

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	DSFRA/22/17
<b>MEETING</b>	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	26 SEPTEMBER 2022
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY & FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) 2021 INSPECTION REPORT
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Chief Fire Officer
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p><i>(a). That the proposals for reporting progress against the actions plans for the cause for concern and areas for improvement in the 2021 HMICFRS inspection report, as set out in Section 3 of this report, be endorsed;</i></p> <p><i>(b). That the Authority notes:</i></p> <p><i>(i). that the Efficiency Pillar has increased from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good' with the Effectiveness Pillar remaining at 'Good'; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii). The development of Action Plans, as appended to this report, to address both the cause for concern and the areas for improvement as identified in the HMICFRS report.</i></p>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>This report advises the Authority formally of production of the latest report on the Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service following the inspection of the Service by HMICFRS in 2021.</p> <p>HMICFRS comments that it is pleased with the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Service but that more work is required on how the Service looks after its people.</p> <p>In addition, this report advises on proposals to ensure that actions required to address issues identified in the report are appropriately monitored and scrutinised by the Authority.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Nil.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS</b>	N/A
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>A. Cause for concern action plan.</p> <p>B. Areas for improvement action plan.</p>

**BACKGROUND  
PAPERS**

[2021/22 HMICFRS Inspection Report Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority](#)

## 1. **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

1.1. In July 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) remit was extended to include fire and rescue services in England. The first round of inspections of fire and rescue services (including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service – the Service) by the newly-expanded Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was conducted during 2018-19.

1.2. HMICFRS inspects fire and rescue services against three “pillars”:

**Effectiveness:** how effective is the fire and rescue service in keeping people safe and secure.

**Efficiency:** how efficient is the fire and rescue service in keeping people safe and secure.

**People:** how well does the fire and rescue service look after its people.

## 2. **2021 INSPECTION REPORT – GENERAL OVERVIEW**

2.1. In 2021, HMICFRS undertook its second full assessment of the Service. [The report detailing the outcome of the assessment was published on 27 July 2022 and can be found here.](#)

2.2. In summary, the Service was rated:

Good for the Effectiveness pillar (2019 inspection result: Good);

Good for the Efficiency pillar (2019 inspection result: Requires improvement);  
and

Requires improvement for the People pillar (2019 inspection result: Requires improvement).

2.3. The report identifies that the cause for concern identified following the 2019 inspection, relating to assurance that operational staff meet minimum fitness requirements, has been discharged following significant progress made by the Service.

2.4. HMICFRS comments that it is pleased with the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Service but that more work is required on how the Service looks after its people. The 2021 inspection report identifies a cause for concern relating to the behaviours of some staff. The report acknowledges that, while the Executive Board has demonstrated a clear intention to improve the culture of the Service, more still needed to be done to address certain poor behaviours not in line with Service values.

2.5. In addition to this cause for concern, the report also identifies a number of areas for improvement.

### **3. RESPONSE TO THE REPORT FINDINGS**

#### ***Cause for Concern***

- 3.1. The HMICFRS report states “The service has shown a clear intent from the executive board to improve the culture of the service. However, more needs to be done throughout the organisation. We have found evidence of poor behaviours that are not in line with service values. Some staff didn’t have the confidence to report these issues”.
- 3.2. The HMICFRS report recommended that, by 31 August 2022, the Service should develop an action plan to:
- Make sure that its values and behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all levels of the organisation; and
  - Make sure that staff are trained and supported to identify and challenge inappropriate behaviour when identified and that they have clear mechanisms in place to raise their concerns.
- 3.3. This action plan has been developed and has been forwarded to and received by HMICFRS. A copy of the action plan is attached at Appendix A for information.
- 3.4. As previously advised at the Members’ Forum meeting on 24 August 2022, the Service already has in train a number of measures to address this cause for concern, including the “Safe to..” and “It’s OK/It’s not OK” initiatives.
- 3.5. Creating a positive culture will deliver a number of benefits in terms of creativity, productivity, staff retention and recruitment. The Service recognises, however, that it will take time to embed new approaches. Whilst the Service would wish to discharge the cause for concern at the earliest opportunity and ideally before the next formal inspection, it is recognised that HMICFRS will require evidence of positive behaviours, embedded at all levels demonstrated at all times, before it can be discharged.
- 3.6. It is intended that reporting on progress against the cause for concern action plan will be a standing item for all meetings of the People Committee up until the point where the cause for concern has been discharged.

#### ***Areas for Improvement***

- 3.7. The Service has also developed an action plan to address the 14 areas for improvement as identified in the HMICFRS report. The action plan is attached as Appendix B to this report, for information.
- 3.8. In 2020 the Authority undertook a review of its governance structures, supported by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). This resulted in the Authority revising, from June 2021, its structure so that the Authority would set overarching strategic policy objectives, with Committees responsible for scrutinising and ensuring appropriate delivery against the objectives so approved. The Terms of Reference of the Committees were revised accordingly and aligned to the three diagnostic “pillars” of HMICFRS inspections.

- 3.9. In line with this, it is proposed that regular, detailed progress reports on the action plan to address those areas for improvement in the HMICFRS report will be submitted to the relevant committees to ensure that scrutiny, enabling challenge in addition to recognition of progress, can be applied at the right level on a regular basis.
- 3.10. In addition, summary reports as to progress will also be reported to full Authority meetings at least twice a year.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1. This report sets out the findings of the second full inspection of the Service undertaken by HMICFRS, together with how the Service intends to respond to the cause for concern and areas of improvement as identified in the report.
- 4.2. It is entirely right and appropriate that the Authority has full visibility on progress in addressing these areas. As such, this report also sets out how it is proposed to ensure this visibility thereby providing for challenge, support and scrutiny.
- 4.3. It is pleasing that progress made by the Service since the last inspection has been recognised by HMICFRS. The Service is, however, far from complacent and remains committed to continuous improvement and demonstrating further evidence of progress in the months ahead.

**LEE HOWELL**  
**Chief Fire Officer**