

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 5

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE: 22ND FEBRUARY 2021

SUBJECT: SERVICE ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY), THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the progress made against the Service Assurance and Improvement Plan (Appendix A).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) has a longstanding commitment to continuous improvement, welcomes feedback and seeks to learn from independent assessment.
- 2.2 The Service Assurance and Improvement Plan contains our strategic, crosscutting improvement actions from a range of sources. It does not replace any other strategic documents. It is a monitoring tool bringing improvement actions conveniently into one place.

3 PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, positive progress has been made against the Plan since November 2019. The highlights and key updates are noted below.
- 3.2 **Service Assurance Activities – Progress Update:**
- The Annual Audit Letter and Internal Audit confirmed good assurance activities in the Service, and identified no major improvement actions
 - The HMICFRS COVID-19 Thematic Inspection, carried out in October 2020, confirmed the Service responded well to the initial phase of the pandemic and are well prepared.
 - Investors in People (IiP) conducted a full reassessment in December 2020 and indicated the Service are making good progress and have retained the Gold IiP status.

- The Service's approach to staff surveys is currently being reviewed, to improve the process and move towards a more regular, targeted 'temperature testing' of staff satisfaction and engagement. This will be complemented with all other survey activity, including HMICFRS staff survey, themed surveys, and IRMP consultation, to ensure a joined up approach.
- In July 2020, the Service were awarded the prestigious Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Award.
- The Service achieved the North East Better Health at Work Gold Award level in October 2020. The Service is now working towards achieving the next award of "Continuing Excellence".

3.3 Service Assurance - New Activities for 2021/22:

- Introduction of a Service Assurance Programme: In November 2020, the Executive Leadership Team approved the introduction of a programme to ensure progress against key improvement actions, support preparation for HMICFRS inspection, and drive continuous improvement. This work commenced in January 2021, starting with high priority / risk critical improvement areas.
- HMICFRS Inspection – round 2: HMICFRS have announced they will commence the second programme of full inspections of FRS in England in early 2021. TWFRS will be inspected in Tranche 2, and this is expected to be inspected in Summer / Autumn 2021/22 (date TBC).

3.4 Service Improvements – Progress Update:

- HMICFRS 2018/19 Inspection Improvement Plan: 10 of the 14 formal Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified by HMICFRS have been recorded as completed. Reality testing of these improvements (to confirm and assure continued progress) has commenced, and progress will continue to be monitored and reported in preparation for the next inspection.

3.5 Service Improvements – New Actions:

- HMICFRS COVID-19 Thematic Inspection Improvements: some 'areas for focus' by the Service have been highlighted as a result of the thematic inspection, and will be included in the COVID-19 Action Plan and progress monitored by the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Group.
- New actions have also been added to reflect the following improvement activities in 2021/22:
 - Review of the Corporate Risk Management Group structure and process
 - The introduction of the new Environmental Task Group
 - Enhancement of activities to improve inclusion and diversification of workforce.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The implementation of the Service Assurance and Improvement Plan has been assessed as low risk as good progress is being made on the improvement actions.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of the audits and assessment activities (detailed within the Assessment Plan) that result in improvement actions, are identified in the plan. These are contained within current budgets.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Committee is recommended to:
- a) Note the contents of this report
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

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