



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

19 DECEMBER 2019

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT OF AREA MANAGER TRAINING, ASSETS AND ASSURANCE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the current position and next steps of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

Current Position

2. The inspection of CDDFRS was completed on 19 July 2019.
3. On 23 October 2019, the Service received a pre-publication copy of the report to carry out a factual accuracy check. This report was issued to the Chief Fire Officer on an embargoed basis.
4. The pre-publication accuracy check was returned to HMICFRS on 6 November 2019. HMICFRS will provide CDDFRS with a copy of the final version at least 24 hours prior to publication.
5. The planned publishing date for the fire and rescue service effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19 tranche three reports was December 2019. The confirmation of the date has been delayed due to the general election.
6. Additionally, the 'State of Fire: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England' has been delayed until early 2020.

Fire Inspection Cycle Two Methodology

7. During November 2019, HMICFRS published a draft 2020/21 inspection framework for consultation. The proposed methodology is similar to the previous methodology. This approach will allow HMICFRS to gauge improvements and a direction of travel from the first cycle of inspections. It will also give a strong foundation to consider a future move to a risk-based approach.
8. The proposed assessment of effectiveness will continue to consider how well each fire and rescue service is performing its principal functions of preventing fires happening, ensuring the public is kept safe through the regulation of fire safety, and responding to emergency incidents. During the second cycle of inspections, HMICFRS will provide the public with

more clarity on how well fire and rescue services are prepared to respond to major incidents with other fire services and agencies.

9. The proposed assessment of efficiency will now make a clearer distinction between the way each fire and rescue service use its resources to manage its current risks, and how well it is securing an affordable way of managing its risks in the future. New questions have been added which focus on whether a fire and rescue service can demonstrate what savings it has made, the effect of these on its operational performance, and whether its use of reserves is sustainable.
10. The proposed assessment of how each fire and rescue service looks after its people will remain focused on the leadership at all levels in the organisation, including training, diversity, values and culture. The question sets have been altered slightly to reflect an additional focus on the behaviours within the workforce, and to also consider individuals' career pathways.
11. The consultation for this new methodology was based around the following six questions:
 - a) What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in the next cycle? How could this be improved?
 - b) Does the draft inspection methodology include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?
 - c) How best could HMICFRS report on the progress the service has made since the previous inspection?
 - d) What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?
 - e) How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?
 - f) What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?
12. The Service have collated a response and submitted this to HMICFRS on 29 November 2019.

Recommendations

13. CFA Members are requested to:
 - a. **note** the contents of this report.

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