

# HMICFRS Cause of Concern and Areas For Improvement Progress Report

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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### 1 Executive Summary

This report details the Service's progress towards improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Cause of Concern (CoC) recommendations and Areas For Improvement (AFIs).

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report

### 3 Background

Following the June 2024 inspection by HMICFRS, the Service was graded in 11 areas with 1 Cause of Concern (CoC) and 30 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified.

The HMICFRS Inspection 2024 report can be accessed via this link:  
[HMICFRS 2024 Report](#)

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other risks	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Making best use of resources
		Responding to fires and other emergencies	Making the FRS affordable now and in the future	
		Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Promoting the right values and culture	
			Getting the right people with the right skills	
			Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	
			Managing performance and developing leaders	

Service improvement is monitoring the progress of the 5 recommendations from the CoC and all 30 of the AFIs within the action plan.

This report presents the Service's progress towards HMICFRS Cause of Concern and Areas For Improvement action plans, as recorded within the CoC and AFI Planner and Risks Assumptions Issues Dependencies and Opportunities (RAIDO) log.

#### 4 HMICFRS Cause of Concern (CoC) – Monitoring January 2026

Efficiency (How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure)								
Making best use of resources								
Inadequate								
<p><b>Cause of Concern</b> The service doesn't have adequate processes, controls or internal governance arrangements in place to manage strategic risks, performance and improvement plans.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b> The service should develop an action plan to make sure: 1 there are appropriate strategic oversight arrangements in place to manage risks, performance and improvement plans effectively; 2 the corporate risk register is actively used to mitigate and manage known risks; 3 all processes in place to support performance management are effective; 4 it has access to accurate data and analysis to support effective performance management; and 5 it has robust processes for reporting accurate and suitably detailed finance and risk information to the fire and rescue authority</p>								

CoC Ref	Theme / Domain	CoC Recommendation Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
Making best use of resources								
1.1	Strategic oversight of risk, performance and improvement plans	there are appropriate strategic oversight arrangements in place to manage risks, performance and improvement plans effectively;	Deputy CFO Service Delivery		55%	12/22	01/05/2026	The Planning and Performance Framework has been established around service goals with aligned Corporate Performance & Health Indicators and is being refined with service goal owners ahead of SMT presentation & alignment to Fire Standards to ensure clear assurance, transparency, and a consistent approach to monitoring organisational performance.

CoC Ref	Theme / Domain	CoC Recommendation Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
1.2	Manage known risk using corporate risk register	the corporate risk register is actively used to mitigate and manage known risks;	ACFO Corporate Services		75%	6/8	21/07/2026	Draft corporate risk strategy reviewed by SAP committee member; further stakeholder engagement and revisions required to ensure alignment and effective risk management. Improvements will be implemented to the process post December 25. Policy is progressing through the Brigade Order publishing process.
1.3	Effective performance management	all processes in place to support performance management are effective;	Deputy CFO Service Delivery		61%	11/18	31/07/2026	Corporate performance indicators are in development, service planning framework is advancing, and leadership assurance and development programme is actively underway.
1.4	Accurate data and analysis to support performance management	it has access to accurate data and analysis to support effective performance management	ACFO Corporate Services		53%	8/15	31/12/2026	The digital and data strategy is in advanced stages of development, with a resource staffing plan underway to complement and enable successful implementation.
1.5	Report accurate and detailed finance and risk information	it has robust processes for reporting accurate and suitably detailed finance and risk information to the fire and rescue authority	Chief Fire Officer		90%	18/20	31/03/2026	Revised budget framework introduced, with greater monitoring officer involvement, new ACFO appointment, and FRA meeting scheduled to ratify appointment of s.151 Officer.

## 5 HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFI) - Monitoring December 2025

<b>Effectiveness</b> (How effective is the Service at keeping people safe and secure)				
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Preventing fires and other emergencies	Protecting the public through fire regulation	Responding to fires and other emergencies	Responding to national risks
<b>Good</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>Preventing fires and other emergencies</b>								
<b>AFI 1</b>	Evaluate Prevention	The service should evaluate its prevention activity, so it understands what is most effective.	AM Service Delivery		36%	9/25	30/04/2026	New person centric Home Fire Safety visit training session to be rolled out. Evaluation of activities to be aligned to developing performance indicators. Following evaluation, the safeguarding PowerApp is being developed to improve functionality
<b>AFI 2</b>	Quality Assure Safe and Well visits	The service should make sure it quality assures its prevention activity, so staff carry out safe and well visits to an appropriate standard.	AM Service Delivery		14%	3/22	30/09/2026	New person centric Home Fire Safety visit training session to be rolled out for standardisation.  (Quality Assurance) QA Process for (Home Fire safety Visit) established; training starts after Civica app launch. Limited staff capacity will reduce visits to accommodate QA activity, challenging implementation.
<b>Protecting the public through fire regulation</b>								
<b>AFI 3</b>	Monitor Enforcement	The service should regularly monitor and check compliance with prohibition and enforcement notices that have been served	AM Service Delivery		81%	9/11	<b>31/07/2026</b>	Civica testing has successfully enabled enhanced reporting and identification of new performance indicators Current leadership vacancies are being addressed through the dependency of workforce planning which presented resilience challenges, causing this AFI to be overdue.

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>AFI 4</b>	Unwanted Fire Signals	The service should make sure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms.	AM Service Delivery		55%	16/29	31/03/2026	The revised process has significantly reduced UWFS. Operational Risk and P&P jointly oversee delivery; increased P&P capacity and accurate data is essential. Remaining AFI actions transferred to Ops for reassessment and progression.
<b>AFI 5</b>	Quality Assure Protection Audits	The service should make sure it has an effective quality assurance process, so staff carry out audits to an appropriate standard.	AM Service Delivery		36%	9/22	<b>31/07/2025</b>	QA processes are fully defined and progressing toward integration. Interim backfills mitigate skill gaps; however, capacity constraints being progressed by workforce planning, posing risks to audit scheduling and overall QA delivery.
<b>Responding to fires and other emergencies</b>								
<b>AFI 6</b>	Operational Incident Learning	The service should make sure it has an effective system for learning from operational incidents.	AM Operations and Risk		63%	7/11	30/06/2026	OLB operating to cadence: structured debriefs approval process and action plan monitored. Next steps include integration of Fire Standards into assurance workstreams. Routine impact assurance reporting and consolidation of OLB artefacts into single repository.
<b>Responding to fires and other emergencies</b>								
<b>AFI 7</b>	Fire Survival Guidance	The service should make sure its method of sharing fire survival guidance information with multiple callers is understood by staff and is well tested.	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/6	28/11/2026	Progress impacted by control training capacity risk.  Mandatory Unblur and FSG training is being developed for all relevant staff. Policy work underway to ensure fire control participation in training and debrief exercises

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>AFI 8</b>	Marauding Terrorist Attack	The service should make sure it is well prepared to form part of a multi-agency response to a terrorist incident, and its procedures for responding are understood by all staff and are well tested.	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/3	18/06/2026	Progress on multi-agency MTA preparedness through national exercises. Resilience framework adopted. Next steps focus on assurance, embedding learning, and aligning plans with forthcoming LRF guidance.

**Efficiency** (How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure)

Making best use of resources	Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future
<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>Making best use of resources</b>								
<b>AFI 9</b>	Reduce non pay costs	The service should make sure that it is taking steps to reduce non-pay costs and can show how it is achieving value for money.	Head of Finance		0%	0/12	<b>No completion date available</b>	This workstream has been divided into twelve tasks focused on non-pay costs to ensure value for money. Ownership has transitioned to from Resources Finance, and milestones will be reviewed with a revised completion date set in the next reporting period.
<b>AFI 10</b>	Business Continuity	The service should make sure it has appropriate business continuity arrangements in place, regularly review the arrangements and test them to make sure they take account of all foreseeable threats and risks	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/11	31/12/2025	Draft Business Continuity strategy in advanced staged of development.
<b>AFI 11</b>	Evaluation of Collaboration	The service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.	AM Transformation and Collaboration		50%	10/20	31/03/2027	Evaluation framework and policy developed. Documents currently within consultation process, current partnerships under review.



AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>Making the FRS affordable now and in the future</b>								
<b>AFI 12</b>	Governance and Selection of Projects	The service should have a clear internal structure with appropriate governance arrangements to make sure the selection, design and delivery of projects are well managed, represent value for money and provide the intended outcomes.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer		36%	4/11	01/04/2026	Project Management Office (PMO) Framework and implementation plan approved and being implemented.  PMO model to be used for Strategic Planning Q3 2025
<b>AFI 13</b>	Workforce Productivity	The service needs to assure itself that it is making the most of opportunities to improve workforce productivity and develop future capacity through use of innovation, including the use of technology."	AM Service Delivery		11%	1/9	01/04/2026	WT FF productivity is a 2025/26 objective. Draft plan targets 3% improvement aligned to Service efficiency strategy. Interim data collection underway pending dashboard and PowerApp enhancements.
<b>AFI 14</b>	Skills to manage change	The service should make sure it has the right skills and capacity to successfully manage change across the organisation.	Deputy Chief Fire Officer		0%	0/7	01/04/2026	PMO implementation progressing with maturity and capacity reviews completed. Phase 2 to include resource management. Project capability enhanced via bespoke IPM training; first cohort completed, next scheduled Q1 2026.
<b>AFI 15</b>	Estates management linked to CRMP	The service should make sure its estates management programmes are linked to its community risk management plan, and that it understands the impact future changes to those programmes may have on its service to the public	Head of Resources		0%	0/2	31/03/2026	Final drafts of Estates, Fleet, and Equipment strategies due by March 2026 for governance. Equipment strategy adopts CRMP-aligned approach, ensuring consistency across resource planning frameworks.

<b>People</b> (How well does the Service look after its people?)			
Promoting the right values and culture	Getting the right people with the right skills	Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Managing performance and developing leaders
Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>Promoting the right values and culture</b>								
<b>AFI 16</b>	Staff demonstrates values	The service should make sure all staff understand and demonstrate its values.	Chief Fire Officer		71%	28/39	31/3/2026	<p>People management performance indicators in development. SMT 360 feedback progressed. Futureworks 1-2-1 coaching sessions provided for Brigade Managers. Cultural managers workshop held January 26. Workplace charter and core code of ethics in review.</p> <p>Cultural Transformation Programme launched June 2025, integrating the Cultural Action Plan. Survey deferred to 2026. Governance strengthened through SMT decisions, workshops, and comms strategy to embed professional standards and reporting.</p>
<b>AFI 17</b>	Senior staff values	The service should assure itself that senior managers are visible and demonstrate	Chief Fire Officer		83%	10/12	31/3/2026	<p>Draft cultural vision in review within Learning Report. Visible leadership commitments to be made by SMT. Informal SMT sessions to be held across Service to promote engagement and visibility.</p> <p>Timelines for the staff survey are now confirmed for early 2026, with the Executive Team supporting this timing to allow Cultural Transformation actions to embed.</p> <p>Evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and defined milestones will be central to measuring programme success.</p>





AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
AFI 18	Mental and physical health	The service should make sure staff have access to services to support both their mental and physical health.	Head of HR & Administration		86%	19/22	31/12/2025	Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager recruitment is being progressed as a priority.  Provision of fitness equipment has been delivered to stations and is to be reviewed at the end of the year
AFI 19	Monitor working hours	The service should proactively monitor working hours (including overtime) to improve staff well-being	Head of HR & Administration	Head of HR &	56%	14/25	No completion date available	On-call leave rules established and trialled. Monitoring system delayed pending BI and FSR inputs. Final implementation awaits union agreement and confirmed development timelines from ICT, expected early next year.
AFI 20	Managing Health and Safety	The service should assure itself that its arrangements for managing health and safety are effective	AM Operations and Risk		0%	0/9	20/11/2026	Recruitment of H&S manager progressed. New reporting system in procurement to address CPI data and escalation process. Next steps include consolidation of H&S framework with new systems.
Getting the right people with the right skills								
AFI 21	Workforce Planning	The service should make sure its workforce plan takes full account of the skills and capabilities it needs to implement its community risk management plan.	AM Operations and Risk		16%	4/25	30/04/2026	Workforce planning scope and approach agreed. Strategic direction and design to be trialled with Prevention and Protection.

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
AFI 22	Succession Planning	The service should review its succession planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public.	Head of HR & Administration		90%	10/11	31/12/2026	HR is developing a strategic workforce plan to address future requirements, enhance talent acquisition and retention, and improve efficiency. Succession planning supported through regular reviews and risk assessments.
AFI 23	Staff Training	The service should assure itself that all staff receive the right training for their role.	AM Operations and Risk		16%	2/12	12/01/2028	Facilities review progressing with staged upgrades aligned to TNA and CRMP. Procurement, surveys and governance underway.
<b>Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity</b>								
AFI 24	Anti Bullying and Harassment	The service should review how effective its policy on bullying, harassment, and discrimination is in reducing unacceptable behaviour towards its staff.	Head of HR & Administration		72%	27/37	31/07/2026	Behaviours training procurement under review and approval by SMT January. Draft positive action engagement plan developed.
AFI 25	Diverse workforce	The service should identify and overcome barriers to equal opportunity, so its workforce better represents its community, including making sure staff understand the value of positive action and having a diverse workforce.	Head of HR & Administration		85%	23/27	30/06/2026	Recruitment Action Group advancing process improvements and data capture. Analysis of needs and PA campaigns informs targeting. Uniformed recruitment trial underway; outreach strategies and multi-agency youth event under consideration.

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
<b>AFI 26</b>	Equality Impact Assessments	The service should make sure it has robust processes in place to carry out equality impact assessments and review its policies and procedures to make sure those staff with a protected characteristic aren't disproportionately affected.	Head of HR & Administration		87.5 %	7/8	30/04/2026	EQIA process strengthened through EDI-led reviews and training. QA options under consideration, including external support and EDISG oversight, to ensure compliance and embed equality standards across PMO.
<b>AFI 27</b>	Collect Equality Data	The service should improve the way it collects equality data so it can better understand its workforce's demographics and needs.	Head of HR & Administration		70%	7/10	31/01/2026	Data monitoring and benchmarking strengthened through PFNTS comparison and enhanced reporting. Recruitment data frequency improved; EDI review underway. CPI analysis shows progress in reducing incomplete data fields.
<b>Managing Performance and Developing Leaders</b>								
<b>AFI 28</b>	Performance Development	The service should improve all-staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.	Head of HR & Administration		80%	4/5	31/03/2026	IPDR completions up 48.6%, overdue self-assessments down 27%. Targeted training and support continue. Feedback informs process improvements; full report pending data collation. Timeline amended to align with launch of new IPDR system
<b>AFI 29</b>	Fair Promotions	The service should make sure its processes for the selection, development and promotion of staff are open and fair, and it should do more to make sure staff have confidence in promotion and selection processes.	Head of HR & Administration		80%	12/15	30/06/2026	New SM promotion process trialled; training gaps addressed through rollout to HR assistants and Development Officer. Evaluation underway; feedback will inform policy amendments post-review with HR leadership.

AFI Ref	Theme / Domain	AFI Description	Lead Officer	Status	% Comp	Task Comp	Target Comp Date	Commentary
AFI 30	High Potential Staff	The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.	Head of HR & Administration		88%	24/27	31/03/2026	Internal QA process finalised and under review for implementation. Leadership programme QA pending confirmation. Support for IPDR completions continues; data correlation and system development priorities under management review.

### Colour-Coding Key

Colour	Status Category	Meaning / Action
 Red – Not Started	Action not yet initiated.	Awaiting action plan or allocation of lead.
 Amber – In Progress	Work underway.	On track but further milestones outstanding.
 Yellow – Complete (Pending Assurance)	All actions delivered.	Awaiting internal or external validation.
 Green – Complete (Assured)	AFI fully completed.	Evidenced and assured by governance.

## **6 HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour and Misconduct**

The HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour workstream remains unchanged, with 13 of the 14 recommendations completed. While this reflects strong progress and a high level of delivery, the outstanding recommendation continues to require completion of the Cultural Transformation workstream to further embed the Core Code of Ethics.

## **7 Workstreams and Progress Summary**

While progress against the Cause of Concern demonstrates encouraging developments in recommendations 2 and 5, recommendation 1 in particular would benefit from increased oversight to ensure momentum is maintained.

AFI progress continues to show variation, reflecting both workforce constraints and differing levels of maturity across workstreams. The confirmation of 100% completion in certain areas is a positive milestone, but assurance processes will be critical to validate outcomes. Evidence submission and department evaluation will provide confidence that completed actions are not only delivered but embedded into practice.

Overall, the trajectory indicates momentum in several key areas, but the Service must maintain focus to translate progress into long-term improvement and compliance with HMICFRS expectations.

## **8 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **10 HMICFRS Areas For Improvement, Cause of Concern, External Audit Recommendations**

This report is directly related to the HMICFRS Area For Improvement and Misconduct recommendations.

## **11 Communications**

Communication impacts arising from this report will be managed through the HMICFRS communications strategy

## **12 ICT**

The ICT impacts have been highlighted in the report and the Risk Management document regarding digital, data and ICT systems support. This is being managed through the Programme Board.

### **13 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

### **14 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.