

HMICFRS 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 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee 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.

This workstream remains on schedule for completion by 1 March 2026. Recent progress includes the research, consultation and ongoing development of performance indicators.

Progress continues across the three identified delivery elements, with updates logged and governance oversight in place to ensure trajectory remains.

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

New corporate risks and corporate risk management process was recently agreed at the July SAP meeting. Key milestones within this workstream are progressing, and the workstream remains on schedule for completion by 21 July 2026. Actions to enhance visibility, usage, and governance of the risk register are being embedded.

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. The recently revised approach has extended development timelines, and is intended to provide a sustainable and integrated solution.

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 are:

- 4.2 – Delivery of the Digital Data Strategy
- 4.3 – Development of a Resource and Staffing Plan

Both elements are delayed pending the appointment of the new ICT Manager, who is scheduled to commence in early September 2025.

It has been identified that the ways of working within ICT, workload management and management structure currently do not support effective progression of work within the team supporting the delivery of departmental and service priorities. Risk mitigation for this issue includes a review of the Digital Strategy to support foundational elements across ICT, team and systems resilience. A Service Level Agreement with WMFS and interim leadership roles also supports the management of work, demand and prioritisation. The new Head of Digital and Data will be in post from 4 September.

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

A report presented to Fire Authority (July) outlining Governance review and 8 recommendations to be implemented. The overall workstream remains on schedule for completion by 30 September 2025.

Future financial constraints and the ability to create capacity has been identified as a risk impacting this recommendation workstream. Risk mitigation includes regular oversight of spends and progress against each cause of concern recommendation.

Recruitment risks associated with this recommendation workstream are being mitigated by ensuring that the section 151 officer function is maintained with a 3rd party and current provider on a temporary basis if no appointment is made. Benchmarking of the role to be recruited will reduce the risk associated with this being a new post in Service.

6 Conclusions

The Service recently welcomed the HMICFRS for the Cause of Concern revisit to review progress against the submitted action plan. The soon to be published letter will provide an update on HMICFRS findings.

All areas of the HMICFRS Cause of Concern action plan are actively in progress and on track to meet the identified timelines. All associated risks are being effectively managed, ensuring continued progress and assurance with improvement expectations.

7 Next Steps

To provide increased governance and oversight, peer Executive team scrutiny of Cause of Concern progress continues to be chaired by AM Transformation and Collaboration on a 4- weekly basis.

On the 5th September the HMICFRS are programmed to carry out in Service engagement. This activity is a less formal opportunity for the Service to

showcase select good progress and highlight Service operating context and challenges.

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 Cause of Concern 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 Programmes Board.

13 Appendices

Appendix 1 - [CoC Planner](#)

Appendix 2- [CoC RAIDO](#)

Appendix 3- [HMICFRS Shropshire Report 2024](#)

14 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.