



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

AN UPDATE ON THE AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM THE 2019 HMICFRS INSPECTION

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 01 April 2022

Purpose of Report:

To present Members with an update on the Service's response to the outcomes regarding the 2019 inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, and present closure of the associated 'Areas for Improvement' which were identified.

Recommendations:

That Members agree the closure of 'Area for Improvement 9'.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Fire Authority in July 2019, Members were presented the report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following the recent inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).
- 1.2 In September 2019, Members were presented with an action plan detailing the 24 'Areas for Improvement' (AFIs) which had been highlighted by HMICFRS and capturing the actions to address these areas.
- 1.3 It was agreed that scrutiny and monitoring of progress of these actions would be facilitated through the Fire Authority Committee structure, with regular progress reports being presented to Members.
- 1.4 Of the 24 AFIs, 12 were aligned to the Community Safety Committee for scrutiny.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Each of the 24 areas for improvement were allocated to a lead officer with clear milestones and expected outcomes. Within the Service, progress against these timelines was monitored and reported through the monthly Performance and Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.2 Over the past 36 months, work has been undertaken to develop the Service in the areas highlighted by HMICFRS. Much of the work that was developed had already been started by the Service or was planned as part of the Service business planning. The Service has continued to focus resources and support to ensure continual improvement of these areas as part of the Service's wider Strategic Plan.
- 2.3 Eleven AFIs have previously been presented to Members and 'closed' at the Community Safety Committee and, in total, 23 of the 24 AFIs have now been closed by the Service and approved by Members.
- 2.4 The final area for improvement, under Community Safety Committee governance, was AFI 9 – *"to ensure that mobile data terminals (MDTs) are reliable to allow staff to access risk information"*.
- 2.5 Progress against AFI 9 did not meet the original target date of 31 March 2021 and was extended by Members to 31 September 2021 at the June Community Safety Committee. This was further extended to a revised deadline of 31 March 2022 at the September Community Safety Committee meeting by Members.

- 2.6 The failure to meet original deadlines occurred due to the Service's supplier being unable to deliver proposed upgrades to the Service's mobilising systems which would have remedied the issues that had been highlighted.
- 2.7 The outstanding AFI was addressed by the Strategic Leadership Team and was entered on the Service's Corporate Risk Register due to impacts on the provision of risk information to operational Crews.
- 2.8 Work has been prioritised to improve functionality and reliability of the Service's Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) and was monitored to ensure progress through a programme board being Chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.9 To achieve a satisfactory position to close this AFI, the programme board oversaw 16 actions which addressed immediate, medium, and long-term requirements to provide a sustainable solution.
- 2.10 These actions have now been concluded and the programme board has received assurances in relation to the provision of risk information to crews at operational incidents.
- 2.11 Whilst the programme board acknowledges that issues still persist in relation to the reliability of the MDTs, it is envisaged that this will not be satisfactorily remedied until updates to the mobilising system are administered through the mobilising replacement project, due to complete by 2024.
- 2.12 In the interim, a robust process has been adopted to ensure that a secondary source for risk information is available on all appliances, as well as processes in place to ensure that faults with MDTs are highlighted, awareness of these is present with all affected crews and remedial steps are in place.
- 2.13 The Service has implemented ongoing scrutiny and performance reporting in relation to this matter, which will continue to be monitored through a dedicated programme board on a quarterly basis.
- 2.14 With these mitigations in place, the programme board is assured that a position has been reached where no further improvements are achievable with the current mobilising system, and that a robust and sustainable process is in place to assure the provision of risk information to crews.
- 2.15 With this information, it is proposed that Members agree the closure of AFI9 and report this to the full Fire Authority as closed.
- 2.16 In order to align to Fire Authority governance, and schedule of meetings, it is proposed that Members of the Community Safety Committee review the AFIs presented in this report and agree closure of all actions. It is proposed that this is reported to the full Fire Authority meeting in July 2022, and that scrutiny of the 12 AFIs for this Committee is discharged.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act, 2004, places a duty on NFRS in respect of the delivery of its services to communities.
- 7.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on NFRS to '*secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised*'. The reporting of Service performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives, as set by the Fire Authority, and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.
- 7.3 The Police and Crime Act (2017) Chapter 4 Section 11, outlines that the English inspectors must inspect, and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of, fire and rescue authorities in England.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members agree the closure of 'Area for Improvement 9'.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER