

Performance and Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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Scrutiny Committee

1 Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the key matters considered by the Committee and highlight issues for onward reporting and consideration by the Fire Authority.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

1. note the matters considered by the Performance and Scrutiny Committee;
2. endorse the continued use of live data and executive summary reporting to support scrutiny; and
3. consider whether any of the issues identified require further direction, assurance or reporting.

3 Background

The Fire Authority's Performance and Scrutiny Committee was introduced as part of the Governance Review that was undertaken in 2025. The Terms of Reference for the Performance and Scrutiny Committee state that a summary from the Committee will be provided to the Fire Authority for awareness and progress.

This report satisfies this requirement by providing a summary of the Performance and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 April 2026.

A summary of the Performance and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 June 2026 will be provided to the Fire Authority at its next meeting.

4 Key Points for the Fire Authority to note

- The Committee focused on strengthening scrutiny, transparency and assurance in relation to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services recommendations, including the Cause of Concern and Areas for Improvement.
- Members supported the use of live Microsoft Planner information and dashboards to provide more current and transparent reporting than traditional static reports.
- The Committee agreed that information relating to the Cause of Concern, Areas for Improvement and External Audit recommendations should be processed into an executive summary and shared with Committee Members to help identify areas requiring deeper scrutiny.
- Corporate Performance Indicators were discussed, with members supporting the current reporting format while recognising that revised indicators are being developed for future monitoring.
- Communications capacity, planning and performance were considered, with members noting the need for clearer activity dates, greater resilience and the potential use of technology to support delivery.

5 Summary of Main Business discussed at Committee

Committee approach and role of members: The Chair emphasised that the Committee should take a focused approach to scrutiny, identifying specific areas for deeper examination and reporting to the Fire Authority to provide assurance. The role of Independent Members was discussed, with clarification that they are full participating members of the Committee, providing additional transparency and scrutiny, although they do not have voting rights.

HMICFRS Cause of Concern: The Committee received an overview of the Service's response to the Cause of Concern arising from the 2024 inspection. The Transformation and Collaboration Team has developed a Microsoft Planner site to monitor actions, milestones, evidence and progress. The Planner is structured around the five areas within the Cause of Concern, with assigned leads, completion dates and assurance evidence. Members discussed how progress is monitored, how reminders and RAG ratings are used, and how live data could improve transparency and reporting.

HMICFRS Areas for Improvement: The Committee noted that the 30 Areas for Improvement are being managed using a similar approach to the Cause of Concern, with tasks broken down, allocated to owners and linked to national good practice. Members discussed how progress is displayed, how recurring Areas for Improvement are identified, and how completion percentages are calculated. There was also discussion about capturing the impact of operational process changes on teams and providing public-facing evidence of progress.

External Audit recommendations: It was resolved that information relating to Agenda Items 6, 7 and 8 should be processed through artificial intelligence and then shared with Committee Members. This is intended to support members in identifying areas that may require further scrutiny or a deeper dive by the Committee.

Corporate Performance Indicators: Members considered operational performance information, including fire trends, Automatic Fire Alarms, response standards and fires confined to room of origin. The Committee discussed the handling of persistent false alarms, the statutory nature of fire response, emerging risks such as lithium batteries, and the Service's role in planning consultation. Members were advised that the current performance indicators are operationally focused and that a revised suite of indicators is being developed for consideration by the Strategy and Resources Committee in July, with future monitoring by this Committee.

Communications Action Plan: The Committee received an update on progress against the Year 1 Action Plan within the Communication Strategy 2025-28 and communications performance for January to March 2026. Members discussed social media engagement, prevention messaging, the need for a rolling communications plan, resource pressures within the Communications Team and opportunities to use artificial intelligence to support content generation. The Committee requested that future reports include specific dates for completion and planned activities.

6 Decisions and Resolutions

- It was resolved that information relating to the HMICFRS Cause of Concern, HMICFRS Areas for Improvement and External Audit recommendations will be processed through artificial intelligence and shared with Committee Members to support identification of areas requiring deeper scrutiny.
- It was resolved that the Committee is satisfied with the current reporting format for Corporate Performance Indicators and that other incidents and enabling services will also be reported at future meetings.
- It was resolved that the Committee note the information provided in the Communications Action Plan update report.

7 Issues for Escalation or Further Consideration

- Consideration should be given to how live Planner and dashboard information can be made accessible and transparent, including through the refreshed website.
- Future executive summaries should clearly identify completion dates, years, progress status and any areas where delivery is delayed or evidence is incomplete.
- The Committee may wish to identify specific HMICFRS recommendations, audit actions or performance areas for focused scrutiny at future meetings.
- The development of revised Corporate Performance Indicators should ensure that enabling services, non-operational performance and wider organisational assurance are appropriately reflected.
- Communications capacity and resilience should remain under review, including how technology can support delivery without increasing headcount.

8 Conclusions

The Fire Authority is asked to note the matters considered by the Performance and Scrutiny Committee; endorse the continued use of live data and executive summary reporting to support scrutiny; and consider whether any of the issues identified require further direction, assurance or reporting.

9 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

12 Appendix

There are no appendices attached to this report.

13 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.