



OVERVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 17 March 2021

Annex 2

| Report Reference | Inspection Pillar | HMICFRS inspection report item | Improvement Activity | R/A/G |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|-------|
| Page 11 | Prevention – Area for improvement | The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better. | <p>An evaluation of the prevention activity commenced in July 2020. The evaluation uses a diagnostic methodology developed from academic research and with colleagues from Manchester University. The approach uses the Viable Systems Methodology, which has been adapted for the Services purposes and forms the basis of the evaluative approach.</p> <p>The evaluation has been separated into work-stream to enable a more focussed and pragmatic approach to the evaluation. The first phases include fire and wellness checks (linked to the item above, youth engagement and safeguarding.)</p> | |
| Page 11 | Prevention - Area for improvement | The service should understand the reasons for its reducing number of prevention visits and consider how it can better target those who are most at risk to fire. | <p>An increased shift to referral led prevention visits has been implemented from April 2019 to utilise service resources more effectively. Administration teams that are responsible for screening and booking in Fire and wellness visits, have previously been under established, affecting the ability to book in visits. A recruitment campaign has been undertaken and will soon see the three administration teams back to full establishment.</p> <p>Specific roles have been identified & funding has been agreed by the Authority to establish a number of new Prevention posts, which will help to oversee and deliver Fire & Wellness visits, to address the volume of</p> | |



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| | | | <p>prevention visits in identified areas of increased risk, including the delivery of a program of high-rise interventions and engagements with specialised housing.</p> <p>Intervention post incident, is being reinvigorated through a revised procedure supported by processes which enable this activity to be recorded in PRMS.</p> | |
| Page 14 | Protection - Area for improvement | The service should ensure it allocates enough resources to a prioritised and risk-based inspection programme. | <p>Several recruitment campaigns have been undertaken to fill posts that have become vacant following resignations and also to fill newly created apprentice fire safety roles, approved 2019/20 by the FA. Training is currently underway of these new staff members.</p> <p>This year, 2020/21, the Fire Authority have approved four further fire safety posts, which will be utilised to increase capacity of existing inspecting officers, through the creation of lead teams in specialist areas, such as: enforcement and prosecution; Specialised Housing; and, High Risk Residential Buildings (HRRB).</p> | |
| Page 14 | Protection - Area for improvement | The service should review its response to false alarms to ensure operational resources are used effectively (termed 'unwanted fire signals'). | An evaluation of the policy on Automatic Fire Alarms commenced in July 2020, as part of a collaborative project with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire fire and rescue services. Due to COVID-19 pressures, the three-service approach has been paused however continues in this Service. The evaluation uses a diagnostic methodology developed from academic research and with colleagues from Manchester University. The | |



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| | | | <p>approach uses a methodology, which has been adapted for the Services purposes and forms the basis of the evaluative approach.</p> | |
| Page 14 | Protection - Area for improvement | <p>The service should ensure it works with local businesses and large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations.</p> | <p>Capacity to deliver proactive engagement activity has been limited due to vacancies in an already small protection department. These posts have now been filled and training up to Level 4 Diploma accreditation is currently underway.</p> <p>The creation of additional posts enables the increased capacity to focus work on targeted engagement of lower risk premises that may not be included within a refreshed Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP).</p> | |
| Page 16 | Response – Area for Improvement | <p>The service should ensure it has a sustainable system to provide its operational response model.</p> | <p>Following a review of the Resourcing Model, the Service has commenced work to further improve availability of appliances and disposition of staff. The introduction of new on-call contracts has led to a better employment proposition for staff, which in turn provides greater resilience and opportunity.</p> <p>Total staffing numbers remain low, and the review has identified a range of areas in which efficiency can be improved. These efficiencies are supported by the introduction of 20 additional firefighters to the establishment following a recent successful growth bids in 2020.</p> | |



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| Page 16 | Response – Area for Improvement | The service should improve the availability of its on-call fire engines to respond to incidents. | <p>A new revised approach to On-Call awareness sessions has been created and delivered online (virtual) on three occasions now. This has seen an increase in new applications.</p> <p>A new On-Call Contract was introduced in 2018 which created four availability options. This ranged from immediate response through 20mins, 60mins and 3 hour response to mobilising.</p> <p>A new resource management system (FSR - Fire Service Rota) was introduced and the resilience availability options are being developed into the system. The strategic resourcing model identifies three On-call appliances with up-to 10 minute mobilisation availability.</p> | |
| Page 23 | Efficiency – Recommendation | Ensure it has the capacity and capability to support its activity in its public safety plan; | Officers adopted a zero-based budget approach when developing the budget proposal for 2020/21. This approach has been developed alongside the new Public Safety Plan and feedback from our recent inspection report from HMICFRS. Although our report noted that the inspectorate “would like to see improvements in the year ahead, but without increased funding, it is difficult to see where progress can be made” the zero-based budget approach has identified some key opportunities within the current budgetary constraints: | |



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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the wholetime establishment by up to 20 firefighters in 2020/21, with the potential to increase by a further 10 in the following year (depending on the outcome of the comprehensive spending review) Increasing the Protection Team by 4 FTEs and introducing a Team Leader role and two further FTEs into the Prevention Team. Introducing a Head of Technology, Transformation and Programme Management Office (PMO) to manage the actions required following our inspection report. | |
| Page 23 | Efficiency – Recommendation | Consult with the people of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes on options to have the most effective and efficient response against the financial environment in which it operates. | <p>The 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan (PSP) was approved for public consultation at the Authority’s 18 September 2019 meeting. The consultation was open for an eight-week period from 23 September to 18 November 2019.</p> <p>Officers will proceed with the further development of the strategy proposals set out in the PSP having regard to the consultation feedback as they are progressed and to undertake further consultations with stakeholders potentially affected by any specific changes arising from their implementation.</p> | |
| Page 25 | Efficiency – Area for Improvement | The service should use sound financial management to ensure all additional costs such as pension liability are | The zero-based budgeting approach adopted for 2020/21 reviewed all costs to ensure that the right amount of money is being spent in the right places. | |



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| | | accounted for and that there is a contingency plan. | <p>The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2020/21 to 2024/25 shows two scenarios, one with the continuation of the pension grant funding and the other showing the impact if it were to cease after 2020/21.</p> <p>Following approval of the PSP a Financial Strategy has been developed, this was considered by the Executive Committee in November 2020 and approved by the Fire Authority in December 2020. The Strategy included the development of alternative scenarios and contingency plans and further addressed the two Efficiency recommendations shown above.</p> | |
| Page 31 | People –Area for Improvement | The service should put in place an achievable succession plan, for the whole organisation. | Implementation of a pan-organisational succession plan which undertakes regular systematic and rigorous Strategic Workforce and Succession Planning processes, incorporating Public Safety requirements | |
| Page 33 | People – Area for Improvement | The service should plan to be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce which better reflects the community it serves. | Attendance at Career Fairs at Colleges, Schools, MK Stadium etc. Have a go days for Females, BAME groups. Review of the People Strategy portal to ensure the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) message is consistent. Workforce Reform project as part of the Thames Valley Collaboration agenda established. Re-established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group to work on initiatives to attract a more diverse workforce. | |



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| Page 34 | People – Area for Improvement | The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders. | <p>Our talent management programme, continues to ensure replenished development pools at each level, resulting in staff with the required skills to fulfil the roles when needed.</p> <p>A pilot scheme to identify and develop future senior leaders was successfully employed to recruit an interim replacement for a Head of Service position. This pilot is being validated later this year with a senior management assessment and development centre. This approach will continue to futureproof the Service and minimise the potential impact on its workforce, ensuring the operational commitment can be maintained.</p> | |
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