

TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

FROM: Head of People - Christine Doody

PRESENTING OFFICERS: Head of People - Christine Doody
Telephone: 01480 444500
christine.doody@cambsfire.gov.uk

DATE: 20 April 2023

UPDATE ON CULTURE RELATED WORK AT CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the work planned around culture at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS), including the gap analysis against the independent culture review of London Fire Brigade and the gap analysis against His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) spotlight review of culture across the sector.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee is asked to;
- 2.1.1 Note the work undertaken and make comment as they deem appropriate,
- 2.1.2 Discuss Paragraph 8 – representation at quarterly Inclusion Steering Group meetings.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Political** – HMICFRS's spotlight report on culture across the sector, published in March 2023, follows the independent culture review of London Fire Brigade in November 2022. It is now mandated across the sector to disclose any culture related cases within the past 12 months as well as any current cases directly to HMICFRS; our recent HMICFRS inspection had a focus on culture.
- 3.2 **Social** - Reviewing the recommendations in these reports against our current practices will demonstrate that we put the interests of the community and our colleagues at the centre of everything we do, in line with our vision and values. Our published 2020/24 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has a strategic objective to further develop our culture. It is important to continue this work for our colleagues and the community.

3.3 **Legal** – Compliance with our existing Code of Conduct, which was updated in October 2021 to reference the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics fire standard, outlines our culture in the expected behaviours for colleagues and is written into all contracts of employment.

3.3.1 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from harassment or less favourable treatment in the workplace related to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. This legislation also protects all of the protected characteristics against discrimination including marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

3.4 There is therefore significant political, social and legal risk in failing to demonstrate that we have duly considered these reports against our current practices.

4. **Equality Impact Assessment**

4.1 Equality impact assessments (EQIA's) are carried out for any relevant actions within our plans.

5. **Background**

5.1 Culture has been a strategic focus for at least the last ten years. In our current IRMP we have a strategic objective to further develop our culture. The IRMP action plan outlines this year's culture related actions throughout the 'People Excellence' section as follows;

- Continue to develop our organisational culture and enhance employee engagement;
- Develop and improve the ways we support the mental health and wellbeing of employees,
- Ongoing work to improve the diversity of our workforce,
- Expand our programme of development activities,
- Continue to embed an understanding of the value of quality conversations,
- Strengthen ways in which we understand our succession planning needs,
- Continue to review of our recruitment and progression process to provide equality of opportunity.

- 5.2 CFRS was rated “Good” in the HMICFRS inspection in 2020 for ‘People’. The inspection included a survey to all employees that asked a range of questions to measure organisational culture. In the inspection report it was noted that CFRS *“looks after it’s people well...prioritises the physical and mental health and wellbeing...is a great place to work...with an open management structure”* and how colleagues *“felt safe and supported to challenge the status quo”*. They noted that CFRS had *“improved its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion”* since the previous inspection.
- 5.3 This year we will consult with colleagues and the community to build our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2024/29 and therefore there is an opportunity to reflect on our culture journey as it will likely continue to be a strategic objective.
- 5.4 In addition to our current IRMP action plan, officers have undertaken a gap analysis of the London Fire Brigade Independent Review of Culture and HMICFRS’ Spotlight on Culture report’s recommendations.

6. Gap Analysis against the London Fire Brigade Independent Culture Review

- 6.1 Recent actions that are relevant to this gap analysis, that are completed or in progress, are;
- We reviewed and relaunched of our Equality Act eLearning which reached 100% completion in 2022. We relaunched the manager’s inclusion eLearning module in 2023.
 - Watches attended a face-to-face inclusion workshop that covered our values, culture, the protected characteristics and unconscious bias. We are refreshing and relaunching our inclusive leadership development course for all managers this year.
 - We have refreshed our suite of professional skills development workshops to support wellbeing, resilience, professional behaviours and quality conversations, supported by a range of online mindset modules. We had great attendance from colleagues across the organisation and positive feedback.
 - We have launched development portfolios for progression in wholetime and combined fire control to crew commander, watch commander and station commander. The development portfolios include evidencing behaviours that support our values, one team behaviours and leadership attributes.

- We have recently run an all-employee engagement survey and the initial results show that our engagement level is 79%, an increase from the last full survey in 2019.
- We have equality impact assessed our previous wholetime recruitment campaign and have planned positive action in our 2023 campaign, including re-introducing community assessors to our selection panels.
- We reviewed and improved our approach to neurodiversity support. We have added a workshop about managing neurodiversity in the workplace to our suite of professional skills courses.
- Our equality, diversity and inclusion work has evaluation measures that are reviewed annually. This year we will also use the new NFCC maturity model self-assessment for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- We have an 'Employer of Choice' project to ensure our values and positive culture are displayed in recruitment.
- We have reviewed our current trauma risk management or TRiM process and have set up a project to introduce any revised interventions.
- We have reviewed our processes for monitoring secondary contracts to ensure we support the wellbeing of colleagues with more than one role.
- We have reviewed our sickness absence management policy and process to ensure alignment with our values. We have held workshops with managers to develop their skills in managing the wellbeing of their teams.
- We relaunched our Personal Development Review/one-to-one guidance with a suite of supporting tools.
- We have started reviewing our suite of people policies to ensure alignment with our values.
- Since the pandemic, the people group and senior leadership team have worked in a hybrid way, including working from stations, to allow for even more informal collaboration and conversations with colleagues, in addition to planned station visits.
- We are designing community engagement dashboards based on the Census 2021 demographic data, for targeted community engagement activity by each station going forward, to ensure that we are inclusive and that hard to reach groups have the opportunity to be involved with the service.
- We have designed a new role to recruit a qualified counsellor, to further support the mental health and wellbeing of colleagues.

- We are reviewing our leavers' questionnaire and conversations to ensure that the process gathers feedback about our culture and that we can identify any actions needed.
- We are re-communicating our RESPECT programme to all colleagues. We have set up a SharePoint page listing all the channels that colleagues can use to report anything of concern and communicated this to everyone.
- Following the engagement survey, we are going to do the work to clarify our culture and expectations in line with our values and refresh our 'One Team Behaviours' to ensure they align and colleagues have clarity on what is expected of them and that managers embed them into our practices.
- We have reviewed our 'People Excellence' data reporting to give greater visibility to the leadership team in key areas, to aid decision making.

6.2 From the London Fire Brigade Independent Culture Report recommendations, there were four areas that we will take forward;

- We review the 'People Excellence' data quarterly and present it as separate topics. We will bring this data together into a dashboard of key metrics so that we can review our culture holistically and further aid insights and decision-making.
- We have a suicide communication plan; we will create a suicide support guide and make it available to all colleagues for information.
- We are considering the options for independent panel members on group commander/head of group and senior leadership team role selection panels.
- We are reviewing our recruitment application form to add a request for disclosure of membership of any external organisations that would conflict with our values.

7. Gap Analysis against HMICFRS' Culture Spotlight Report

7.1 Recent actions that are relevant to this gap analysis, that are completed or in progress are;

- We notify HMICFRS regularly of any concerns raised related to our culture.

- We have incorporated the NFCC's Core Code of Ethics into our Code of Conduct.
- We have re-communicated all the channels colleagues can use to raise concerns and seek support.
- Our complaints process and contact form are available to the public on our website.
- We are refreshing and relaunching our inclusive leadership development course for all managers this year.
- We have contact logs so that if a colleague raises a concern, we can ensure they are regularly updated and we provide support.
- We are completing a gap analysis on two new fire standards – Leading and Developing People and Leading the Service.
- We have a 360 feedback tool, we are updating the content and will roll it out to all leaders/line managers.
- We have re-designed our EQIA process and trained over a hundred colleagues to complete EQIAs. The course is now part of our professional development workshops and there are regular peer sessions.
- We gather diversity data in line with the NFCC ED&I data toolkit.
- We review 'People Excellence' data quarterly and it is currently presented as separate topics. We will bring this data together into a dashboard of key metrics so that we can review our culture holistically and further aid insights and decision-making.
- We are reviewing our recruitment background check arrangements and our approach to DBS' for all employees, ahead of the upcoming proposed legislation change.
- We are reviewing the data we collect on protected characteristics against the Office for National Statistics' harmonised standard, ahead of the Home Office updating their data collection next year.
- We are reviewing the options of running our engagement survey, or a culture survey, more frequently.
- We have considered the NFCC's direct entry programme into management and over the next few years we will learn from other fire and rescue services who are taking part in the recently launched pilot. We would welcome a funded programme being introduced in the future.

- We are researching the options available to trial an external reporting line, in addition to our current channels that colleagues can use to raise a concern.
- We are updating our succession planning/talent management work, which will include an EQIA at relevant points and positive action.

7.2 From the HMICFRS' Culture Spotlight Report, there were two additional areas that we will take forward;

- Consideration of how we can apply the principles of professional standards for oversight of conduct cases.
- More promotion of progression paths for existing colleagues in non-operational roles and positive action.

8. **Governance**

8.1 Culture and equality, diversity and inclusion plans are discussed at the quarterly Inclusion Steering Group. The attendees are inclusion network and working group leads, members of the senior leadership team and fire authority members. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to discuss and consider representation at these meetings going forward.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

| Source Documents | Location | Contact Officer |
|---|--|---|
| HMICFRS Spotlight Report on Culture | Values and Culture in FRS' on website | Christine Doody Head of People 01480 444500 christine.doody@cambsfire.gov.uk |
| Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade November 2022 | Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (london-fire.gov.uk) on website | |
| HMICFRS State of Fire 2022 Report | State of Fire 2022 on website | |
| CFRS Code of Conduct | Code of Conduct | |
| IRMP 2020/24 | IRMP on website | |
| CFRS Values | CFRS Values on website | |
| NFCC Maturity Models | NFCC Maturity Models on website | |
| Fire Standard – Leading the Service and Leading and Developing People | Leading the Service on website Leading & Developing People on website | |
| NFCC ED&I Data Toolkit | NFCC ED&I Data Toolkit on website | |
| NFCC Direct Entry Scheme | NFCC Direct Entry Scheme on website | |