

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Cause of Concern 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 the HMICFRS Cause of Concern

2 Recommendations

The Audit and Standards Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

Following the June 2024 inspection, the HMICFRS identified the following Cause of Concern: the Service doesn't have adequate processes, controls or internal governance arrangements in place to manage strategic risks, performance and improvement plans.

This report presents the Service's progress against HMICFRS's Cause of Concern action plan towards the recommendations for improvement made, as recorded in Planner and RAIDO (see Appendix).

4 Progress Report

Cause of Concern Recommendation	Description	Progress Indicator
1	There are appropriate strategic oversight arrangements in place to manage risks, performance and improvement plans effectively.	On Schedule
2	The corporate risk register is actively used to mitigate and manage known risks.	On Schedule
3	All processes in place to support performance management are effective.	On Schedule
4	There is access to accurate data and analysis to support effective performance management.	Behind Schedule
5	There are robust processes for reporting accurate and suitably detailed finance and risk information to the FRA.	On Schedule

5 Progress Narrative

Cause of Concern R1 – Appropriate strategic oversight arrangements are in place to manage risk, performance, and improvement plans effectively.

Recent progress includes the SMT support and development of the Portfolio Management Office. Recruitment into the PMO office is currently underway, complemented by the selection of a new project management software solution.

A revised delivery timeline of the 1st May 2026 has been established to facilitate the thorough completion of the action plan, embed and evaluate the new approach

Cause of Concern R2 – The corporate risk register is actively used to mitigate and manage known risks.

New monthly SMT corporate risk review process now in place. Reporting of corporate risks and status to be brought to September SAP. Guidance for corporate risk owners issued in September. Policy remains in the Brigade Order publishing process

Cause of Concern R3 – All processes supporting performance management are effective and consistently applied.

This workstream has seen progress in the development of an Evaluation policy and launch of new departmental plans to include CPIs. Recent progress includes the SMT approval of NFCC recognised leadership development programmes for supervisory and middle managers.

Cause of Concern R4 – Access to accurate data and robust analysis supports effective performance management.

Recent progress includes the agreement in principle of the Digital and Data Strategy at SMT (July). This workstream is currently behind schedule, attributable to changes in strategic ownership following the retirement of the ICT Manager and associated workstream lead.

Particularly impacted is:

- 4.3 – Development of a Resource and Staffing Plan

With a proposed date of the end of the year the Head of Digital and Data is confident that the strategies and staffing plan currently under development will be in place.

All elements will soon have had revised timelines following the appointment of the new Head of Digital and Data, who has programmed: a data audit to facilitate the ongoing development of the data strategy, and a skills gap analysis to support a 90 day action plan and structural review.

Cause of Concern R5 – Robust processes are in place to ensure accurate, timely, and detailed financial reporting to the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

Recent progress includes the agreement of a Portfolio Management Approach to be utilised at the strategic planning day November 2025. Commencing on the 1st October a Service Level Agreement for Monitoring Officer role has been finalised with Telford and Wrekin.

Timelines have been extended to the end of 2025 to allow for recruitment for S151 role.

6 Conclusions

The Service continues to make steady progress in addressing the HMICFRS Cause of Concern, with the majority of workstreams remaining on schedule. Strategic oversight, risk management, and performance processes are being strengthened through the development of the Portfolio Management Office, enhanced corporate risk review mechanisms, and the integration of NFCC-endorsed leadership programmes.

While the data and analysis workstream (R4) is currently behind schedule due to changes in strategic ownership, the appointment of a new Head of Digital and Data has brought renewed momentum, with revised timelines expected and a structured action plan now in place.

The Service remains committed to delivering sustainable improvements, embedding robust governance, and ensuring transparency in performance and financial reporting. Continued SMT oversight and support will be critical in maintaining progress and meeting the revised delivery timelines.

7 Capacity

Implementing the action plan may require additional resourcing in particular areas, potentially impacting existing workloads and necessitating additional capacity within teams.

Where achieving an element of the CoC or AFI requires additional staffing or financial investment, this will be assessed and scrutinised through SMT and will form part of the Service Programme Board and project methodology to ensure effective resource planning.

8 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

Collaboration with the NFCC, other Fire and Rescue Services, and external partners will be essential to drive improvements, share best practices, and access additional expertise, ensuring a coordinated approach to service enhancement.

9 Financial Implications

Addressing AFIs may require investment in governance, data systems, training, and workforce planning. Any financial implications will be subject to SMT scrutiny and considered within the Service Programme Board, ensuring cost-effective implementation.

10 Legal Comment

Strengthened governance, risk management, and financial oversight will support compliance with statutory responsibilities and ensure adherence to regulatory frameworks, mitigating legal risks.

11 Communications

Clear internal and external communication, will promote staff engagement, increase stakeholder confidence, and transparency in service improvements.

12 Community Safety

Enhanced risk management, performance oversight, and resource planning will contribute to more effective community safety activities, ensuring the service meets evolving public safety demands.

13 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

14 Equality Impact Assessment

Strengthening workplace culture, diversity, and inclusion initiatives will help ensure fair treatment, equal opportunities, and alignment with national equality standards.

15 Health and Safety

There are no health and safety impacts arising from this report.

16 Fire Standard Core Code of Ethics and Human Rights (including Data Protection)

Improved governance, data accuracy, and reporting processes will support adherence to ethical standards, national fire standards, and data protection regulations.

17 ICT

The ICT team, while currently operating with vacancies, may be impacted by the increased demands and workload associated with delivering the Cause of Concern (CoC) and Areas for Improvement (AFIs). As part of the action plan development, it was identified that ICT involvement is required in over 90% of the AFIs, highlighting the critical role of digital solutions, data management, and system improvements.

Resource planning within ICT will be subject to SMT scrutiny to ensure the team can effectively support service-wide improvements while managing existing operational pressures.

18 Insurance

No significant impact anticipated; however, improved risk management and governance may contribute to reduced liability exposure and improved organisational resilience.

19 The On Call Service

Workforce planning improvements and clearer risk management processes will help ensure more effective integration, training, and support for on-call staff, contributing to improved service delivery.

20 Public Value / Service Delivery

Enhancing performance management, risk oversight, and governance will drive improved service delivery, increased efficiency, and greater public confidence in the service.

21 Reputation

There are no reputational impacts arising from this report.

22 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

23 Training

Staff training and development will be integral to the implementation of the action plan, particularly in performance management tools, governance processes, and cultural improvements. Training requirements will be assessed through SMT and the Service Programme Board to ensure alignment with organisational priorities.

24 Appendices

[Link to HMICFRS Inspection Report 2024](#)

Appendix A - [CoC Planner](#)

Appendix B - [CoC RAIDO](#)

Appendix C- [HMICFRS Shropshire Report 2024](#)

25 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.