

HMICFRS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSPECTION 2021/22 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM TRANCHE 3 AND CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE’S HMICFRS INSPECTION 2021/22



REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

For Information

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT













- 1.1 To provide Members with a summary of findings from Tranche 3 Inspections as detailed in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6 and Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To present the outcomes of Cleveland Fire Brigade’s HMICFRS Inspection which took place over the period May - July 2022; the Report is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.3 To inform Members of any identified areas of improvement/development that are set out within the Brigade’s Improvement Plan 2023/24 attached as Appendix 3; the progression of which will be monitored by the Fire Authority’s Executive Committee.
- 1.4 To inform Members of the HMICFRS Inspection Programme and Framework for 2023 onwards attached as Appendix 4.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note:
 - the summary of gradings from Tranche 3 Inspections as detailed in paragraphs 3.5, 3.6 and Appendix 1
 - the outcomes of Cleveland Fire Brigade’s HMICFRS Inspection 2021/22 as detailed in the Report at Appendix 2
 - that any identified areas of improvement/development are captured within the Brigade’s Improvement Plan 2023/24 attached at Appendix 3
 - the HMICFRS Inspection Programme and Framework for 2023 onwards attached as Appendix 4.
 - that further reports on the next round of inspections will be provided as and when details of the arrangements are confirmed by HMICFRS













3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As part of its reform agenda, the Government has introduced an independent inspection regime for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England – and the fire and rescue service they oversee. The inspections are delivered by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The chief fire and rescue inspector and inspectors of fire and rescue authorities in England have powers of inspection given to them by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017.
- 3.2 The Inspectorate provides a crucial assurance function to consider how effective and efficient fire and rescue authorities are, how well they manage their people and whether they are fulfilling their statutory obligations. The Inspectorate also highlights good practice and identifies areas where improvement is needed so that remedial or constructive action can be taken.
- 3.3 The first round of Fire and Rescue Service Inspections took place in 2018/19 and comprised three tranches. A further round of Inspections for 2021/22, which also comprised three tranches of Fire and Rescue Services is now complete.
- 3.4 The outcomes from the 'first and second tranches' of inspections for 2021/22 were reported to Members in Jan and Sep 2022 respectively.
- 3.5 The final 'third tranche' of inspections were undertaken in 16 fire and rescue services namely: Cleveland, County Durham and Darlington, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Dorset and Wiltshire, East Sussex, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Hertfordshire, Isles of Scilly, Kent, Leicestershire, North Yorkshire, Royal Berkshire, South Yorkshire, Suffolk and West Midlands. HMICRS has now published the results of those inspections and the full inspection reports are available from <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/publications/>
- 3.6 FRSs were graded according to the findings of HMICFRS and a summary of these are highlighted in the following table showing their direction of travel since 2018/19.

Pillar of Judgement	Number of Tranche 3 Fire and Rescue Services							
	Outstanding		Good		Requires Improvement		Inadequate	
	2018/19	2021/22	2018/19	2021/22	2018/19	2021/22	2018/19	2021/22
Effective	0	1	14	12	2	3	0	0
								
Efficiency	0	2	13	6	3	6	0	2
								
People	0	0	8	11	8	4	0	1
								

3.7 Further details of the outcomes of the elements that make up the pillars are set out in Appendix 1.

- 3.8 The overall direction of travel of the 44 FRSs in Tranches 1, 2 and 3 are set out below:

Pillar of Judgement	Tranches 1,2 and 3 Number of Fire and Rescue Services							
	Outstanding		Good		Requires Improvement		Inadequate	
	2018/19	2021/22	2018/19	2021/22	2018/19	2021/22	2018/19	2021/22
Effective	0	1	29	25	15	18	0	0
								
Efficiency	0	3	25	18	18	21	1	2
								
People	0	0	18	23	24	19	2	2
								

Judgement Area	Number of Fire and Rescue Services			
	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Effective	1	25 Includes CFB	18	0
Efficiency	3	18 Includes CFB	21	2
People	0	23 Includes CFB	19	2

4 CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE'S INSPECTION REPORT 2021/22

- 4.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade's Inspection took place over the period May - Jul 2022 and comprised the completion of a self-assessment, a visit to the Brigade by an Inspection team, interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders, and an assessment of performance data. A staff survey was undertaken as part of the inspection process but as highlighted by HMICFRS 'due to self-selection sampling methodology and relatively similar sampling sizes, we do not consider the staff survey to be representative of the opinions and attitudes of the entire service's workforce'.

- 4.2 Cleveland Fire Brigade's Inspection Report 2021/22, attached as Appendix 2, was published, and distributed to Members in January 2023.
- 4.3 The HMICFRS found that Cleveland Fire Brigade:
- is 'good' at effectively keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks;
 - is 'good' at how efficiently it manages its resources; and
 - is 'good' at looking after its people.
- 4.4 In his summary HMICFRS Roy Wilshire stated that he was 'pleased with the performance of Cleveland Fire Brigade in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks' and positively highlighted the continuous quick response to fires and other emergencies, the good range of prevention activities for the local community, and the active fire protection service to help ensure local businesses are safe and legally compliant.
- 4.5 Mr Wilshire was pleased with the Brigade's improvement journey noting the improvements made against all 16 areas highlighted in the 2018 inspection; with 12 being resolved and 4 being progressed.
- 4.6 His principal findings his assessment of the brigade are as follows:
- The brigade has made clear changes to its culture.
 - The brigade also has a strong set of values, which are now underpinned by the national Core Code of Ethics.
 - The brigade has improved at recruiting women into operational roles.
 - The brigade has made improvements to its prevention, protection, and operational response.
 - The brigade has improved staff productivity to drive efficiencies.

'Overall, this is a good performance from Cleveland Fire Brigade, both for the communities it serves and for the people who work for the brigade'.

- 4.7 The Inspection Report and its findings clearly show that Cleveland Fire Brigade continues to be one of the top performing FRSs in the country. There is no doubt that this has been achieved as a result of the excellent support that it gets from the Fire Authority; outstanding relationships that it has built with its communities, businesses, partner agencies and other organisations and the professionalism, dedication and hard work of its staff - all of which has made a positive difference to the safety and lives of the people in Teesside.

Improvement Planning

- 4.8 Our approach to Inspection was one of 'no surprises' and Members will recall that as part of the preparations for CFB's Inspection the Executive Leadership Team undertook a self-assessment of the areas of efficiency, effectiveness and people;

we entitled our work 'This is US'. The outcomes of this comprehensive self-assessment informed our Improvement Plan 2021/22.

- 4.9 Since the publication of the Brigade's Inspection Report 2021/22 we have reviewed the outcomes and any areas of improvement have been captured in the Improvement Plan attached as Appendix 3. The actions within this Plan will be progressed through our Corporate Internal Operating Plan that is regularly reported upon to Members.

5 FUTURE HMICFRS INSPECTIONS

- 5.1 In December 2022 HMICFRS published an overview of their inspection programme commencing 2023 attached as Appendix 4. Key features of the programme are:

- The next round of inspections will be known as 'Round 3' and will start early in 2023.
- All 44 fire and rescue services in England will be inspected over a two-year period using a similar methodology to our Round 2 inspections.
- As set out on page 5, the areas of inspection will remain on effectiveness, efficiency, and people.
- During Round 3 there will be a greater focus on assessing service productivity
- No thematic inspections are scheduled in Round 3.
- As illustrated on Page 9 a new grading category 'adequate' will be introduced to improve the focus of improvement.
- Judgements will be made against the 11 diagnostic questions instead of the three pillars, again to better highlight where a fire and rescue service is doing well and where they need to improve.

- 5.2 In line with current arrangements the Chief Fire Officer will continue to provide the Executive Committee with update reports as and when details of the next round of Inspection are clarified.

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