

HMICFRS Inspection: Findings and progress

HMICFRS said	Progress to date	Future activity planned	Timescales	Responsible Lead
The service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information	Gathering and recording of risk information is now monitored by Station Auditors and Station Managers using performance dashboards. This provides clear oversight of when reviews are due, and which are overdue, broken down by station.	Peer review of the organisational risk management process.	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention, Protection and Response Delivery
	Risk information is stored in a central repository once gathered and made available to essential systems (e.g. Control and Mobilising Systema and Mobile Data Terminals on appliances) in a timely manner.	Development and implementation of a new assurance process for all operational activity and risk information		
	Future risk, new and proposed developments are now considered centrally by a tactical team, and all findings and responses to relevant consultations are shared with our blue-light partners.			
The service should make sure it allocates enough resources to meet its Prevention Strategy	Group Managers and Station Managers can monitor, review and manage activity undertaken to deliver the Prevention Strategy and reassign resources as required. This is underpinned by Group and Station Plans that specifically refer to activity to be carried out by operational crews in the prevention space.	Action to increase further the number of home safety checks completed by operational crews	Q3 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention and Protection
	Monthly prevention meetings review and monitor progress against delivery of the Prevention Strategy.	Continue to support the countywide Vision Zero initiative		
	Road and Water Prevention Team in place and operating a calendar of events and engagements.			
	Vision Zero, a key multi-agency initiative delivered under the auspices of the Safer Essex Roads Partnership (SERP), has been identified as an ECFRS change project with a supporting delivery plan			
	The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner’s deep dives into Home Fire Safety Visits by operational crews and implementation on the Prevention Strategy demonstrated a whole systems approach with demonstratable grip.			
The service should make sure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people	New e-learning package on safeguarding and identifying vulnerable people has been launched for all staff.	Achieve full compliance with the Safeguarding Fire Standard by introducing a strategy on the service’s approach to DBS checks for all staff	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention and Protection
	Safeguarding Fire Standard implemented and the current compliance rate is at 95%	Explore a partnership with Norfolk FRS for safeguarding services		
	Reporting of safeguarding concerns has increased as a result of the above activity	Safeguarding information dashboard to be created to allow greater monitoring of safeguarding activity, including the number of referrals in / out.		
The service should evaluate its prevention activity so it understands what works	Prevention Board established to monitor / review progress against the strategy and its effectiveness	Review the effectiveness of the prevention partnerships and strategy (ongoing through the Prevention Board)	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention and Protection
	A dedication Prevention and Protection Analyst has been employed. Work priorities are being structured in connection with the Prevention Strategy with dedicated review cycles of analysis produced to evaluate the effectiveness / impact of targeted prevention activity (e.g. relating to deliberate fires)			
	The Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is an active member of the National Chief Fire Council's Evaluation Group which is developing consistent evaluation processes for the fire and rescue community.			

<b>The service should ensure it works with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations</b>	<p>Business engagement lead has been employed.</p> <p>False Alarm Due to Apparatus (FADA) App developed and implemented by Performance and Analytics to assist with the identification of organisations that are repeat offenders with unwanted fire signals to allow for early engagement and education.</p>	Develop a business engagement plan linked to the protection strategy that demonstrates planned engagement themes and methods as well as defined measures to evaluate success	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention and Protection
<b>The service should make sure its Response Strategy provides the most appropriate response for the public in line with its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)</b>	<p>Core Station Policy implemented and coverage reporting in place for strategic stations to enable immediate identification of stations that require additional resources to maintain coverage</p> <p>Deep dive monthly analysis carried out into incidents where we have not met our response standards to identify causes and learning</p> <p>Fire survival training rolled out to Control staff</p> <p>New fully agnostic 999 mobilising system procured for implementation in 2023</p> <p>Link to animation re mobilisation here:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m33PWfattvo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m33PWfattvo</a> </p>	<p>Develop a suite of performance measures and business processes aligned to the delivery of the Response Strategy.</p> <p>Implementation of the new workforce management system, including a crewing availability app and new mobilising system to ensure we have state of the art technology contributing to delivery of the Response Strategy.</p> <p>Centralise all resource management resources into a resource management unit to enable more effective utilisation and greater flexibility of resources, supported by creation of a single crewing policy.</p> <p>Continual review of the effectiveness of Response Strategy</p>	Q2 2023/24	Assistant Director, Response
<b>The service should make sure its operational staff have good access to relevant and up-to-date cross-border risk information</b>	Mobile Data Terminals hold cross border risk information for Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Kent and Hertfordshire	Work with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to source supply of risk information to ensure that crews have access to cross border risk information from the LFB via the mobile data terminals.	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention, Protection and Response Delivery
<b>The service should ensure that its procedures for responding to terrorist-related incidents are understood by all staff and are well tested</b>	<p>Mandatory Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) training rolled out to operational staff</p> <p>Training package developed and launched for non-specialist personnel attending a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA)</p> <p>National Interagency Liaison Officer (NILO) input including response to MTAs (Operation Plato) included in all Control Officer basic training courses (two to date).</p> <p>Regular programme of MTA related exercises being delivered. Operational staff, non-specialist responders and Control staff all participate in MTA exercises.</p> <p>MTA training package developed for support staff.</p>	<p>Continually review and strengthen MTA response</p> <p>Continue to deliver MTA related exercises incorporating all staff</p> <p>Monitor completion of all MTA training packages</p>	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Prevention, Protection and Response Delivery
<b>The service should make sure it participates in a programme of cross-border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises. Some but not all</b>	<p>Five cross border exercises have been delivered (with London, Herts, and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services)</p> <p>Exercise planning, delivery and attendance monitored through the Operations Assurance Group</p> <p>Cross border exercises are undertaken against a common risk and will be both live and tabletop exercises.</p>	<p>Service Level Agreement (SLA) agreed with Kent to facilitate live exercises, information sharing and risk information. Initial exercise in the Dartford Tunnel planned.</p> <p>Currently developing a programme of risk based cross border exercises to enable pre-planning of resources and be able to evidence that all operational staff are regularly attending exercises.</p>	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Response

staff take part in cross-border exercises		Cross border exercises planned for all staffing groups		
The service needs to show a clear rationale for the resources allocated between prevention, protection and response activities. This should be linked to risks and priorities set out in its IRMP.	<p>Increased activity in both Home Fire Safety Visits (Prevention) and Risk Based Inspection Visits (Protection) by operational crews.</p> <p>Training package implemented to enable operational crews to inspect low and medium risk rated buildings as part of the service’s Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)</p>	<p>Review Prevention, Protection and Response Strategies to ensure clear links to risks and Integrated Risk Management Plan priorities.</p> <p>Review structures of the Prevention, Protection and Response Teams to evidence clear rationale for the resources allocated to activities</p>	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Response
The service should assure itself that its workforce is productive	Information dashboards produced to measure performance and activity are available to the Extended Leadership Team, Group Managers, Station Managers and Watch Managers. A performance dashboard is regularly scrutinised at the Continuous Improvement Board.	Further work to develop bespoke station plans focusing on local risk and targeting of work to areas of the community most in need. Station plans will have measurable targets for delivery and progress will be incorporated into station management information dashboards	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Response
The service should assure itself that it makes the most of collaboration opportunities and that they are value for money	<p>All financial benefits from collaboration are monitored through a dashboard. Current efficiency savings (across the programme portfolio) are projected at £12.9m against a 10-year target (to 2027) of £15.1m.</p> <p>Collaboration meets statutory duties under the Police and Crime Act 2017 and the Serious Violence Duty under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021</p> <p>Collaborative effectiveness improvements have been secured through enhanced performance, shared estates, service provision and targeting of resources.</p> <p>Public safety improvements, including for the most vulnerable, along with improved joint response, community resilience and community engagement (rural and urban).</p> <p>Annual benefits reporting of projects in business as usual, including the joint Education Team, use of the fire and rescue estate by Essex Police, collapsed behind closed doors (gaining entry to patients in crisis for the East of England Ambulance Service Trust), arson prevention / fire investigation work and Safe and Well Visits</p>	<p>Progression of collaborative projects in delivery to achieve projected benefits across efficiency, effectiveness and public safety, including estates (fleet workshops, Dovercourt / Harwich stations), Restorative Justice Firebreaks, and Tri-Service Rural Officers.</p> <p>Project Minerva (vulnerability mapping) in relation to violence against women and girls (VAWG), joint volunteering (building on the pandemic response), use of the FRS estate by Essex Police, procurement and co-location of resilience teams</p> <p>Continued annual benefits reporting of projects in BAU, including the joint Education Team, use of the FRS estate by Essex Police, collapsed behind closed doors (gaining entry to patients in crisis for East of England Ambulance Service Trust), arson prevention / fire investigation and Safe and Well Visits</p> <p>Update report and business case templates to ensure collaboration opportunities / options are considered and evidenced as options in all proposed change initiatives</p> <p>Formulation of a collaboration register that incorporates all collaboration activity happening across the service (including collaboration outside of blue light partners e.g. with the Essex Centre for Data Analytics)</p>	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Performance, and Improvement
The service should make sure that it is taking action to reduce non-pay costs and can demonstrate how it is achieving value for money	<p>Value for money audits are conducted as part of our annual audit plan by our external auditors. The last of these was conducted in 2021 and provided an opinion of reasonable assurance</p> <p>1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) dedicated resources (Finance Business Partner and Benefits Officer) are dedicated to monitoring savings and efficiencies across the service.</p>			Assistant Director, Finance

	<p>Information dashboards are now in place for budget holders to efficiently review budgets. This includes an easy view at transaction level for non-pay costs.</p> <p>The budget process for budget holders is no longer based on the prior year budget. Historic spending data has instead been provided to ensure non-pay budgets are lean.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reflects the service’s overall annual financial savings</p> <p>A significant area of non-pay spend is the capital finance charge (MRP). The Authority now has a Capital Strategy and, through modelling the MRP / utilising the capital receipts reserve, MRP can be set and managed to ensure value for money.</p> <p>Savings and Efficiency Board set up to track all projects and value for money secured. The review of Non-Pay Costs is a standard agenda item for the Savings and Efficiency Board.</p> <p>Centralised procurement function introduced, along with the adoption of a category approach to procurement. The Procurement Team has launched its first Procurement Strategy.</p>			
<p>The service needs to better understand the financial challenges it faces. It should strengthen the assumptions that underpin its plans to manage the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future.</p>	<p>Balanced budget now a prerequisite. Balanced budget delivered for 2022-23 (for the first time in seven years)</p> <p>Forecasting, medium term financial strategy and sensitivity analysis published quarterly</p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy progress update presented quarterly at the Strategic Board. To enhance this, improved sensitivity analysis is being prepared and presented at the Strategic Board and throughout the Budget Process.</p> <p>Activity based budget setting for the 2023-24 budget process.</p> <p>Produce a Capital / Treasury Management Strategy.</p>	<p>Q4 2022/23</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Finance</p>
<p>The service should have a clear and sustainable strategic plan for the use of its reserves which promotes new ways of working.</p>	<p>Reserves Strategy implemented. The Authority reviews and publishes its Reserve Strategy on an annual basis. This strategy is prepared alongside and is in sync with the:</p> <p>Annual Budget Medium Term Financial Strategy Capital Strategy Treasury Management Strategy</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy and balanced budget requirement will protect the service’s reserves.</p>			<p>Assistant Director, Finance</p>
<p>The service needs to assure itself that it is maximising opportunities to improve effectiveness and efficiency through the better use of technology.</p>	<p>New workforce management system in place to centralise and introduce more effective planning, forecasting and visibility of resources.</p> <p>Installation of new fast internet fibre broadband to all fire stations.</p> <p>Post implementation review process for projects and programmes implemented.</p> <p>Digital Skills Officers in place to support development of digital skill across the service.</p>	<p>Continued delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy through the Digital and Data Programme</p> <p>Review of working practices through innovation to establish where technological changes can support better efficiencies</p>	<p>Q2 2023/24</p>	<p>Head of ICT</p>



	<p>Management information dashboards are widely available, delivering near live data across most functions.</p> <p>ICT Relationship Management Team established to understand fully the digital need of all functions / customers</p>			
<p>The service should make sure all staff understand and demonstrate its values</p>	<p>NFCC Core Code of Ethics (CCoE) launched. Our values are echoed and incorporated in mandatory Core Code training.</p> <p>Values and Ethics are incorporated into Recruitment, Learning and Development and key people processes (including how to challenge unacceptable behaviour).</p>	<p>Further activity to embed the Core Code of Ethics, values and behaviours including use of surveys and cultural maturity model.</p>	<p>Q2 2023/24</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Human Resources</p>
<p>The service should monitor secondary contracts to make sure working hours are not exceeded</p>	<p>Workforce management system project has started with a required deliverable for the system to support management of the Working Time Directive.</p>	<p>Update to the existing process, guidance and communication to be issued to managers of existing secondary contract holders with links.</p>	<p>Q3 2023/24</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Human Resources</p>
<p>The service should make sure that its absence / attendance procedures are consistently applied</p>	<p>Revised attendance management policy and supporting managerial resources published on the service’s intranet.</p> <p>Absence Management Training is available and easily accessible to managers</p> <p>People Impact Assessment of Attendance Management Policy completed.</p> <p>New absence management information dashboard issued to HR Business Partners (BPs) and managers, who use this to ensure effective monitoring and detection of inconsistent application of policy.</p> <p>Case and peer reviews carried out to ensure consistency.</p>	<p>Continue building our service’s Employee Relations capability.</p>	<p>Q1 2023/24</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Human Resources</p>
<p>The service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out the IRMP</p>	<p>New Strategic Workforce Plan data in place to support decision making and budget control.</p> <p>Succession plans developed across the service.</p> <p>Skills gaps reviewed and training in place.</p>	<p>Develop an approach to direct entry and build on accelerated development to support revised leadership, resourcing and development arrangements.</p> <p>Prioritisation of training to ensure the IRMP needs are met.</p> <p>Develop a strategic approach and process to understand the skills needed to carry out specific roles in certain locations to deliver the IRMP.</p>	<p>Q4 2022/23</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Human Resources</p>
<p>The service needs to assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role. It needs to ensure all staff keep their skills up to date and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training</p>	<p>Learning Management System for all staff launched, including eLearning for mandatory training courses.</p> <p>Manager reports of competency compliance are published via dashboards which enables scrutiny and management action to be taken to rectify any issues.</p> <p>Digital skills support now established to ensure that all users can access the courses and information available to them.</p> <p>Learning &amp; Development (L&amp;D) Steering Group in place which oversees compliance.</p> <p>Monthly reporting on mandatory operational training, monitored by the Continuous Improvement Board and through performance reporting to the Performance and Resources (P&amp;R) Board.</p>	<p>Formal review of the progress of the L&amp;D Strategy / deliverables.</p> <p>Update to intranet pages and communications to ensure pathways are well promoted and understood.</p> <p>L&amp;D launch of ‘Learning by Level’ as outlined in the NFCC core pathways. This signposts the mandated and core needs and our offerings to deliver the training needs.</p> <p>Implement process improvements to effectively record technical and professional training (starting in Q3).</p> <p>Delivery of activities identified in the formal review of the Learning and Development Strategy.</p>	<p>Q4 2023/24</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Human Resources</p>

	<p>Specific programme of learning has been developed and delivered for Control operators.</p> <p>Appraisal completion rates are monitored to ensure needs are captured and fulfilled through departmental training plans.</p>			
<b>The service should make sure issues identified through its staff survey are appropriately addressed and that actions taken are communicated to staff in a timely way</b>	<p>Bright Ideas (cross-workforce) Group continues to meet regularly to coordinate and triage new suggestions.</p> <p>Feedback from staff survey has led to actions which have been communicated to staff as ‘you said, we did’.</p>	Next staff survey commenced and reflects feedback from previous surveys. Managers will be trained to understand the survey feedback and to facilitate sessions which further capture needs and identify actions.	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Human Resources
<b>The service should review how effective its policy on bullying, harassment and discrimination is in reducing unacceptable behaviour towards its staff</b>	<p>Case reviews completed to understand trends / themes to enable learning and proactive interventions.</p> <p>Dignity at Work Advocates re-launched in September 2022.</p>	Review and promotion of the Dignity at Work Policy to include management of bullying, harassment and discrimination.	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Human Resources
<b>The service should make improvements to the way it collects equality data to better understand its workforce demographics and needs</b>	Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) reviews (in 2021 and 2022) included suggestions to improvement engagement / willingness to provide data.	People Data Project (Portfolio of Change) planned to improve collection and utilisation of people data. Data gaps to be reviewed and identified, and actions taken to increase data availability.	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Human Resources
<b>To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well understood and become important values of the whole of the service</b>	<p>Inclusion and Diversity Action Group established and meeting regularly with key purpose and objectives.</p> <p>Positive Action Group established and key objectives defined to target improvements.</p> <p>Ongoing training delivered throughout 2021/22.</p> <p>Monthly “Inclusion Insights” newsletter published and communicated to all employees.</p>	<p>Fair, Kind and Inclusive Workplace project in place.</p> <p>Next tranche of Diversity and Inclusion training scheduled.</p>	Q4 2022/23	Assistant Director, Human Resources
<b>The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders</b>	<p>Process flow and promotion pathways communicated (through managers briefings / intranet).</p> <p>First phase of succession plans completed with readiness and skill development focus.</p> <p>Leadership Development Programme in place for two years.</p> <p>Leadership, Resourcing and Succession (LRS) improvements identified, and changes made to reflect feedback and meet the service needs.</p>	<p>Improve resourcing and talent experiences.</p> <p>Review of the Leadership Development Programme.</p> <p>High potential / aspiring leader identification incorporated into future succession plans.</p> <p>Pilot of the Group Manager to Area Manager development pathway delivered.</p>	Q2 2023/24	Assistant Director, Human Resources

		Ongoing review of the LRS and the scope to include high potential development.		
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