



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Overview and Audit Committee, 19 July 2023

**Report title:** His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update: May 2023

**Lead Member:** Councillor David Hopkins

**Report sponsor:** Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mick Osborne

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**Action:** Noting

**Recommendations:** That the Committee note the updated HMICFRS - BFRS improvement plan: May 2023

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## **Executive summary:**

BFRS's second round inspection took place between 24 May 2021 and 9 July 2021.

The latest report for this Service, was published on 15 December 2021, identified 22 areas for improvement, and two causes of concern – Effectiveness: Prevention and People: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) accompanied by eight recommendations.

An improvement plan (Appendix 1) is in place to specifically progress the report recommendations and areas for improvement.

BFRS's third round inspection took place between 17 April 2023 and 9 June 2023. The inspection involved document reviews, interviews, desktop reviews and stations visits.

The high level debrief took place at the end of June 2023, with the full report due for publication by the end of October 2023.

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## **Financial implications:**

The prioritisation of improvements to address the specific recommendations raised within the causes of concern may introduce additional financial implications, either through reprioritisation of other projects, or through new workstreams.

Consideration will be given to ensure associated costs, both direct and indirect, are fully understood and managed effectively.

FRSs are not funded for the preparation for, HMICFRS inspections, nor is the Service charged. The inspections are funded directly by the Home Office. The Police are top sliced from their government grants to fund the HMICFRS inspections of Police Forces. There has been no indication yet that this might be a future funding model for the inspection of FRSs.

#### **Risk management:**

There remain reputational corporate risks to the organisation should we be judged as inadequate. The Service had already taken steps to mitigate this through having extensive internal and external audits of a number of areas of the Service, in addition to the HMICFRS inspections. The external audit plan for 23/24 can be found here: [Internal Audit Report – Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Internal](#)

#### **Legal implications:**

The current Fire and Rescue Service National Framework issued under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to which the Authority must have regard when carrying out its functions, states as follows at paragraph 7.5:

‘Fire and rescue authorities must give due regard to reports and recommendations made by HMICFRS and – if recommendations are made – prepare, update and regularly publish an action plan detailing how the recommendations are being actioned. If the fire and rescue authority does not propose to undertake any action as a result of a recommendation, reasons for this should be given.’

It continues: ‘When forming an action plan, the fire and rescue authority could seek advice and support from other organisations, for example, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association’.

#### **Privacy and security implications:**

No privacy or security implications have been identified that are directly associated with this report or its appendices. The respective strands of the improvement plan have undergone Data Protection Impact Screening and full impact assessments have been completed and reviewed where appropriate.

The report and its appendices are not protectively marked.

#### **Duty to collaborate:**

Each fire and rescue service is inspected individually. However, the latest report includes findings relating to the Service’s ability to collaborate effectively with partners.

#### **Health and safety implications:**

There are no Health, Safety or Wellbeing implications arising from this report.

#### **Environmental implications:**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

Progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives are included within the updated improvement plan.

The Service has been judged as 'requires improvement' in the people pillar, along with a cause of concern and five recommendations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. All the findings from the HMICFRS round two inspection report will be fully considered and prioritised to ensure continual improvement is established and maintained.

The Authority's equality, diversity, and inclusion objectives 2020-2025 – year 3 progress was presented to the Fire Authority on 14 June 2023.

### **Consultation and communication:**

Specific areas identified for Service improvement are being captured in relevant plans and will be reported on in the usual way, ultimately to the Overview and Audit Committee.

### **Next steps -**

- Report published on BFRS website

### **Background papers:**

HMICFRS Home Page: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/>

10 November 2021 - Overview and Audit Committee: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/10/oa-item-18-10-11-21.pdf/>

10 November 2021 - Overview and Audit Committee: Prevention Evaluation - Phase one report 2021 <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/10/oa-item-17-17-10-21.pdf/>

16 February 2022 – Fire Authority: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Report 2021

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/02/fa-item-10-16022022.pdf/>

16 March 2022 – Overview and Audit Committee: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/03/oa-item-14-160322.pdf/>

15 June 2022 – Fire Authority – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 – Year two update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/05/fa-item-16.pdf/>

20 July 2022 – Overview and Audit Committee: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update – May 2022

Overview & Audit Committee, 19 July 2023 | Item 16 – HMICFRS Improvement Plan Update: May 2023

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/07/oa-item-13-2.pdf/>

12 October 2022 – Fire Authority: Prevention Strategy 2022-2025, Safety Centre Funding Agreement, People Strategy 2020-2025 Year Two Update

[Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/10/2022](#)

9 November 2022 – Overview and Audit Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update – November 2022

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/10/oa-091122-item-14.pdf/>

9 November 2022 – Overview and Audit Committee: Prevention Improvement Plan – Update Two

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/10/oa-091122-item-15.pdf/>

20 January 2023 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022 - HMICFRS](#)

15 March 2023 – Overview and Audit Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) –Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Improvement Plan Update – March 2023

[Overview-and-audit-committee-meeting-15-march-2023-item-12-hmicfrs-bfrs-improvement-plan-update-march-2023.pdf/](#)

15 March 2023 – Overview and Audit Committee: Prevention Improvement Plan – November/December 2022

[Prevention-improvement-plan-november-december-2022.pdf/](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	2021 Inspection report action plan – May 2023	N/A