

<b>Report title: HMICFRS REPORT - ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE</b>	
<b>Report to:</b> Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
<b>Report author:</b> Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst	
<b>Date:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	<b>For:</b> Noting and comment
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Rick Hylton, Deputy Chief Fire Officer <a href="mailto:Rick.Hylton@essex-fire.gov.uk">Rick.Hylton@essex-fire.gov.uk</a>	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

### 1. Purpose of Report

To share with the Panel the publicised report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) as a part of the independent inspection of Fire and Rescue Services.

### 2. Recommendations

The report is provided by HMICFRS for the attention and action of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Chief Fire Officer. Whilst there is no action needed or required of the Panel, in the interests of openness and transparency, the Panel is invited to note and comment on the contents of the report.

### 3. Context / Summary

Following its inspection in July 2019, HMICFRS published its report into ECFRS's effectiveness, efficiency and how well it looks after its people in December 2019 (see appendix 1).

ECFRS was inspected by HMICFRS as part of an inspection programme for all UK Fire and Rescue Services. It assesses how effective each Service is at preventing, protecting against and responding to fire and other risks, how efficiently the Service provides value for money and how well the Service looks after its people and ensures fairness and diversity.

ECFRS was graded as requiring improvements across the three main pillars of the inspection – Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. The Inspectorate found evidence that some staff had been the subject of bullying behaviour and there was a lack of understanding by some of the value of diversity in the workplace. This has led the Inspectorate to grade the Service as inadequate with regards

to values and culture. Within the report, it has also recognised that ECFRS is good at responding to emergencies when called.

It concluded that the Service is particularly good at:

- Responding to fires and other emergencies
- Responding to national risks
- Making the Fire and Rescue Service affordable now and in the future
- Managing performance and developing leaders

The report has highlighted that ECFRS requires improvement in preventing fires and other risks, protecting the public through fire regulation, promoting the right values and culture and ensuring fairness and promoting diversity. These are areas the Service is already taking actions to address.

The Inspectorate found two 'causes for concern'. These were in the areas of protecting the public through fire regulation and promoting values and culture.

With regards to protecting the public through fire regulation, the inspection team revisited the Service in November and was encouraged by progress to address many of its concerns, specifically the recruitment of additional fire safety officers to enable the Service to build capacity to inspect more high risk premises and enable the Service to be in a better position to respond to additional pressures that may result from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Revised Prevention and Protection Strategies are well developed and the rollout of operational crews delivering home safety work will commence in January, further improving reach to those most vulnerable (see appendix 2).

The Inspectorate recognised the legacy issues that the new Chief Fire Officer has inherited with regards to culture and reported that improvements were being made but that equally there was much work to be done and it would take time to achieve the cultural change that was needed. The Inspectorate further noted that there was a clear commitment from the PFCC and CFO to bring about this change and welcomed the investment and work that had begun and was planned to be delivered in this area. These include the investment in a dedicated strategic role for People, Values and Culture; Dignity in the Workplace sessions for staff, and the investment in a listening exercise with staff through a programme titled 'Everyone Matters'.

A full action plan will be developed in response to the report and the areas where improvements can be made and placed on the Service website.

#### **4. Appendices**

##### **4.1 Full Inspection Report**

##### **4.2 Copy of follow up visit letter from HMI Billingham to CFO Turton**