

**CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE'S HMICFRS
INSPECTION 2023-25****REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER****For Information****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on HMICFRS Round 3 Inspections and the preparation activities required for Cleveland Fire Brigade's HMICFRS inspection in October 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the current position regarding HMICFRS Round 3 Inspections and the preparation activities required for Cleveland Fire Brigade's HMICFRS inspection in October 2024.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the previous Government's reform agenda, an independent inspection regime was introduced 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 (FRS) Inspections took place in 2018/19 and comprised three tranches of inspections; a further round of inspections, also comprising three tranches, took place in 2021/22. Inspections are now underway for 2023/25.

4. CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE'S INSPECTION 2021/22

- 4.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade's Inspection Report 2021/22 was published and distributed to Members in January 2023. The Report can be found here <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/frs-assessment-2021-22-cleveland/>.
- 4.2 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.
 - is **'good'** at looking after its people.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 His principal findings in 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'.
- 4.6 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 because 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

- 4.7 Our approach to Inspection was one of 'no surprises' and 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 Plans for 2021/22.
- 4.8 On publication of the Brigade's Inspection Report 2021/22 we reviewed the outcomes and captured any new areas for improvement in a Plan for 2023/24 onwards; this was presented to Elected Members on 10 February 2023. The actions within this Plan have been progressed through our Corporate Internal Operating Plan that is regularly reported upon to Members of the Executive Committee. To provide assurance that the 'areas for improvement' arising from the HMICFRS 2021/22 Inspection Report have been addressed - a specific Progress Report was presented to the Executive Committee on 19 January 2024.

5. HMICFRS INSPECTION 'ROUND 3' FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES 2023/25

- 5.1 In January 2023 the HMICFRS started their third full programme of inspection of FRSs in England. Again, inspection findings, analysis and professional judgement are being used to assess how effective and efficient FRSs are at fire safety, firefighting and responding to road traffic collisions and other emergencies, as well as assessing how well the service looks after its people.
- 5.2 Whilst the inspection methodology is similar to Round 2, the outcomes will be a grade against the eleven assessment questions as opposed to the three pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People; Table 1 demonstrates this.
- 5.3 The gradings for Round 3 has also changed – the previous inspection had four grades for each pillar of inspection namely Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate. Round 3 Inspection will have five i.e., Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Requires Improvement and Inadequate for each assessment questions.

| Table 1 | Principal Questions (graded in previous inspection) | Assessment Questions (graded in next inspection) |
|---------------|---|---|
| Effectiveness | How effective is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks? | How well does the FRS understand the risk of fire and other emergencies? |
| | | How effective is the FRS at preventing fires and other risks? |
| | | How effective is the FRS at protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety? |
| | | How effective is the FRS at responding to fires and other emergencies? |
| | | How well prepared is the FRS to respond to major and multi-agency incidents? |
| Efficiency | How efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks? | How well does the FRS use resources to manage risk? |
| | | How well is the FRS at securing an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future? |
| People | How well does the FRS look after its people? | How well does the FRS promote its values and culture? |
| | | How well trained and skilled are FRS staff? |
| | | How well does the FRS ensure fairness and diversity? |
| | | How well does the FRS develop leadership and capability |

- 5.4 To date twenty-one FRSs have been inspected in Round 3; these are Avon, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hereford and Worcester, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire and West Yorkshire. The reports and gradings from these inspections are available at <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/frs-assessment/frs-2023-25/>
- 5.5 Table 2 below highlights the gradings of these FRSs following inspection. It can be seen from the Table that from the FRSs inspected six received no areas of good and six got four areas of good or less. Only two FRSs received one or two outstanding areas.
- 5.6 It should be noted that because the areas for assessment and the gradings have changed somewhat, comparisons to previous years inspection results make assessing improvement challenging.

| TABLE 2 | Understanding risk | Preventing | Protecting public | Responding to fires and other emergencies | Responding to major and multi-agency incidents | Best use of resources | FR 3 affordable now and in future | values and culture | The right people with the right skills | Ensuring fairness, promoting diversity | Managing performance developing leaders |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Avon | Inadequate | Inadequate | Adequate | Inadequate | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Inadequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Bedfordshire | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate |
| Buckingham | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Inadequate | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Cambridgeshire | Good | Good | Good | Adequate | Adequate | Outstanding | Good | Good | Adequate | Good | Requires Improvement |
| Cheshire | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Cornwall | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Inadequate | Inadequate | Requires Improvement |
| Essex | Good | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Adequate |
| Gloucestershire | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Inadequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Inadequate | Requires Improvement | Inadequate | Requires Improvement |
| Greater Manchester | Good | Good | Good | Good | Adequate | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Hereford and Worcester | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Good | Good |
| Lincolnshire | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Good | Good | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Merseyside | Good | Outstanding | Good | Good | Outstanding | Outstanding | Good | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Good |
| Norfolk | Good | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Requires Improvement |
| Northampton | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Adequate |
| Northumberland | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Good | Good | Good | Adequate | Adequate |
| Nottinghamshire | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Oxfordshire | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Staffordshire | Good | Good | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Good | Requires Improvement | Good | Requires Improvement | Good | Requires Improvement | Good |
| Surrey | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| Warwickshire | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement | Requires Improvement |
| West Yorkshire | Good | Requires Improvement | Adequate | Good | Good | Adequate | Good | Adequate | Good | Good | Good |

Key

Outstanding

Good

Adequate

Requires Improvement

Inadequate

6. CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE'S HMICFRS INSPECTION 2023/25

- 6.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade's HMICFRS Inspection will commence 7 October 2024 for a six-week period. Preparations for this inspection are on track and include:
- submission of Home Office data returns
 - distribution of HMICFRS staff survey
 - submission of key documents to HMICFRS
 - submission of a self-assessment to HMICFRS
 - developing a strategic brief
- 6.2 Michelle Skeer OBE QPM has been appointed as His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services for the northern region and Spencer Rowland has been appointed as the Brigade's Service Liaison Lead.

PETER RICKARD
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

KAREN WINTER
ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES