



Committee report

COMMITTEE	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	7 JANUARY 2020
TITLE	HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES ACTION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT FOR ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
REPORT OF	DCFO STEVE APTER, DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PLANNING

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides the Isle of Wight Council Corporate Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the progress that Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) has made in respect of the Action Plan resulting from the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report, which was published in December 2018.
- 1.2. The Action Plan submitted to HMICFRS is being progressed by accountable organisational leads through business as usual activities. The monitoring of progress is being managed through Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's (HFRS) Performance and Assurance Directorate, in consultation with IWFRS colleagues, and assured via the Integrated Performance and Assurance Board (IPAB).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The HMICFRS Action Plan follow-up and monitoring process is an important part of our overall approach to continuous improvement within the Service, and evidences our performance in respect of efficiency, effectiveness and looking after our people. When an activity has been incorporated into the Action Plan to address an area for improvement identified by the Inspectorate, it is important that the activity is then implemented as planned.
- 2.2. The Action Plan, whilst submitted to HMICFRS, is not routinely tracked by the Inspectorate. However, they maintain an interest in, and oversight of, our progress, particularly in areas that were a "Cause for Concern". Furthermore, the expectation is that, on future inspections, all activities that IWFRS has committed to by that point in time will have been completed. In total, there are 25 IWFRS HMICFRS actions (12 open actions, with 13 closed). There are, however, two actions that will not be delivered in 2020 as they are linked to the revised 'go-live' date for the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in 2021.

- 2.3. Strategic Leads have been appointed in respect of each of the diagnostic areas as accountable owners for progression of improvement work. These Strategic Leads (all Directors) have assigned Action Owners, typically at a department head level, to progress specific actions. A comprehensive system has been created to enable the accurate tracking of progress of each diagnostic and their associated actions. This also enables early escalation where progress towards a specific activity is at risk and provides the opportunity for Action Owners to submit updates on their progress.
- 2.4. A dashboard has been created to enable reporting of both HFRS and IWFRS progress towards completion of the actions to the IPAB, which includes representation from both HFRS and IWFRS management, as well as reporting into the HFRS Executive Group.

3. OVERVIEW OF DIAGNOSTICS

- 3.1. Initially eight diagnostics (seven classified as 'Areas for Improvement' and one classified as a 'Cause for Concern') were assigned to the IWFRS. Of these eight, three diagnostics have been completed, one remains on track to deliver by the original completion date and a further four are in progress against revised completion dates (see Section 7).

4. 'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' UPDATE

- 4.1 *"The Service does not do enough to be an inclusive employer".*
- 4.2 The People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate is working to develop a comprehensive programme of work, within a POD framework, to address this action. The framework has been developed with a consideration of the future Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and, as a result, elements of this are already being delivered across both HFRS and IWFRS. However, it is not possible to implement certain aspects until full alignment of the CFA in April 2021. These are being monitored within several workstreams under the CFA programme.
- 4.3 This programme of work encompasses six areas:
 - Embed a programme to ensure that inclusion, fairness, equalities and professional development are priorities for the Service;
 - Ensure that its recruitment activities are open and accessible to all communities;
 - Treat employees according to their needs so they feel valued;
 - Ensure that each person's potential can be developed so they can perform to their very best;
 - Ensure that the chief officer team leads the programme, promoting the values of the organisation; and
 - Ensure that everyone knows how they contribute to the values.
- 4.4 Significant work has taken place since the 'Cause for Concern' was identified.
- 4.5 The newly-formed People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate has been established to align all the key teams and departments that have a workforce or people focus together. Working with colleagues and stakeholders, the Head of

People and Organisational Development has defined our collective core purpose, guiding principles and strategic intentions over the next five years.

4.6 This has now been refined into our joint POD framework of strategic principles and areas of focus that will guide the plans, activity and outcomes of the directorate. This framework is a living document and includes the key POD areas of:

- Inclusion and Diversity;
- Culture, Values and Behaviours;
- Health, Wellbeing and Fitness;
- Workforce Transformation and Engagement;
- Learning and Development; and
- Leadership and Management.

4.7 More widely, the Service has been proactive in addressing this 'Cause for Concern'. For example:

- IWFRS' participation within the quarterly 'breakfast briefings', which allow the Chief Fire Officer and other senior managers to have open conversations with our teams; enabling them to choose topics of discussion;
- IWFRS staff have been involved in shaping the Service's future values and behaviours by attending a values and behaviour workshop that recently took place; and
- Various activities are taking place to support the mental health and welfare of our teams including introduction of the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) and Mental Health First Aider networks across the Island.

4.8 The activity that has taken place thus far, as well as our planned future activity, clearly demonstrates that work is already underway to address this 'Cause for Concern'. The Service will, however, continue to closely measure performance in this area, and Action Plan progress more widely, through the IPAB, Executive Group and IWC Management Team.

4.9 IWFRS continues to deliver extensive work and alignment activity (wherever statutory, contractual and legislative restrictions permit) as part of our continued preparations and business readiness for the Combined Fire Authority in April 2021.

5. CLOSED DIAGNOSTICS

5.1 To date, three diagnostics ('Areas for Improvement') have been completed and closed:

5.2 *"The Service should ensure it has the capacity to vary the level of its response to incidents based on risk".*

5.3 This has been addressed through a review of attendance standards to ensure we are delivering the most effective service with the resources we have available. The revised standards, which were established in line with the IWFRS Service Review, have now been in effect for over six months, and our performance against these (below) indicates that we are continually around (or above) the required targets as follows:

All critical incidents

- First appliance in 10 mins (Target: 80%, Actual 75%)
- Second appliance in 15 mins (Target: 80%, Actual 100%)

All non-critical incidents (100% of the time)

- First appliance in 20 mins (Target 100%, Actual 97%)

5.3. These standards have been further reviewed as part of the 2020 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) process; currently embargoed pending the outcomes of a public consultation and Cabinet approval.

5.4. Completion of this specific diagnostic was also reliant upon implementation of all other findings and recommendations contained within the IWFRS Service Review. This review was undertaken in order to provide a more flexible allocation of our response resources, better matched to the demands in operational activity, and a more flexible use of staff. This has subsequently been achieved through the following:

- Delivery of a 2-Locality Model; effectively splitting the IWFRS into two areas of activity and resourcing each according to their specific risks (including implementing individual Locality Managers - Station Managers to oversee and lead these changes).
- Changes in the way we crew our two wholetime fire stations (Ryde and Newport) so that we provide a timelier and risk-driven response model.
- Recruitment of an additional seven Retained Duty System (on-call) personnel has been undertaken to fully crew our local retained stations.

5.8 The second closed diagnostic is *“The Service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.”*

5.9 This diagnostic was originally scheduled for completion by September 2019. However, as it was dependent upon the HFRS process being finalised and tested in the first instance (November 2019), it was not possible to roll-out across our service until December 2019; hence the necessary revision of this diagnostic deadline from September to December 2019.

5.10 Following a review of our policy in line with national developments, every incident is now the subject of an on-scene ‘Hot Debrief’, where immediate reflection and learning points are captured by our Incident Commanders. Larger, more significant incidents are reviewed formally by way of a structured feedback/debrief mechanism, where a more structured pro-forma is sent to all personnel that attended the incident; in lieu of scheduling a formal, chaired debrief meeting. All significant areas of incident feedback are discussed within this multi-agency environment, resulting in a suite of documented outcomes that ultimately support and foster shared organisational learning. In addition to this, a monthly central audit of learning is captured and shared service-wide/nationwide as applicable. IWFRS are now active participants in the National Organisational Learning (NOL) programme; ultimately sharing essential ‘lessons learned’ with other UK Fire and Rescue Services.

- 5.11 Operational Assurance and Operational Risk policies have been rewritten and, once published, will be supported by two generic Operational Effectiveness posters capturing the importance and responsibilities of all individuals when feeding into operational debriefs. This more decentralised approach is currently being piloted across HFRS and we hope to follow suit and commence a trial across our Island stations. Importantly, this new process is driven at a more local level (by the relevant Group Commander), encouraging collective input from all personnel involved within the incident. This will ultimately ensure that we capture and, indeed, learn from all areas of operational improvement.
- 5.12 The third closed diagnostic is *“The Service should ensure staff have access to trauma support and counselling services”* and *“The Service should assure itself that staff are confident in raising welfare concerns.”*
- 5.13 This diagnostic (originally due for completion by September 2019) has been revised in order to align with the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) and Mental Health First Aider training providers’ availability. This essential training is now scheduled in and due to commence within the next two months.
- 5.14 At the IWCS meeting on 9 July 2019, it was recommended that the Chief Fire Officer meet with the IW Clinical Commissioning Group and the IWNHS Trust regarding establishing a support service for firefighters based on the Island; particularly to assist with post-traumatic stress disorder. However, work towards achieving this had already commenced within the IWFRS HMICFRS Action Plan and the following updates (from the Action Plan) reflect the progress made to date:

- **The appointment of a Watch Manager onto a 6-month project to implement the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) process within IWFRS and to improve awareness of all of the available welfare and support arrangements.**

It has been established that all IWFRS personnel have access to the necessary trauma support and counselling services that are available through the IWC provision. However, as part of the ongoing CFA work, there are plans in place to transition IWFRS personnel across into the HFRS 'TRiM' and Welfare provisions, with a TRiM course in place for IWFRS staff in January 2020.

- **Improved awareness of mental health issues and our provision for it through the implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy.**

A Mental Health Action Plan for IWFRS has been developed and is being communicated to staff and managers as follows:

- Various communication (Routine Notice, posters and emails) around IWFRS signposting to IWC mental health provision and national initiatives (World Mental Health Day and National Inclusion Week)
- A reminder of our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) - Health Assured, and invitation to the Health Assured EAP update in October for staff and managers, to increase awareness of the service.
- Monthly management meetings – the Operational Management Team (OMT) will continue to update IWFRS managers on mental health provision.

5.15 In addition, various initiatives (such as those below) will continue to be delivered to our teams across 2020/2021; at which point we will work with our HFRS colleagues to deliver a joint Mental Health Action Plan, in readiness for the new Combined Fire Authority:

- Boundaries Training (end 2019) and half-day training (2020) for existing Mental Health First Aiders;
- Mental Health First Aider course (April 2020);
- Joint CPD events with HFRS and IWFRS around mental health (ongoing);
- Stress and Resilience workshops (2020);
- TRiM - training course booked for IWFRS practitioners in January 2020;
- Joint suicide pathway for HFRS and IWFRS (April 2020).

6. REVISED DIAGNOSTIC COMPLETION DATES

6.1 In addition to the two realigned diagnostics above, a further four diagnostics have also been re-timed for the reasons outlined below.

6.2 *“The Service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information” and “The Service should ensure its firefighters have good access to relevant and up-to-date risk information.”*

6.3 This diagnostic was originally scheduled for completion by June 2019. However, it was established that this date would need to be aligned with the corresponding HFRS diagnostic (set as April 2020) due to a dependency on the provision/procurement of new Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs that permit crews fireground access to the necessary risk information). This realigned date would also assure all necessary migration of IWFRS risk information onto the newest ‘cloud’ version of CFRMIS (Community Fire Risk Management Information System) by February/March 2020.

6.4 The diagnostic also requires all policies, procedures and guidance to be harmonised across both Services. However, several of the Island’s non-operational policies (eg, Human Resources, Finance, ICT, etc.) are currently owned by IWC and, as such, this work cannot be completed until April 2021 at the earliest. Despite these interdependencies, the Area Manager IWFRS (Local Senior Officer) continues to drive significant work areas with a dedicated focus upon the assurance of, and access to, all risk information. This has included seconding an IWFRS Watch Manager to manage this essential and risk-critical piece of work in conjunction with Hampshire counterparts.

6.5 *“The Service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk”.*

6.6 The completion date for this diagnostic was originally revised from March 2020 to April 2020 to align with the original CFA date. This will now remain the scheduled completion date despite the fact that the CFA date has moved to April 2021.

6.7 *“The Service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme.”*

- 6.8 The completion date for this diagnostic has been revised from September 2019 to March 2020 to align with the revised date for the corresponding HFRS diagnostic (originally revised following detailed planning and an assessment of available capacity).
- 6.9 *“The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders”*
- 6.10 The completion date for this diagnostic has been revised from September 2019 to April 2021. This is due to the completion of one action (the roll out of the existing HFRS workforce development offering to IWFRS staff) being reliant upon the delivery of CFA. Although this delay has meant that the diagnostic completion date was revised, the other actions within this diagnostic are on track to be completed by March 2020 as originally scheduled.

7. NEXT INSPECTION

- 7.1 The next round of inspections has been announced to begin in 2020/21, albeit the exact dates have yet to be confirmed. From our various engagements with the HMICFRS we believe that the first round of inspections could be as early as April 2020.
- 7.2 As previously experienced, we will be inspected independently to that of HFRS although we will continue to share the same Service Liaison Officer (Samuel Fairman; Organisational Assurance Manager) and Service Liaison Lead (HMICFRS Representative, details to be confirmed). Our inspection planning and readiness work is already underway with one of the most significant areas being our self-assessment process. Both the Local Senior Officer (Dan Tasker) and Group Commander (Jeff Walls) are meeting regularly with the Service Liaison Officer and will continue to update the Corporate Management Team as work gains traction, and timelines get firmed up, in the new year. More information on this, or inspection planning and readiness more widely, is available from Samuel Fairman or Alex Quick (HFRS, Head of Performance).

8. OVERVIEW OF CFA SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 At the point at which the combination comes into effect in April 2021, governance of HFRS and IWFRS will be delivered through the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority, and its Standards and Governance Committee (S&G). The Cabinet member responsible for fire within IWC will form part of the new authority membership.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 In conjunction with our HFRS colleagues, the IWFRS has created a robust monitoring and assurance process to support progress of all activities within the HMICFRS Action Plan. The one remaining diagnostic due in December 2019 is on track to be completed, with the further four diagnostics (realigned) being closely monitored in order to assure completion within their revised timelines. Naturally, the ‘Cause for Concern’ diagnostic will remain a priority area of focus through to completion.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 That the progress made by IWFRS towards the delivery of the HMICFRS Action Plan is noted by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.
- 10.2 That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee specifies how frequently it wishes to receive updates on IWFRS HMICFRS Action Plan progress.

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