

**ESSEX POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**  
**FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Performance &amp; Resources Board</b>	Agenda Item	8
<b>Meeting Date</b>	29 September 2020		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Tracy King, Assistant Director		
<b>Presented By</b>	Moira Bruin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Colette Black, Assistant Chief Executive		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>HMICFRS Improvement Plans progress update</b>		
<b>Type of Report:</b>	Information		

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members of the Performance & Resources Board are asked to note the progress made against the HMICFRS Protection and Culture Improvement Plans.

## **BACKGROUND**

Following the Services first HMICFRS Inspection in July 2019 the Service were required to submit improvement plans detailing how the required improvement would be delivered in the areas of protection and culture. As part of the agreed governance in relation to these plans the Service committed to provide the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner with regular updates on progress against the plans.

## **UPDATES**

### **Protection Improvement Plan progress update – August 2020**

Good progress being made against the protection improvement plan. The list below provides a summary of the progress made within the reporting period:-

- Go live of CFRMIS the new software solution for Protection
- Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) and Protection Strategy sent to designer to be branded
- Implementation of activities in line with the new RBIP for central staff

The full plan with progress updates against all actions and RAG status is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

## **Culture Improvement Plan progress update – August 2020**

Progress continues to be made with delivery of our culture improvement plan. A full progress update can be found in Appendix 2. Provided below is a summary of the progress achieved against the plan in August 2020.

### **Values and Behaviours:**

An action and engagement group has proposed a new and clearer set of underpinning behaviours, which was approved by SLT on 8th September 2020. This will now go forward for further engagement with our representative bodies.

Policy Review schedule has commenced, the next phase which will run from 21st September to 30th October, will include Attendance and Code of Conduct. Currently under consultation is the amended Disciplinary procedure. The process includes a review of 'tone of voice' to ensure our Service values are clearly embedded throughout the documentation and overall approach, and included an upskilling session with the HR team.

A values-based interviewing question-bank is being developed and is on track for deployment for the upcoming recruitment of wholetime firefighters - this is part of our culture of positive action in recruitment.

### **Recognition:**

The Your Voice Engagement and Action group - Recognition, continues to improve the recognition offering, including highlighting staff benefits.

A campaign to raise the profile of Benenden Healthcare via The Shout took place in July which increased the take up of people paying direct via payroll from 15 to 21 during August.

A review of staff offers has been completed and identified opportunities to increase our offering by collaborating with partners, and by improving "Pin-point" - the intranet pages that access the staff offers. Working with Essex County Council who have now agreed to give share their staff offers provision, this will be developed through September and October to go live before Christmas. Work is now underway with our Communications team to highlight these in a more accessible way.

Work has also started on scoping a peer-to-peer e-thank you process which has a target date to be in place by June 2021.

### **Communication:**

The annual engagement survey was due to go live in September but has been postponed to allow the HMCFRS survey to take place. Work is now underway to re-plan the survey and accompanying focus groups, and re-work the timelines for the accompanying communications plan.

### **Continuous Improvement:**

Our 'digital first' approach to welcoming new joiners is near complete, with a filmed introduction from Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer Jo Turton to be included prior to trialling with new joiners.

The selection process for wholetime firefighters has been reviewed and new arrangements are being implemented for the 2020+ campaign.

The on-boarding experience for new recruits is being process mapped with all key stakeholders, with the objective of creating a more streamlined and effective approach. This will be completed by November in readiness to support the Whole-time recruitment in December.

The Continuous Improvement action and engagement group are continuing to develop the 'Suggestion Box' approach using Workplace as a primary mechanism.

### **Manager Self-development:**

The coaching offering has been re-launched including open access to a number of high-quality external coaches. Take up has been good with 9 external coaching sessions undertaken in August and positive feedback from managers accessing it so far. Benefits that coachees have acknowledged so far include an increased confidence to deal with issues, energy & motivation have also been reported to have improved significantly with one coachee feeling significantly less stressed, 'like a weight had dropped from their shoulders'. General themes of those 1:1 coaching sessions have been:

- Supporting people new to management (and/or new to a specific role/function as a manager), so sometimes a little more mentoring than coaching, considering:
- improving working relationships with their line manager; or their direct reports; or their 'customers';
- confidence to manage capability or performance issues in their teams;
- influencing &/or networking skills;
- managing change effectively.

A programme of manager self-development webinars is underway which is receiving positive feedback from participants - our evaluations are scoring c.4/5. The webinars are covering subjects such as giving and receiving feedback, positive behaviours, cultural awareness, leadership and self. The objective is to develop a culture of self-awareness, self-reflection and openness to self-development, and feedback has also been positive in respect to progress towards this.

ILM development programmes for levels 3 and 5 are booked and commencing in October.

A comprehensive Leadership development programme tender is being developed to go out to tender with a view to beginning training in December.

### **Inclusion and Diversity:**

This will be updated separately via Colette

- Our approach to 'a culture of positive action in recruitment' is now in action. An 18-month approach of attraction positioning ECFRS as an employer of choice and a career of choice that welcomes all and provides an inclusive public service to the communities has been launched and has 4 attraction workstreams; all, age, gender, BAME.
- A continuous recruitment approach which creates 'candidate pools' combined with approaches to colleges and partner agencies to source potential candidates alongside an open invitation to apply for future opportunities has begun.
- We have broadened our attraction strategy to include Fire Cadets, schools, public service students and partner organisations alongside more traditional advertising using social media, careers page and job boards.
- We have begun to use a more varied range of physical assessments, an alternative to the verbal and numerical reasoning test and a values and success-based interview approach.

- Additional internal assessors are being trained to provide a more diverse pool of interview assessors and our Inclusion and Diversity Action Group has formed some sub-groups which have focus on gender and ethnicity

### **Strong Effective Leadership and Development:**

SLT have endorsed a revised approach to leadership development and succession planning, to replace the previous Talent Pool approach. Implementation plans are underway.

A Future Leaders feasibility study is being developed to identify a way forward for high potential or 'fast-tracking' our people.

### **BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

HMICFRS Inspections and reports assist the Service in formulating its continuous improvement approach.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional Financial implications created by this report.

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional Equality and Diversity implications created by this report.

### **WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT**

A dedicated HMICFRS communications plan and employee engagement plan is live and is aligned to the HMICFRS dates for inspection.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The inspection of ECFRS by the HMICFRS forms part of a mandatory Home Office programme inspecting all 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England.