



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Extraordinary Fire Authority, 11 September 2024

Report title: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Values and Culture Update

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse, Chairman

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer, Louise Harrison

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Action: Noting

Recommendations:

That the HMICFRS Values & Culture update be noted

Executive summary:

On Thursday 30 March 2023 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services'. The report has 9 themes supported by 35 recommendations and all Fire and Rescue Services, alongside the government and national fire bodies are urged to implement them as a matter of urgency.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) welcomed the report and the recommendations within it.

The Service and Authority continues to take the culture of our service extremely seriously and we want to make sure all our staff and the public we serve are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade Culture by Nazir Afzal OBE in November 2022 and subsequent news articles into allegations at South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, the service reviewed what is in place for employees and what actions need to be taken. This was presented for noting on 22 March 2023.

Previous actions, including the previously presented Exploring our Culture paper, were reviewed against the subsequent HMICFRS Values and Culture report to ensure there were clear priorities. These were reviewed by an independent EDI specialist from Bucks Council and subsequently consolidated into one overarching EDI Plan.

Of the 35 recommendations, 20 were owned by the Chief Fire Officer. The Chief Fire Officer has reviewed all recommendations and is assured that the service has the appropriate processes and measures in place.

The final recommendations update provided to HMICFRS can be found in Appendix 1.

The Service continues to review other Service's reports published and feed any recommendations into our annual planning process.

Financial implications:

The prioritisation of improvements to address the specific recommendations raised 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.

Risk management:

There remain reputational corporate risks to the organisation. The Service continues to take 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 internal audit plan for 24/25 can be found here: [Internal Audit plan](#)

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 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. The report states: "We were pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate. It continues to consider opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders."

Health and safety implications:

The HMICFRS 2023-2025 report states:

- The service provides good well-being provisions to its workforce, but work-related stress is not being fully addressed.
- The service has a positive health and safety culture.

The areas for improvement relating to working hours and secondary contracts will feed into the health, safety and wellbeing group.

Environmental implications:

No environmental implications have been identified that are directly associated with this report or its appendices.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The Service has been judged as 'requires improvement' in the area relating to ensuring fairness and promoting diversity, along with a cause of concern and four recommendations relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. All the findings from the HMICFRS round three inspection report have been 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 line with the recommendations.

Background papers:

HMICFRS BFRS Home Page: [Buckinghamshire - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/buckinghamshire/)

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/>

28 April 2023 - Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting: Values and Culture in fire and rescue services

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/04/bmkfa-extraordinary-meeting-28-april-2023-item-8-values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services.pdf/

24 October 2023 – Extraordinary Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Report 2023

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/extraordinary-fire-authority-meeting-24-october-2023-item-9-hmicfrs-inspection-report.pdf/

6 December 2023 – Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Action Plan

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/11/fire-authority-meeting-6-december-2023-item-15-hmicfrs-action-plan.pdf/>

8 February 2024 – Executive Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/01/executive-committee-meeting-8-february-2024-item-12-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-and-rescue-services-hmicfrs-buckinghamshire-fire-and-rescue-service-bfrs-2023-update.pdf/

13 March 2024 – Overview and Audit Committee: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/02/overview-and-audit-committee-13-march-2024-item-9-hmicfrs-bfrs-2023-2025-update.pdf/>

09 May 2024 - State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023

[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2023 - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/state-of-fire-and-rescue-the-annual-assessment-of-fire-and-rescue-services-in-england-2023-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

12 June 2024 - Fire Authority: His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023-2025 Update

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/06/2024 11:00 \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2024/06/2024-11-00-public-pack-agenda-document-for-buckinghamshire-milton-keynes-fire-authority-12-06-2024-11-00.pdf/)

30 July 2024 – HMICFRS Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter

[Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: Causes of concern revisit letter - His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/causes-of-concern-revisit-letter-his-majestys-inspectorate-of-constabulary-and-fire-rescue-services/)

01 August 2024 - HMICFRS Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services

[Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in fire and rescue services - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)
(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

| Appendix | Title | Protective Marking |
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| 1 | HMICFRS Values and Culture Recommendation final report | N/A |