



Meeting	Service Leadership Team meeting	Agenda Item	8
Meeting Date	17 th December 2019	Report Number	19-285
Report Author:	AM J. Palmer		
Presented By:	ACFO M Bruin		
Subject	Technical Fire Safety Action Plan		
Type of Report:	Update		

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper is to highlight the progress made to date against the action plan developed in response to the HMICFRS inspection. SLT are asked to note the progress made in a short time frame and the future direction of travel.

BACKGROUND

Following the inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in July 2019. Four areas of concern were identified in relation to the Effectiveness pillar, these were;

- Essex County FRS doesn't have a clear strategy for ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations
- The service isn't carrying out the number of audits of high – risk premises that it commits to as part of its Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)
- The service doesn't quality assure audits to ensure they are effective
- The service doesn't have a clear programme to ensure operational staff are competent to carry out inspections.

The action plan that was developed following the area of concern (appendix A) covered how ECFRS would address the areas identified with associated high level time frames. This paper will provide an update of progress against the action plan and the next steps.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

ECFRS recognises the areas of concern identified by HMICFRS and agrees that these are areas that need to be enhanced.

Progress against the action points is outlined below.

Action Point 1: ECFRS doesn't have a clear strategy for ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations.

Progress to date:

The draft strategy and been developed and presented to SLT. Strategy is also going to Strat board to seek views prior to amending into a final document. Expected completion date. 31st Jan 2020

Definition of a high risk premises: included in draft strategy and will be clearly defined prior to sign off of strategy: Expected completion date 31st Jan 2020

Work has started on the development of the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), first draft expected 31st Jan 2020. Full sign off expected 31st March 2020

Action Point 2: The service isn't carrying out the number of audits of high-risk premises that it commits to as part of its risk based inspection programme.

Progress to date:

The structure of TFS is to be formally reviewed following the completion of the RBIP as this will give a clearer idea of the resource requirements. New staff have been recruited to fill current vacancies and initially over establish against the budgeted head count. This has resulted in 11.4 new inspecting officers due to start Jan 2020.

The protection and enforcement policies to be reviewed in light of a new strategy: Expected completion date 30th September 2020.

Reporting methods have been changed to more accurately reflect the enforcement work the team are doing. Notices of deficiencies are now reported on through our usual performance reporting.

Activities for staff have been concluded. Inspecting officers qualified to level 4 will be the staff who carry out orders and enforcement. Inspectors who are qualified to level 3 will do audits only. Operational crews will carry out fire safety checks. The form operational crews complete has been developed to remove the judgements they were previously asked to make as this is something that trained officers should do. Expected date: COMPLETE.

HR and Protection manager have begun to work on a succession plan. It has been highlighted when we can expect current staff to retire, this will be linked to the restructure to ensure it is sustainable. Expected date: 30th September 2020

The process by which data is captured, stored and reported on is being reviewed. A change resource has been allocated to look at a tactical fix for the current solution. Expected date: 31st March 2020

A fuller piece of change work is being scoped to deliver a long term fix.

Action point 3.

The service doesn't quality assure audits to ensure they are effective.

Progress to date:

Quality assurance process is being scoped out. Business owners are now receiving a form to measure performance of the audit from the business perspective. Expected date for full completion 30th September 2020

There is a link on the ECFRS internet page that takes users to the NFCC page where prohibitions are published. Further work to explore publishing all our enforcements and notice of deficiencies on our page. Expected date: 31st May 2020

Action point 4.

The service also doesn't have a clear programme to ensure operational staff are competent to carry out inspections.

Progress to date:

Operational crews will carry out a fire safety check and not an audit. Reporting form has been revised to reflect this. Expected date: COMPLETE

Training package for operational crews has been developed. Training to begin Jan 2020. Training of all Whole time crews to be complete by 31st Jan 2020.

A further observation from HMICFRS following the re-visit was that the action plan required more detail. This is being completed in the form of a Microsoft project plan and a Gant chart. Expected completion date 10th January 2020

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATION

The benefits of this plan are that it provides transparent reporting against a set of criteria with a pathway to improvement in the function.

The risk is that subsequent changes that are as yet unknown post Grenfell are not factored in and work may have to be re-prioritised to manage this.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Increase in headcount over establishment. This has been approved by the finance team and SLT and is accounted for in planning.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None in this paper.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

All staff that are impacted have been consulted. Further engagement to take place with the wider workforce.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Specialist legal advice being bought in to ensure legal compliance.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None identified in this paper.