



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

HMICFRS UPDATE: PUBLICATION OF THE STATE OF FIRE AND RESCUE REPORT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 31 January 2020

Purpose of Report:

To make Members aware of the publication of the HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the contents of this report.
- Endorse the approach to adopting recommendations from the State of Fire and Rescue report.
- Agree to receive any additions to the formal HMICFRS action plans through the Fire Authority Committees.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary became Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- 1.2 In spring 2018, HMICFRS started an 18-month programme to inspect all 45 fire and rescue services in England. This was the first independent inspection for fire and rescue services in over a decade.
- 1.3 In 2019, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) had their inspection, following which a report was received that detailed the findings.
- 1.4 The State of Fire and Rescue report, written by HMICFRS lead inspector, Sir Tom Winsor, was published on 16 January 2020. The report details the summary findings following the inspection of all 45 fire and rescue services in England. It makes four overarching recommendations, as well as highlighting a number of other points to help promote improvement for the sector.
- 1.5 Members have previously been provided with access to this report and it is also available via this [link](#).

2. REPORT

- 2.1 NFRS welcome the work of HMICFRS in providing independent scrutiny to the fire sector. The Service welcomes the recommendations it has made to NFRS specifically following its inspection, and now the recommendations it makes to promote improvement to the sector as a whole.
- 2.2 The report rightly recognises some of the good work that fire services are undertaking nationally. The report specifically recognises that '*fire services determination and dedication to protect life and property are second to none*'.
- 2.3 In part one of the report, there is a section entitled, '*Significant Reform Is Needed to Modernise the Sector*'. Within this section, the report details 17 areas of improvement for the fire sector. These have been listed at Appendix A to this report.
- 2.4 Part one finishes with HMICFRS making four formal recommendations to the sector. These are entitled '*Setting Expectations to Create Modern Fire and Rescue Services Fit for the Future*'. The specific recommendations are:
 1. *By June 2020, the Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should review and with precision determine the roles of: (a) FRSs; and (b) those who work in them.*
 2. *By June 2020, the Home Office, the LGA, the NFCC and trade unions should consider whether the current pay negotiation machinery requires*

fundamental reform. If so, this should include the need for an independent pay review body and the future of the 'grey book'.

3. *By September 2020, the Home Office should consider the case for legislating to give chief fire officers operational independence. In the meantime, it should issue clear guidance, possibly through an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, on the demarcation between those responsible for governance and operational decision making by the chief fire officer.*
 4. *By December 2020, the NFCC, with the LGA, should produce a code of ethics for FRSs. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.*
- 2.5 Part two of the report details the methodology of the Service inspections. It details 37 key findings, which it breaks down into the areas of effectiveness, efficiency and people. These are referenced Appendix B of this report.
- 2.6 Although the report makes recommendations to the sector as a whole, and not specifically to individual fire and rescue services, it is proposed that the Service reviews the document in detail to identify any opportunities for learning and service improvement, and adds any areas to the formal HMICFRS action plan for the Service.
- 2.7 It is proposed that any additions to the action plan will be reported through the Fire Authority committee structure.

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 Delivery's performance ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives as set by the Fire and Rescue 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

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the contents of this report.
- 10.2 Endorse the approach to adopting recommendations from the State of Fire and Rescue report.
- 10.3 Agree to receive any additions to the formal HMICFRS action plans through the Fire Authority Committees.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**SIGNIFICANT REFORM IS NEEDED TO MODERNISE THE SECTOR:
17 AREAS OF SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT**

1. The role of the fire sector needs greater clarity.
2. National terms and conditions need reviewing.
3. Trade union influence is not always in the best interests of public.
4. Chief fire officers need operational independence.
5. Operational response is strong but many services need to improve their protection work.
6. The sectors strength lies in its response.
7. The degree of variation between services is undesirable.
8. The future of the on-call model needs attention.
9. Staff need to be better treated.
10. There is a toxic culture in too many services.
11. Better performance and talent management is needed.
12. Some watches develop their own culture, sometimes to the detriment of the service.
13. Diversity must be addressed.
14. More and more wellbeing provision is being made available.
15. Some services are financially strapped; others are inefficient.
16. The sector is missing opportunities to use data and technology effectively.
17. Significant savings could be achieved through combining services.

KEY FINDINGS FOR THE INSPECTION PROGRAMME

Effectiveness

- How services respond to fires and emergencies is one of their principal strengths, but there is too much variation in response
- The number of fire engines available differs hugely across services
- The viability of the on-call crewing model is of concern
- Services have taken steps to achieve greater operational consistency
- Services can work together to respond to major incidents
- Services aren't doing enough to enforce fire safety
- The lack of fire safety enforcement is a concern
- False alarms continue to be the biggest demand the services face
- Services are doing less prevention work and don't always target it effectively
- Greater evaluation of prevention activities is needed
- There is an inconsistent approach to identifying risk
- The use of risk information needs improvement
- Services could do more to engage with their local communities

Efficiency

- Resources aren't always aligned to risk
- Workforce plans could be more ambitious and better linked to risk
- Many services are under-resourcing prevention and protection
- Most services have made savings, but more could be done
- Reservices have grown significantly over recent years, but their intended use may not be sensible or sustainable

- There are barriers to workforce reform
- Services are willing to collaborate with others
- Services need better financial data
- Services need to keep continuity plans up to date
- Services need to make sure their workforces are productive
- While there are pockets of innovation, services and the sector as a whole need to use technology better
- Services are exploiting opportunities to generate an income
- Services are now planning for the future

People

- The values and culture in some services must be improved
- Services need to think hard about the consequences of a watch culture
- Services take staff wellbeing seriously
- Services need to monitor staff working hours more closely
- Better workforce planning is needed
- Staff are generally well trained and equipped to provide the best response possible to the public
- Diversity remains an aspiration, with much work still to do
- There is a lack of diversity amongst leadership
- Inequality between operational and non-operational staff
- There is much variation in how services seek and use feedback from their staff
- Managing and developing individual performance needs to improve