



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

13 FEBRUARY 2018

HMICFRS PROPOSED FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES INSPECTION PROGRAMME AND FRAMEWORK 2018/19 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Report of Area Manager, Assurance & Assets

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report briefs Members on the public consultation recently published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on the proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2018/19. A draft response has been prepared for comment and approval by Members.

BACKGROUND

2. Members will recall that the Home Office announced on 19 July 2017 that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), now rebranded as HMICFRS, would be expanded to take on the role of inspectorate of fire and rescue services in England.
3. On 19 December 2017, HMICFRS launched a public consultation on the proposed structure and methodology of the inspection regime. The consultation closes on 19 February 2018.
4. The consultation documents are attached as appendices:
 - i. Appendix A - Proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2018/19;
 - ii. Appendix B - HMICFRS fire and rescue service inspection methodology core diagnostic questions.
5. The draft programme and framework sets out how HMICFRS will assess and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of all 45 fire and rescue services in England. This includes how well fire and rescue services prevent, protect against and respond to fires and other emergencies and how well they look after the people who work for the service.
6. The proposed inspection programme has been developed with the fire and rescue service including advice gained from senior service representatives who are members of the external reference group, experts recruited from the sector to carry out the inspections and subject matter experts. The proposed programme has been designed to promote improvement in all aspects of the work undertaken by fire and rescue services.
7. All 45 fire and rescue services will be inspected, in tranches of 15, over an 18 month period commencing in summer 2018.

8. HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services for England is required to report each year on the carrying out of inspections, including an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire and rescue authorities in England. At the end of each tranche of 15 inspections, HMICFRS intends to publish a national report of its assessment of each fire and rescue service inspected in that tranche, as well as a summary of themes emerging from the inspections.
9. Fire and rescue services will be assessed and given graded judgments for the three principal questions in the inspection methodology (efficiency, effectiveness and people). They may give a single overall judgment for each service but this will be tested during the pilot inspections and a final decision made when the pilots have concluded. The categories of graded judgment are:
 - outstanding;
 - good;
 - requires improvement; and
 - inadequate.
10. Judgement will be made against how efficient and effective fire and rescue services are, and how well they look after their people. Good is based on policy, practice or performance that meets pre-defined grading criteria that are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards. If the policy, practice or performance exceeds what is expected for good, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of outstanding. If there are shortcomings in the policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of requires improvement. If there are serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of inadequate.

CONSULTATION

11. The consultation seeks responses to seven questions about how the inspection of fire and rescue services should be carried out. HMICFRS will use the consultation responses to develop a programme and framework, and methodology for the forthcoming inspections. The questions are as follows:
 - i. What do you think of the proposed approach to fire and rescue services inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?
 - ii. Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?
 - iii. Are there any other areas of fire and rescue services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?
 - iv. Does the draft inspection methodology include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?
 - v. How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?

- vi. What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?
 - vii. What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?
12. A copy of the draft Authority's response to the consultation is attached at Appendix C.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Members are requested to:
- i. Members are requested to **comment** on and **approve** the Authority's draft response to the consultation.

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