Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
Inspection Improvement Actions

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service was inspected by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in summer 2018, as part of an inspection programme for all UK fire and rescue services. The resulting Report of Findings highlighted areas where we are performing well and two key areas we need to work on to improve, which encompasses seven recommendations.

HMICFRS told us they were concerned that the service did not have a robust and sustainable operating model to manage our fire and rescue resources, including use of staff, and that resources were not being used effectively to manage risk. They were also concerned about how we managed our finances. They made seven recommendations to address these concerns. We have taken immediate action to address these recommendations and are also undergoing a significant programme of work to transform our service, which included the ‘Making Surrey Safer’ Plan consultation and resulting activity.

The HMICFRS have now confirmed that a small team of inspectors will revisit the Service on 2-4 September.

The purpose of the visit will be to review the action we have taken against the causes of concern raised by Dru Sharpling, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, in her letter dated 20 December 2018 which specifically relate to progress of actions in the Overtime Action Plan and the development and communication of the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Progress on the key areas of concern and seven recommendations is shown below:

**Key area 1:** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service doesn’t have a robust and sustainable system to support its operational response model.

**Recommendation 1. Put in place a response plan based on a thorough assessment of risk to the community**

Our [Community Risk Profile](#) (CRP) has been updated to include the most recent data about the risks within Surrey. This information helps us to understand where the risks associated with places in the county are, where the most vulnerable people are and when and where the risks are greater. This helps us to plan the positioning of fire and rescue resources (firefighters and fire engines) to keep Surrey safe.

The CRP is a key document that informed our proposed ‘Making Surrey Safer’ Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2020-2023 to help us to manage our resources for responding to emergencies more efficiently. We used this risk information to inform our modelling of the best distribution of resources to respond to emergencies. This analysis has been independently verified to confirm it is robust and accurate.
The CRP also helps us identify the resources required to reduce the risks through community and business safety prevention activity.

The IRMP was published for consultation on 4 March 2019 and closed on 26 May 2019. The findings are being brought together and will inform proposals that will be considered by our Fire Authority (Surrey County Council) on the 24 September 2019. The consultation report will be included in the papers submitted to Cabinet.

If changes are agreed by Cabinet a transition process will be put in place which will include ensuring the public are aware of the proposals agreed by cabinet and how we intend to implement the changes. The implementation will include consulting with staff and negotiating with representative bodies as appropriate. Subject to agreement we aim to introduce the agreed operating model in April 2020. Improvements to effectiveness of the prevention work and efficiency of the response to emergencies will be seen thereafter.
**Recommendation 2. Ensure the Service has the appropriate resources (people and equipment) to respond to risk in line with its Integrated Risk Management Plan.**

Since the inspection took place in July 2018, we have increased our firefighter numbers and by the end of the year will have increased them even further. This will mean we can crew more fire engines and reduce the need to rely on staff undertaking overtime.

As part of our recruitment drive, we are developing a more robust approach to monitoring and managing staff resourcing and succession planning. In addition to this, we are looking to recruit staff on different contractual basis in order to develop a more flexible and agile workforce and to reduce the need for us to use overtime. We have already implemented the use of fixed term contracts for operational staff and are investigating the introduction of bank contracts.

We are successfully recruiting firefighters collaboratively with East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services. Working collaboratively allows us to share best practice and improves the efficiency of the process.

**Recommendation 3. Ensure the Service understands and actively manages the resources and capabilities available for deployment.**

Following the inspection, immediate controls were put in place to ensure that the service adhered to legislative requirements for overtime hours firefighters can work. Since August 2018, monthly audits of overtime have been carried out across the service to ensure the use of overtime remains within agreed parameters. This includes ensuring appropriate rest breaks between shifts are being taken and ensuring excessive overtime is not being worked. These parameters were also reiterated to staff and managers, and guidance was issued to managers on how to manage and monitor use of overtime, as well as clearly identifying the roles and responsibilities for all involved.

As staff working overtime may be based at a different location to their usual base, the manager in charge at the different location is required to access the training records for those individuals to ensure appropriate levels of capability. The HMICFRS report identified that not all managers in charge were confident that this access was available to them. Managers are able to access these records, guidance on how to do this, and record training has been reinforced with staff alongside individual roles and responsibilities confirmed.

Roles and responsibilities for monitoring and managing overtime levels have been clarified with concise guidance to support our managers in carrying out their duties. This ensures we rely less on overtime and that any overtime is robustly monitored and managed. Preventing staff from exceeding permitted levels of overtime ensures staff wellbeing and promotes safety for both our firefighters and our community. It also ensures we are making best use of our resources.
We are actively working with the Surrey County Council’s Digital Transformation team to develop our IT systems to make them more efficient, easier to use, more appropriate and to cut down on duplication. We need to ensure that we have the accurate information available in the right place when it’s needed.

A computer-based overtime pay system has been rolled out across the Service to enable us to better monitor overtime hours worked and ensure that staff do not exceed agreed amounts. All wholetime stations will be using the electronic pay system by September 2019. Reports will provide information on overtime hours worked by individuals, total overtime hours worked and reasons the overtime is required, such as covering sickness or annual leave. We believe that these actions address the issues in the immediacy, and we continue to work towards a longer-term solution that will appropriately match resources to the risks identified, through the proposals that will be put to Cabinet in September in our Making Surrey Safer Plan.

**Recommendation 4.** Tell the people of Surrey what benefits its service provision and ways of working in the operational response model will give them.

HMICFRS told us that we interact with the public in a positive way. We are building on this foundation to clearly tell the people of Surrey about the services we are providing. We consulted with residents on the draft proposals in our Making Surrey Safer Plan and also published the implications of our proposed response model (how we allocate fire and rescue resources to emergencies) at a local level in our Equality Impact Assessment.

We engaged with residents in several ways during our current consultation for our plan. We explained our analysis of the risks in Surrey, through the Community Risk Profile, and how we intended to meet these risks. We used various ways of telling people in Surrey, which include local media, social media, consultation materials in Libraries and Borough & District offices, advertising at fire stations and online, articles in resident publications and web content. We actively encouraged people to feedback their views on our three proposals for change through our online survey and through face to face meetings.

We are now bringing all of the feedback together and the consultation report will be included within the papers that are discussed by Councillors at the Cabinet meeting in September.
HMICFRS recognised that we produce station plans that clearly outline our priority activities over the year. We are building on this and now engage with the community when we develop these plans to support us in identifying vulnerable groups and target our resources to the top priorities to enable us to reduce risk.

**Key area 2:** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service doesn’t use its resources efficiently to manage risk or its financial and physical resources effectively to keep people safe.

**Recommendation 5: Ensure that the resourcing model meets our risk demand sustainably.**

Recommendations 1 and 2 outline how we have analysed the risk in Surrey and informed how we should resource the service in line with the risk profile. The Community Risk Profile also uses predictive data, such as the predicted population demographics for groups vulnerable to fire between now and 2030. We have ensured that our resourcing model, which will be included within the proposals within our Making Surrey Safer Plan, takes account of the risk we have and the way we expect some risks to change. The plan will be discussed at Cabinet in September 2019.

**Recommendation 6. Ensure the Service workforce model supports the operational model to manage risk efficiently and sustainably**

Recommendation 2 describes how we have already increased the number of firefighters and used a mixture of permanent and fixed term-contract options to ensure that we can resource our response to emergencies in Surrey sustainably now and in the future.

A new workforce resourcing policy has been implemented that ensures a structured, systematic, timely and consistent approach to filling vacancies. We have established a workforce sub-group that leads on workforce planning, aided by our Workforce Information Team. Their role is to consider the analysis of the retirement and leaver profile and to pre-emptively identify where key roles are likely to be made vacant, to lead on succession planning and to drive recruitment activity.

Within the Transformation Programme which will deliver improved effectiveness and efficiency across the Service, we have a project that will be further exploring how we can continuously improve workforce planning and resourcing. It will explore several areas, including recruitment, improving representation within the workforce to better represent our community profile and fully review on-call recruitment.

**Recommendation 7. Ensure that the Service uses the available budget prudently to support its risk management activities**
The feedback is being brought together from the consultation and this is being fed into the proposals for 2020-2023 in our draft ‘Making Surrey Safer’ Plan which is being costed and will be discussed by Cabinet in September.
We will robustly monitor our finances to ensure we can continue to deliver our fire and rescue service and any new ways of working if approved. We have introduced regular cross-service financial monitoring meetings to ensure the prudent use of available budget across departments.

The proposals contained within the Making Surrey Safer Plan have been costed and clearly link our future operating model to the risks in Surrey – both in terms of reducing the risks through community and business safety alongside responding when emergencies occur. As a result of our proposed new model being our solution to address risk, we believe we will be more efficient and effective in saving lives in the future.

Further work within the Transformation Programme will identify improvements to processes that we can make to ensure that we continually use available budget prudently.