



Committee report

Committee	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date	7 JULY 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 AND PLANNING

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides the Isle of Wight Council Corporate Scrutiny Committee (IWC CSC) with an overview of the closing position with regard to the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) 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 has been progressed by accountable organisational leads through business as usual activities. The monitoring of progress has been 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 identified as 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, all of which have been completed and are now closed.

- 2.3. Strategic Leads were appointed in respect of each of the diagnostic areas as accountable owners for progression of improvement work. These Strategic Leads (all Directors) then assigned Action Owners, typically at a department head level, to progress specific actions. A comprehensive system was created to enable the accurate tracking of progress of each diagnostic and their associated actions. This also enabled early escalation where progress towards a specific activity was at risk and provided the opportunity for Action Owners to submit updates on their progress.
- 2.4. A dashboard was 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 every Executive Group meeting.

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. All these eight diagnostics have now been completed; two having been delivered by their original completion date (including the 'Cause for Concern'), with six delivered against agreed, revised completion dates.

4. 'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' UPDATE

- 4.1 *"The Service does not do enough to be an inclusive employer"*.
- 4.2 Much of the work required to address this action, focused around the development of a joint People and Organisational Development (POD) Framework, was shared with IWC CSC in the previous report. At that time, the only outstanding element related to the implementation of the Inclusion and Diversity Plan and refreshing the Diversity Champion's role, with each of the four network groups having an identified Executive Group 'champion'.
- 4.3 Since then, senior advocates have been assigned to all the network groups. However, following discussions with IWC HR, it was agreed that, in the short term, IWFRS would continue to work to the IWC Equality & Diversity Strategy (as opposed to implementing the new HFRS Inclusion and Diversity Plan as part of the POD Framework). However, work is underway (via an HFRS/IWC working group) to align the two strategies as part of our continued preparations and business readiness for the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in April 2021.
- 4.4 As such, this diagnostic has been closed, with implementation of the transition to be delivered through the governance of the CFA Programme, with progress towards this overseen by the IPAB, Executive Group and IWC Management Team.

5. CLOSED DIAGNOSTICS

- 5.1 As previously stated, all eight diagnostics have now been completed and closed, the following three of which have already been reported to IWC CSC at the meeting on 7 January 2020:

- *“The Service should ensure it has the capacity to vary the level of its response to incidents based on risk”*
 - *“The Service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command”*
 - *“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”.*
- 5.2 In addition to the ‘Cause for Concern’ reported separately in section 4 above, the following four diagnostics have also been completed and closed since the last update to IWC CSC on 7 January 2020.
- 5.3 ***“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”.***

Following the launch of the new dual-badged Operational Assurance Procedure, the ‘Submit Learning’ application is now being used by IWFRS for the purpose of capturing incident/exercise/operational feedback, thereby promoting improved operational learning opportunities. Since the launch in January 2020, there have been 45 ‘submit learning’ tool submissions from IWFRS personnel (most submissions have multiple comments). These submissions resulted in 17 actions being raised and having received responses from the relevant departments, 14 of these actions have been concluded. The three outstanding actions require a longer-term solution and will continue to be tracked and monitored to conclusion. Examples of how the feedback received from IWFRS personnel has been used to improve operational performance on the island, include the procurement of new handheld radios and improvements to the response plan for a more efficient mobilisation of the Command Unit.

- 5.4 In order to ensure that risk information is readily available to frontline crews and is up-to-date, all Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) and Operational Plans have been reviewed and rationalised, with unnecessary SSRIs having been replaced with Mobile Data Terminal (MDT)/Vision (Control mobilisation system) alerts. Testing of these plans forms part of IWFRS’s Plan ‘Priorities’ led by the Risk, Response and Resilience (RRR) Team.
- 5.5 The replacement of MDTs with new Windows 10 devices, supported by refreshed and updated software/content, will ensure that crews on the fireground have access to the necessary risk information – with the fitting of new MDTs about to commence. In the meantime, all existing MDT devices have already been updated with the revised risk information documentation and this will be transferred to the new devices once installed.
- 5.6 IWFRS have now upgraded and aligned their risk information with HFRS’ by migrating to the newest ‘cloud’ version of CFRMIS (Community Fire Risk Management Information System).
- 5.7 Under the new structure, the RRR team now has the responsibility of quality assuring and, importantly, regularly inspecting the quality and availability of all risk information under the oversight and management of the GM Operations (HFRS).

- 5.8 Harmonisation of all policies, procedures and guidance (PPG) across both services is complete for operational PPG, with documents having now been reviewed and assured as being in date. However, these documents are a mixture of Delivering Differently in Partnership (DDIP), Networked Fire Services Partnership (NFSP) and dual-badged procedures/guidance. Work continues in order to harmonise these risk-critical PPG, ultimately creating one single HFRS and IWFRS document suite by April 2021. Responsibility for this longer-term work forms the heart of the Operational Alignment Group (OAG) responsibilities, and is being delivered by the Operations Workstream of the CFA Programme.
- 5.9 Whilst the non-operational policies that are currently owned by IWC, such as Human Resources, Finance and ICT, cannot be harmonised until the point of combination in April 2021 at the earliest, background work and discussions are being progressed as part of the 'Business Readiness' workstream of the CFA Programme, and overseen by the CFA Programme Board.
- 5.10 ***“The Service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk”.***
- 5.11 Under the new structure, an additional 1.5 Green Book (Community Safety Officer) posts are now in place in order to bolster and support the delivery of key prevention priorities moving forward including Safe and Well Visits, Driver Awareness Training and Ageing Island. It will also support the re-introduction of some potential income-generation activity and Health and Wellbeing initiatives.
- 5.12 The revised IWFRS structure has also seen the ownership of prevention and protection work transfer to a single team, albeit that TUPE arrangements (to be addressed through the People Workstream of the CFA Programme) cannot occur until full combination in April 2021.
- 5.13 ***“The Service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme”.***
- 5.14 Under the new IWFRS structure, the HFRS Group Manager for Protection has been leading on the delivery of a Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) across the Island, designed to ensure that premises are accurately risk assessed, our inspection regime is matched to actual risk and that resources are available to meet the demand. This has been supported by the transfer of all relevant CFRMIS and Experian data onto the IWFRS system and will see all future inspection routines (including Local Based Inspection Programme requirements and business as usual) being amalgamated.
- 5.15 The IWFRS Strategic Plan 2019/21 has now been published and includes a full suite of measures (reported monthly to the Leadership Team, and quarterly through the IWC CSC) which facilitates review/scrutiny of continued performance improvements.
- 5.16 ***“The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders”.***

5.17 Identification of high potential staff and targeting them to the appropriate development programmes is now being achieved through:

- the implementation of a new Station Manager appointment process, that allows a wider pool of applicants, with flexibility to encourage the development and progress of high-performing individuals.
- the development of robust processes (gateways) to support the identification and selection of highly talented individuals through such initiatives as the IWC Talent Management Programme, the Firefly Programme and the Trans2 Leadership Development Programme, all of which are open to IWFRS employees.
- Expansion of the Leadership Framework to include IWFRS staff.
- All IWFRS promotion, development and leadership processes are now fully integrated with HFRS, with candidates who are successfully promoted to substantive and temporary positions entering into the new HIOW Leadership Development Programme. The Island Leadership Forums (quarterly) and Island Leadership Team (monthly) also now include all leaders from across the Island, including Crew and Watch Managers.

6. NEXT INSPECTION

- 6.1 Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) are currently inspected independently, sharing the same Service Liaison Officer, Samuel Fairman (Organisational Assurance Manager) and the same Service Liaison Lead, Joy Smith (HMICFRS representative), with whom we have had discussions since January. Preliminary pre-inspection visits to both Services were planned to take place between 17-20 March. However, due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, HMICFRS (in liaison with the Home Office) decided to postpone all further inspection activity until further notice. HMICFRS's Service Liaison Lead does, however, continue to review the IWFRS documentary evidence and data returns that we provided them with earlier in the year. In addition to this, some remote engagement is now beginning to take place through telephone calls and video conferencing including a meeting between the Service Liaison Lead and Chief Fire Officer Neil Odin.
- 6.2 Previously planned dates for discovery visits (was due to be on the week commencing 30 March 2020) and inspection week (was due to be on the week commencing 27 April) for IWFRS have been postponed until further notice. We do not yet know the revised inspection dates, but will update the Committee when the inspectorate provides us with the revised schedules. The longer inspection activity is postponed, there is an increased likelihood that both IWFRS and HFRS will be inspected jointly; however, this has not been confirmed. HFRS's Head of Performance, the Organisational Assurance Manager, the Director of Performance & Assurance and the Chief Fire Officer are well linked into various HMICFRS governance groups and forums, which means we are well sighted on inspection timings and their inspection framework. The latter is high likely to be refined to encompass Service's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The robust monitoring and assurance process that was implemented to support progress of all activities within the HMICFRS Action Plan has resulted in the successful delivery of all 25 IWFRS actions, facilitating the completion of the 8 overarching diagnostics by their agreed delivery dates.
- 7.1 The observation ('Cause for Concern') that IWFRS does not do enough to be an inclusive employer has been the subject of significant activity designed to rectify this shortcoming, and IWFRS is now able to demonstrate that it can offer a truly inclusive workplace.
- 7.2 The Service is now much better placed to receive the next Inspection once this can be scheduled following relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That the completion of all 25 actions and, thereby, 8 diagnostics within the IWFRS HMICFRS Action Plan is noted, and the closure of the action plan approved, by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.
- 8.2 That the Corporate Scrutiny Committee acknowledges the extent of the work and improvements that have been undertaken to address the 'Cause for Concern'.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 [Appendix 1](#) – HMICFRS Dashboard

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