



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

INSPECTION OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN ENGLAND

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 15 December 2017

Purpose of Report:

This report updates Members on developments following the announcement by the Home Office that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary is to be expanded to take on the role of inspectorate of fire and rescue services in England.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 English Fire and Rescue Services have been subject to a range of different performance improvement regimes in previous years, such as Best Value, Operational Assessment of Service Delivery, Peer Challenge, Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).
- 1.2 Most recently, the Authority received a peer assessment offered through the Local Government Association in 2015.
- 1.3 The Home Office announced on 19 July 2017 that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) would be expanded to take on the role of inspectorate of fire and rescue authorities in England. HMIC has since been renamed Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The inspectorate will consider how efficient and effective fire and rescue services (FRS) are; will highlight good practice and identify areas where they need to improve, so that action can be taken to overcome them. This will include how FRSs prevent and respond to incidents; whether the FRS provides value for money as well as reviewing the FRS's leadership, training, diversity, values and culture.
- 2.2 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Thomas Winsor, has been appointed as Chief Fire and Rescue Inspector, and the HMICFRS's existing inspectors are to be appointed as regional fire and rescue inspectors in addition to their existing police responsibilities.
- 2.3 At the autumn conference of the National Fire Chiefs Council, held in September 2017, delegates received a presentation from Zoe Billingham. In addition to being Her Majesty's Inspector for the Eastern Region, she is the senior responsible officer for HMICFRS's inspections of fire and rescue services.
- 2.4 The Chair of the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) also attended an event hosted by the HMICFRS on 10 October. The event included presentations from HMICFRS, as well as time for delegates to discuss operational and governance issues, share practice and experiences, and offer views on HMICFRS's early proposals for an inspection regime of the fire and rescue service. More recently, Zoe Billingham has also attended an informal meeting in Nottinghamshire with the Authority Chair and CFO.

- 2.5 The Police Efficiency; Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) inspection framework is being used as the basis for fire inspections, but with leadership replacing the legitimacy strand. Therefore, HMICFRS will assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and leadership of the 45 FRSs in England.
- 2.6 Work is underway to develop the methodology with the sector over the coming months, the inspections will examine:
- Operational Service Delivery – prevention, protection, resilience and response;
 - Organisational effectiveness – leadership, training, diversity, values and culture;
 - Efficiency – value for money, matching resources to meet demand, collaboration.
- 2.7 It is important for Members to note that the scope of the inspection will not consider the activity of the actual Fire Authority.
- 2.8 FRSs will receive the same graded judgements as applied to police forces. Those gradings being: Outstanding; Good; Requires Improvement; and Inadequate. Inspection reports will be openly published.
- 2.9 The inspection will focus on a single inspection with onsite fieldwork of around a week's duration by a team of approximately ten people. This will be supported by data returns and a self-assessment produced by the Service in advance.
- 2.10 The fieldwork will be underpinned by a background monitoring framework, as already utilised with the police, and would involve a Service Liaison Lead allocated to up to three Services, whose role will be to establish a close relationship with the FRS throughout the year, acting as the 'eyes and ears' of the HMICFRS.
- 2.11 Over the coming months, HMICFRS are developing the methodology and criteria for judgements. They intend to pilot the methodology in three Services between January and April 2018. All 45 fire and rescue services will then be inspected, in tranches of 15, over an 18-month period commencing from April 2018. At this point it is not known when NFRS will be inspected.
- 2.12 The Service is required to provide a point of contact officer to liaise with HMICFRS and this role will be discharged by the Performance and Planning Manager. This will ensure the Service has a co-ordinated approach in preparing for the future inspection regime.
- 2.13 The Service is working closely with local Police colleagues to anticipate likely impact on the Service, and it is expected that some additional resources will be required in terms of data systems and/or people. In preparation, an earmarked reserve of £50k has been identified for 2018/19 which will be reviewed as more information is made available.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An earmarked reserve of £50k has been established for 2018/19 in anticipation that additional resources may be required in terms of data system and/or people. As more information and experience is gained, formal proposals for resources will be developed and progressed through the normal governance arrangements where appropriate.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The preparatory work will be co-ordinated by Corporate Support, but will require substantial resources from within other departments of the organisation. Officers are liaising with Police colleagues to better assess the resource implications on delivering on the HMICFRS expectations. It is highly likely that resources will need to be redirected into this priority area and details of these will be reported to the Authority in a future report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications arising from this report as it only serves to provide Members with an overview of the recently formed 'Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services'.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

Any fire and rescue service that HMICFRS deems to be failing under the new inspection regime, may be subject to intervention. Furthermore, if NFRS was to receive an unfavourable inspection report there is a risk of reputational damage to the Service.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

NFRS has been working with Nottinghamshire Police to gain knowledge and experience of preparation for these inspections. This area is currently one of the workstreams within the Authority agreed collaboration strategy with Nottinghamshire Police and progress will be reported through the established governance framework now in place.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the content of the report and agree to accept future reports when more detail emerges in relation to the new inspection regime.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER