. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion form part of the People theme of the inspection and as such action will be taken to improve organisational culture as outlined in paragraph 9 above.

Staff Implications

20. The positive outcomes of the inspection reflect well on the hard work, professionalism and commitment of the employees who have contributed to the delivery of successful, high quality services that improve safety in Merseyside communities over many years.
21. As mentioned above, there are improvements that can be made to the culture of the organisation and the Chief Fire Officer is committed to making changes that will make the experience of working for MFRS a positive one for all staff.
22. The inspection report also highlights the need for improving the resources required for Protection and Members will be aware that steps have been made to deliver these changes in the IRMP supplement 2019/21 as referred to in paragraph 7.

Legal Implications

23. In May 2016, the Home Secretary established a wide-ranging reform programme for the fire and rescue services in England. This included a

proposal to establish a rigorous and independent inspection regime for fire and rescue authorities.

24. In July 2017, the Home Office confirmed that HMIC would take on the role of inspecting fire and rescue services in England, and of assessing and reporting on the effectiveness and efficiency of each service. To reflect these new responsibilities, HMIC's name changed to HMICFRS.
25. The Policing and Crime Act 2017, which amended the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, contains provisions to strengthen existing powers to inspect fire and rescue authorities.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

26. There are no financial implications resulting from this report, and the financial implications of any resulting projects and initiatives will be the subject of individual reports.
27. It should be noted that the Inspectorate's findings in relation to the efficiency of the organisation were very positive.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

28. The report has found many examples of ways in which the Service is effectively managing the risks it faces and also reducing and mitigating the risks faced by our communities through the services it provides.
29. Areas where the Inspectorate feels the Service could improve its approach are highlighted in the report and will be the subject of future actions as outlined above.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

30. The inspection report focuses on how effectively and efficiently MFRS reduces risk for communities and delivers its services and how well it looks after its people. The report presents an opportunity for all stakeholders to find out more about the way in which MFRS performs and how it compares with others.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS