

AT AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the HFRA Standards and Governance
Committee held at Fire and Police HQ, Eastleigh on Wednesday 27 February,
2019

Chairman:

* Councillor Liz Fairhurst

* Councillor Jonathan Glen

* Councillor Roger Price

* Councillor Geoffrey Hockley

* Councillor Sharon Mintoff

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Councillor Chris Carter, Chairman of the Fire Authority

Councillor David Simpson, Member of the Fire Authority

59. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All Members were present and no apologies were noted.

60. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

61. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed, and signed by the Chairman.

62. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations for this meeting.

63. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

64. **HMICFRS ACTION PLAN REPORT**

The Committee received a report from the Chief Fire Officer regarding Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

(HMICFRS) Action Plan Report (Item 6 in the Minute Book). It was heard that an Extraordinary meeting had been convened at the request of Members to review the proposed action plan following the previous Standards and Governance Committee meeting where Members received Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) report. It was noted that Members had requested the opportunity to input and review the action plan before the formal response was submitted to HMI by the deadline of 12 March 2019.

Officers detailed the background to the action plan which addressed areas for improvement which were highlighted in the HMI report. It was explained that the Chief Fire Officer and senior management team had developed the action plan in liaison with other officers and were committed to addressing the individual areas raised by HMI with solutions that would be integrated into "business as usual". This would be closely monitored by the Service's Performance and Assurance Board, and the Standards and Governance Committee would be updated on progress at future meetings.

Officers highlighted the area for improvement as set out at page 14 of the agenda pack – 'The Service should ensure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date risk information'. It was explained that HMI felt that there was a lack of clarity around who was responsible for this information in the Service and this would be addressed by reviewing current policies and clarifying responsibility, in addition to effectively targeting resources to risks and focussing on high risk premises. Officers clarified the issue of information held in whole-time station areas as opposed to on-call station areas. Officers also highlighted that all main appliances currently had access to up to date information through a mobile data terminal, and where relevant this was shared with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services. It was noted this wasn't acknowledged in the HMI report. In response to Members questions, it was heard that whilst the HMI report had deemed that risk information held on some heritage sites across the county was out of date and these were seen as high-risk sites, the risk to life was very low, and it was important to factor this into analysis and response. The recent fire at the Ocado warehouse in Andover was also discussed, and the uniqueness of the building design was highlighted with its use of robotics deeming this a 'no life risk'. It was explained that this followed a national model which may need updating as a result. Members heard that an annual review of the strategic risk register was due to be considered at a future Full Authority meeting.

Another area for improvement – 'The Service should understand why it completes proportionately fewer home fire safety checks than other services' was highlighted at page 15 of the agenda pack. It was noted that whilst the number of home safety visits was comparatively low, it was important to recognise that the Service carried out more comprehensive Safe and Well visits, which were better targeted and effective, whilst enabling greater time spent with more vulnerable people. Members heard that the number of fire related injuries and deaths in Hampshire was very low which was a positive indicator that the Service was performing well in this area, but the number of Safe and Well visits would be increased to address this area of improvement. In response to Member questions, it was explained that a target number for Safe and Well visits hadn't been formulated before, so it was seen as a positive way of addressing HMI concerns, as well as targeting more vulnerable members of the population. Officers addressed Members concerns that an increase in the quantity of visits

could reduce the quality, and Officers were confident that the quality of this wouldn't suffer. At the request of Members, Officers would ensure that acronyms would not be used in the submitted plan, and the reference to 'new' in relation to the Chief Fire Officer would also be omitted.

Officers addressed the area of improvement - 'The Service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk' (page 16 of the agenda pack). It was explained that there was positive partnership working with the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board, and that the Service was effective at targeting the most vulnerable through aforementioned Safe and Well visits, and low numbers of fire injuries and fatalities in Hampshire. In addressing this area of improvement, Officers highlighted that the Service would review their policy and evaluate how people were targeted, with a view to demonstrate a correlation between activity and outcomes. In response to Member questions, referrals to the Service's website 'Safe and Sound' was highlighted, and information relating to fire issues on the 'Connect or Support' website would be looked into.

In relation to the area of improvement - 'The Service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better' (page 17 of the agenda pack), it was heard that this would be addressed through target figures for Safe and Well visits, as well as thorough evaluation of these visits in 2019/20 to ensure their effectiveness.

The impact of the Grenfell fire was highlighted in relation to the area of improvement 'The Service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme' (page 18 of the agenda pack). It was heard that the impact of the Grenfell fire had led to an unexpected demand in resources as every high-rise building in Hampshire was visited and inspected. In response to the HMI report, Members heard that there were fewer resources across the Service as a whole due to a reduction in funding, which had resulted in fewer inspections being carried out overall. Officers drew Members attention to the existing Integrated Risk Management Plan which was recognised in the HMI report as prioritising how the Service matched resources to risk. In addressing points raised by HMI, it was explained that whilst there was no evidence that the Service doesn't have a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme, it was noted that existing policy does not necessarily match current resources, and these would need to be aligned, and a revised Protection Risk based Audit policy would be implemented.

Members heard that in relation to the area of improvement 'The Service should assure itself that its commitment to the trading arm does not conflict with its main protection responsibilities or its public service duties' (page 18 of the report), that whilst this hasn't created conflict within the Service, a review of this would be conducted and further clarity would be provided.

The area of improvement – 'The service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command' (page 19 of the agenda pack) was explained, and Members noted that this addressed smaller incidents, and the Service would ensure that policy was reviewed to make sure this was in line with national agreements. The plan also highlighted that HFRS was one of seven volunteer fire services in the

National Operational Learning pilot and was involved in developing debriefing 'best practice'.

Members congratulated Officers for their efficiency work as HMI identified no areas for improvement in efficiency.

Officers addressed the areas of improvement in relation to 'People' which were set out at pages 20 – 28 of the agenda pack. It was explained that HFRS had conducted detailed analysis in this area and was looking to change its culture, and this was already a priority within the Service. Changes that had occurred within the Service could be seen to be unsettling and may have had a negative impact on staff. Members noted that the Chief Fire Officer and Head of HR and Workforce Development would continue to work towards an agreed set of values that would be meaningful for the Service, and work would be undertaken with teams to embed these. Members attention was drawn to how areas of improvement would be addressed and it was heard that these would include new performance and promotional processes and a greater understanding of grievance and absence management policies. A new Performance Development Plan (PDP) would also be designed to encourage continual learning and development for staff, and the Head of HR and Learning and Development would lead in formulating this. In relation to Occupational Health, it was noted that a new Occupational Health Manager had recently taken up post and would work closely with the Service to address issues raised in this area in the HMI report. Members requested that further information be provided in the action plan in relation to the development of an Occupational Health Improvement Plan to address concerns raised in the HMI report, and Officers would ensure this is included in the final version of the action plan before submission.

Whilst the areas of improvement would be addressed, Officers believed that some causes for concern highlighted in the HMI report were over stated, and there was a misunderstanding by HMICFRS of the combined cultural journey and aspirations of the Chief Fire Officer and team, which were not taken into consideration in the HMI report. It was noted that cultural changes, by their nature, take time to embed and this was an ongoing piece of work within the Service. Other concerns that the Service had relating to the reporting of these areas for improvement in the HMI report were also highlighted in the action plan and drawn to Members attention. Officers concluded that the HMI inspection should be seen as a positive experience and has raised challenging questions which would be addressed and monitored.

Members wished to formally record their thanks to Officers for all their hard work in producing the HFRS action plan, and also requested progress update reports be brought to future Standards and Governance Committee meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Standards and Governance Committee praised Officers for their work in producing a comprehensive and excellent action plan for HFRS.
- (ii) That the report and action plan for HFRS is approved by the Standards and Governance Committee, and the Committee note that progress update reports will be brought to future meetings of the Committee.

Chairman,