

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY
Meeting to be held on Monday 24 February 2020

HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS)

Contact for further information: Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ben Norman
Telephone: 01772 866801

Executive Summary

This paper serves to provide Members with an update following publication of the 'State of Fire Report' earlier this month and provides confirmation of Lancashire FRS' next HMICFRS inspection which takes place during week commencing 11th May 2020. This will be our second inspection during which we aim to demonstrate that we have built on our previous achievements in ways that help to make the people of Lancashire safer.

Recommendation

The Combined Fire Authority is asked to note the contents of the report.

Background

During January this year, HMICFRS released the 'State of Fire Report' which is the annual assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of fire and rescue services in England, based on the 45 inspections carried out between June 2018 and August 2019.

The report provides a summary of the performance of the 45 fire and rescue services against the 3 inspection pillars of effectiveness, efficiency and people and provides a comparator for the high levels of performance delivered by Lancashire when considered against peers nationally.

The [report](#) highlights that the sector has many strengths but that ongoing improvement is required. Whilst we acknowledge that many of the negative statements within the report exist nationally, it is pleasing that these were not representative of the picture that was reflected within LFRS' first tranche report.

State of Fire provides strategic recommendations on reforms needed, to ensure that modern fire and rescue services can be provided which are fit for the future. The report recommends:

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) fire and rescue services; and (b) those who work in them.
2. By June 2020, the Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council 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 National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Local Government Association, should produce a code of ethics for fire and rescue services. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.

Second inspection confirmed

The dates for the second inspection of LFRS have been confirmed as week commencing 11th May 2020. For the second inspection our former Service Liaison Lead (SLL), Dave Dryburgh, hands over to his replacement, Jo Hayden (Seconded Programme and Planning Manager for Nottinghamshire FRS). It is anticipated that the Service will meet with the new SLL following their formal HMICFRS training in February.

Meantime work is ongoing within Service to meet key dates within the timeline –

- Data Return – completed in the last week of January 2020.
- Preparation of LFRS Self-Assessment against the inspection framework, prior to Discovery Week.
- Document return – (awaiting the request but previously this constituted 53 service level documents).
- Discovery week – initial visit by a few members of the inspection team, confirmed as week commencing 20th April.
- Inspection week – full inspection team into Service, week commencing 11th May.

During the previous inspection, the Chief Fire Officer's strategic brief was delivered prior to inspection week. This time, it will be delivered to the inspection team on the first morning of inspection week.

There is a spring bi-annual data return expected in May which may coincide with the inspection dates.

Learning from other FRS and sharing our best practice

Whilst LFRS has areas of strength, it is recognised that further improvements can be derived from best practice of our peers. Following the release of the reports from the final tranche of inspections and the more recent State of Fire report, the Service has identified a number of opportunities to be explored with our peers. Accordingly, visits have been made to other FRS, examples being, Merseyside to look at their approach towards Prevention activity, phone conferences with Cambridge and Oxfordshire to look at various areas of strength and a further visit being planned to West Midlands to consider the work undertaken to achieve their 'outstanding' in response.

Conversely LFRS has hosted several FRS over the course of the year to share areas of our best practice, including Lincolnshire, Durham and Darlington and a number of FRS whom attended a recent event to share an overview of our Risk Based Inspection Programme for fire protection.

Business Risk

There is a reputational risk to LFRS should an unsatisfactory inspection outcome be delivered.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None identified at this stage

Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified at this stage

HR Implications

None identified at this stage

Financial Implications

None identified at this stage

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact Ben Norman Tel. 01772 866801
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate:		