

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee
DATE	27 October 2015
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (HMFSI): Local Inspection of Aberdeen City

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report brings before the Committee an overview of the key headlines and a status update of the local action plan following a local inspection carried out by Inspectors of Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (Scotland) during early 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- i. note the content of this report

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications for the Council to this report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The discharging of the Council's responsibilities in relation to the Act is of direct relevance to the delivery of the Council's responsibilities in relation to Community Planning, the Single Outcome Agreement and the Business Plan.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate (Scotland) has recently completed a 'place-based' inspection of local Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) activities and arrangements in Aberdeen City.

This was a wide ranging inspection covering all areas of the SFRS work in Aberdeen City including reference to the current Local Plan.

At its meeting of 19 May 2015, the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure (CHI) Committee noted that the report had yet to be published and requested that the Local Senior Officer provide an update at a future Committee meeting.

This report provides details of the key findings within the report and the actions completed and currently being taken by the SFRS as a result.

It may be helpful for Committee members to note the following:

- This inspection was part of HM Fire Service Inspectorate business plan for 2015 and beyond to carry out inspections of SFRS service delivery in local authority areas across the country
- Local inspections are carried out under the authority of s43B(1) and (3)(c) of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- The report is published although not laid before Parliament.
- The SFRS is required to have regard to any published report and, having had regard to it, to take such action as it thinks fit.

The actual inspection was carried out over a number of weeks and involved a wide range of face-to-face meetings and discussions with local SFRS staff in Aberdeen City.

The HMFSI also:

- Attended and observed a meeting of the CHI Committee
- Held discussions with key local external partners across Aberdeen City
- Carried out a visit to the Community Safety Hub
- Engaged with the Convener and Vice-Convener of the CHI Committee
- Engaged with appointed officials from representatives bodies including the Fire Brigades Union

Key Headlines

The key headlines from the Inspector's final report are outlined as follows:

- The overall impression made of the SFRS's work in Aberdeen City was positive.

- Local partnership working through the Community Safety Hub is impressive and something which the Service should regard as an area of 'good' practice and promote as an element of the Service's core business.
- The Service's performance remains relatively robust.
- Only one specific recommendation was made in relation to the reviewing and updating the accuracy of Operational Risk Information.
- A range of additional minor comments were offered for consideration.
- The SFRS received feedback about positive attitudes to diversity among the workforce and found no evidence of problems such as bullying, harassment or discrimination within the Aberdeen City workforce.
- Overall the impression is of a local area providing effective service in both Prevention and Protection, and Service Delivery functions.

Additionally face-to-face feedback provided to the Local Senior Officer by the Chief Inspector confirmed that, in his expert opinion, ***no risk critical matter was identified following the inspection.***

The full written report can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477241.pdf>

Local Action Plan

The SFRS have carefully considered the content of the report and have developed a specific local action plan for management of Operational Risk Information (ORI)

Status:

- The SFRS carried out a local review of all secure information we hold on known buildings risks and hazards to establish a programme of re-visits.
- The SFRS have established a structured programme of visits that are being carried out by local firefighters.
- The SFRS received an update on the status of a national project to establish a single harmonised process for ORI capture and retention.

General Actions

- The SFRS have noted the observation on performance indicators and will consider this when the next local plans are developed for 2017-20.
- The SFRS now have fully trained Managers in fire safety enforcement to support local staff.
- The SFRS provided a detailed overview of the Aberdeen City staffing profile to our colleagues in Workforce Planning to support our succession planning processes.
- The SFRS have introduced a harmonised Absence Management process that seeks to support our staff during periods of absence and also minimise short term sickness levels.
- The SFRS has commenced recruiting a significant number of wholetime firefighters who will commence employment with the Service around January 2016. These firefighters will be strategically dispersed across Scotland where operational demand dictates.

Conclusion

A number of other minor observations within the report were offered by the HMFSI and have already been noted and addressed locally by the SFRS.

The Local Action Plan is still 'live' and we remain committed to considering and identifying any potential areas for improvement.

The SFRS welcome the opportunity to offer this report to Committee Members as part of our continuing desire to engage closely with our key local partners.

6. IMPACT

As noted above, the subject matter of this report is relevant to the Council's work in relation to Community Planning, the Single Outcome Agreement and the delivery of the Business Plan.

The subject matter of the report will be of interest to the public.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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