

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**  
**COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE**

**27 FEBRUARY 2023**

1. **WMFS HMICFRS INSPECTION 2021/22 – COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. THAT members note the findings of the 2021/22 HMICFRS inspection report in relation to collaboration and transformation.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 2.1. To inform Collaboration and Transformation Committee of the findings of the 2021-22 HMICFRS inspection relating to collaboration and transformation.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. West Midlands Fire Service was inspected between March and May 2022, in “Tranche three” of the second round of Fire and Rescue Service inspections. The final inspection report was published in January 2023.
- 3.2. This inspection involved a comprehensive data gathering exercise, as well as site visits and interviews with staff across the service, as well as with the Chair of the Fire Authority. The inspection covers three broad themes:
- 3.2.1. **Effectiveness** – How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?
- 3.2.2. **Efficiency** – How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?

### 3.2.3. **People** – How well does the service look after its people?

- 3.3. For each of the above themes, there are a number of sub questions against which the service is judged, as well as receiving an overall judgement against each theme.
- 3.4. The inspection findings were very positive, with the services graded as *outstanding* in our overall Effectiveness and one of only two FRSs in the country to be classed as *outstanding* in ‘Understanding fires and other risks’. We also maintained our *outstanding* rating for response to fire and other emergencies from 2019.
- 3.5. There were positive improvements within the “People” theme as well, with our assessment of both ‘Promoting the right values and culture’ and ‘Managing performance and developing leaders’ moving from *requires improvement* to *good*. All other categories were maintained at a good rating.

## 4. **COLLABORATION AND TRANSFORMATION**

- 4.1. Effective collaboration and transformation are important topics on which the service is judged by the inspectorate. Below is a summary of the key findings in relation to those areas within the inspection report.

Question	Grading	Relevant Findings
<i>Effectiveness</i>		
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	Outstanding	<p>[The service] is working with health and social care partners to reduce health inequalities.</p> <p>The service is part of several local and regional safety advisory groups and chairs the West Midlands Social Housing Group, which is attended by all seven local authorities in the area. The service is also part of the West Midlands Race Equality Taskforce, which aims to improve equality of opportunity for all communities.</p> <p>The service has consulted and undertaken constructive dialogue with communities and organisations to both understand risks and explain how it intends to mitigate them</p> <p>[The service] is linked to the local resilience forum (LRF) to make sure that the information is shared with other agencies</p>

		[The service] also works well with housing associations and business owners.
Preventing fires and other risks	Good	<p>[The service] is working proactively with partner organisations to reduce the health inequalities that people face. An example of this is the service's participation in integrated care systems, a partnership between the NHS, local authorities and social care that aims to make sure services are co-ordinated to improve the population's health.</p> <p>Staff gave good examples of how they build relationships with local community groups including food banks, church groups and mental health drop in centres to make sure they can support those people who are most vulnerable.</p> <p>The service has found that targeting prevention activity is most effectively done by working closely with organisations already in contact with people who are vulnerable and most at risk of fire. It works well with organisations to make sure that they understand the link between vulnerability and the risk of fire.</p> <p>The service works with a wide range of other organisations, such as local authorities and other emergency services, to prevent fires and other emergencies.</p> <p>We found good evidence that it routinely refers people at greatest risk to organisations that may be better able to meet their needs. The service has well established arrangements in place to receive referrals from a wide range of other organisations, including the ambulance service, oxygen suppliers and telecare providers.</p> <p>The service routinely exchanges information with other public sector organisations about people and groups at greatest risk. It uses the information to challenge planning assumptions and target prevention activity.</p> <p>When appropriate, the service routinely shares information with other relevant organisations to support the prosecution of arsonists.</p>
Protecting the public through fire regulation	Good	<p>The service works closely with other enforcement agencies to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. The service worked with local authorities in its high-rise buildings risk review. This meant that minor defects could be identified and quickly repaired.</p> <p>As part of our inspection, we spoke to some partner organisations, including the police and council. They described a good working relationship with the service</p>

		<p>and gave examples of where they have worked together effectively to regulate fire safety.</p> <p>The service proactively engages with local businesses and other organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation.</p>
Responding to fires and other emergencies	Outstanding	<p>We are encouraged to see the service is contributing to, and acting on, learning from other fire and rescue services or operational learning gathered from other emergency service partners.</p>
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	Good	<p>The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. It is interoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.</p> <p>We are pleased to see that since our previous inspection in 2019, the service has a cross-border exercise plan with neighbouring fire and rescue services so they can work together effectively to keep the public safe.</p> <p>The incident commanders we interviewed have been trained in and were familiar with JESIP for working with other emergency responders at an incident.</p> <p>The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the West Midlands LRF. These arrangements include joint training and exercising to test arrangements for a range of incidents, including mass fatalities and collapsed structures.</p> <p>The service participates in a multi-agency control room managers forum with police and ambulance to share learning and good practice.</p> <p>The service chairs the LRF. Partners, such as the police and local councils, spoke highly of the contribution it makes to joint working, describing it as the driving force in forum activities.</p> <p>The service keeps itself up to date with other fire services and national operational learning joint organisational learning updates from other organisations,</p>
<i>Efficiency</i>		
Making best use of resources	Good	<p>We are pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate, and routinely considers opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders.</p> <p>Collaborative work is aligned to the priorities in the service's CRMP.</p>

		We are satisfied that the service monitors and reviews the benefits and results of its collaborations. But there are no formal structures in place to evaluate collaborative activity to make sure this is providing benefit to the community.
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	Good	<p>The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. For example, it is developing a system that stores all information for prevention, protection and risk in one place so it can be easily shared across teams. This means that the service can understand risk better.</p> <p>[The service] made a significant investment in technology during the pandemic, which helped it to communicate with staff more efficiently.</p> <p>The service has put in place the capacity and capability needed to achieve sustainable transformation, and it routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency and provide better services in the future. The service uses digital technology well to create capacity and capability.</p> <p>[The service] manages all transformation projects through its programme management team. This makes sure that these are linked to the CRMP priorities, are properly resourced and funded, and provide benefits to the service and community.</p>
<i>People</i>		
Promoting the right values and culture	Good	<p>The service has developed a partnership with Midlands Diving Chamber to provide staff with symptoms of long COVID with hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Staff report that this has improved their symptoms.</p> <p>The service has engaged the Fire Fighters Charity to provide coaching webinars to all staff. These will cover advice for musculoskeletal issues, health and nutrition and mental health.</p>
Getting the right people with the right skills	Good	We were told national learning and learning from incidents and other organisations is shared effectively throughout the service.
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	Good	The service has acted positively to improve diversity. The deputy chief fire officer is seen by staff as a positive role model in the service and externally. The staff networking groups support the recruitment process, for example by giving talks in colleges and universities.
Managing performance and developing leaders	Good	The service has several leadership programmes in place. Forty staff are currently undergoing a management degree programme accredited through Coventry University.

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. As this is an only an informative update, no initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are no legal implications associated with this update report.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications associated with this update report.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. There are no environmental implications associated with this update report.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- [WMFS HMICFRS Inspection Report 2021-22](#)

The contact for this report is Tom Embury, Deputy Clerk to the Authority

Wayne Brown  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER