



REPORT TO:	Internal Improvement Board
REPORTING PERIOD:	October 2017 – 5 September 2019
REPORT OF:	Internal Improvement Team
SUBJECT:	Programme Closure

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Internal Improvement Board (IIB) with a final review of the Improvement Programme. This includes:

- a summary from the Programme Manager;
- critical success factors and lessons learned;
- effectiveness of the management strategies; and
- legacy action(s).

1.2 Due to the local elections, Fire Authority Annual General Meeting (AGM) and intervening induction programme for new Members, there was not an opportunity to hold an Improvement Working Group (IWG) or Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) between April 2019 and late August 2019. As the next available meeting of the PRSC was not scheduled to take place until 4 September 2019, a decision was taken to extend the Programme until the end of September, with final sign-off by Members at the Fire Authority's meeting on 25 September 2019.

1.3 The final meeting of the IIB was held on 2 September 2019 where the CFO/CE and Project Executives were invited to comment on the Programme's draft closure report and add any further lessons learned.

1.4 This report was therefore kept in draft form until after the final meetings of the IIB and PRSC, and was subsequently finalised prior to despatch of Fire Authority papers.

2. Programme Manager's summary

2.1 Following the release of Dr Baker's Statutory Inspection report in 2017, the Internal Improvement Team (IIT) was established, as a dedicated team, to provide robust programme management to the improvement journey in support of the improvement architecture established by the (then) interim Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Mick Crennell.

2.2 There were four key themes of Dr Baker's Statutory Inspection report, ie governance, culture, leadership and driving change. The Fire Authority approved a 62-point action plan to address the recommendations by Dr Baker.

2.3 Using Managing Successful Programmes (MSP®), the Programme was delivered over three stages:

Stage 1	Programme governance and projects initiation	Oct 17-Mar 18
Stage 2	Delivery of projects and work packages	Apr 18-Mar 19
Stage 3	Delivery of remaining work packages and Programme closure	Apr 19-Sep 19

Stage 1

2.4 Stage 1 was challenging for the IIT whose priority was to establish a firm foundation from which to drive the Programme forward, while ensuring evidence of progress was captured and communicated to key stakeholders.

2.5 There were four key components of Stage 1:

- programme governance and project initiation;
- procurement of a baseline cultural review (Phase 1);
- development of a one year interim Corporate Plan 2018/19; and
- procurement of an independent baseline report, development of strategic assessment and commencement of a risk review.

2.6 To achieve this, the IIT analysed the 62 recommendations within the Fire Authority approved Action Plan and produced an underpinning IIT Action Plan to ensure each recommendation was comprehensively addressed.

2.7 The resultant actions/work packages were then grouped into seven key projects and five standalone work packages, each with a Director-level Project Executive to ensure buy in, coordination of projects and that organisational resources and capacity remained aligned with the strategic direction of travel.

2.8 During Stage 1 of the Programme we received formal notification that the Service had been allocated to Tranche 1 of the new inspection regime to be undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). As the inspection methodology was developed, each fire and rescue service was required to nominate a single

point of contact (later more formally designated as the 'HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer') – this was allocated as an additional function to the IIT whose remit was expanded to include the co-ordination and delivery of the Service's inspection arrangements.

- 2.9 In addition, the IIT's remit was further expanded to include responsibility for a review of the Integrated Risk Management Plan which was to be combined with the interim Corporate Plan to produce a single, integrated Service Plan by April 2019.

Stage 2

- 2.10 There were three key components of Stage 2:

- Phases 2 and 3 of our culture journey;
- the HMICFRS inspection; and
- our new Service Plan 2019-2022.

- 2.11 **Cultural Journey:** we continued to build upon the initial success of Phase 1 of our Cultural Review by designing, implementing and extending the Phase 2 qualitative survey to include a "leavers' survey" whereby 140 ex-employees (who had left the Service in the preceding two years) were invited to undertake the survey. The resultant outputs were then included into Phase 3 action planning, which was driven forward by our Diversity, Inclusion Cohesion and Equalities (DICE) Manager to ensure we continue to be seen as an employer of choice.

- 2.12 Between April and October 2018, the Service was subject to its first HMICFRS inspection with the main on-site fieldwork taking place in July and a subsequent re-visit taking place in October. This came at a particularly challenging time for the Service as we were already in the midst of the Improvement Programme. We were naturally disappointed with the judgments across several of the inspection criteria; however, that said, there were four areas where we were pleased that the Inspectorate judged us as 'good'. The overall assessment of the Service determined by HMICFRS set a further challenge but there were no real surprises as the Inspectorate's findings reflected what we already knew and had already committed to address and improve.

- 2.13 Another major workstream delivered the design, coordination, consultation and implementation of our Service Plan 2019-2022. This saw the creation of a risk methodology underpinned by a combination of internal data analysis, independent risk benchmarking and the procurement of risk modelling software to ensure that we continually consider external factors

and influences which may affect our Service during the lifespan of our Service Plan while ensuring we match our resources to risk in the best way possible within the confines of affordability. Our Service Plan received Fire Authority approval on 26 March 2019 and was published on 1 April 2019.

- 2.14 We were encouraged by the feedback provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) which was invited to conduct an independent mid-term assurance of progress and to gauge confidence in our direction of travel. Section 4.5 provides further details.

Stage 3

- 2.15 With just 15 work packages remaining at the start of Stage 3, the IIT had the opportunity to start looking to the future and how we would transition from the Improvement Programme to a new Transformation Programme and continuous improvement.

- 2.16 There were four key components of Stage 3:

- finishing the remaining work packages;
- updating the strategic assessment for 2019 and writing simulation reports;
- monitoring of the HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan and preparing for re-inspection; and
- preparing for programme closure and transition to the new structure.

- 2.17 All but one work package have now been completed as detailed in Section 5. This is a tremendous achievement for the Service and demonstrates the value and commitment of our talented workforce. Section 5 provides details on how the remaining work package will be taken forward.

- 2.18 HMICFRS activity during Stage 3 was principally focussed on developing our response to the inspection findings. The first version of our comprehensive action plan was published towards the end of March 2019 and is now subject to regular monitoring by the Service Leadership Team (SLT) and scrutiny by the Fire Authority. We also made arrangements for a further re-visit in August 2019 when HMICFRS inspectors returned to check on progress against some of their initial findings.

- 2.19 Arrangements have also been made to transition the HMICFRS Service Liaison Officer role into permanent 'business as usual' (as opposed to being a workstream allocated to the temporary IIT) as part of the new organisational structure and we now anticipate that the second round of 'whole Service' HMICFRS inspections will commence in spring 2020.

Conclusion

- 2.20 The last two years have, without doubt, been challenging for the Authority and the Service, not only following the publication of the Baker Report but also due to our inclusion in the first tranche of the new HMICFRS inspection regime in 2018.
- 2.21 However, what we have done, collectively, is meet the challenges head on – openly, honestly and transparently. Our approach was underpinned by an independent and comprehensive cultural review of staff, both past and present, to baseline our improvement and cultural journey in a holistic and inclusive way. This included the creation of our Staff Engagement Network (SEN) which has a permanent seat at our SLT meetings, the creation of our Leadership Charter which sets out what we expect from our leaders, not by rank but by attitudes, behaviours and values, and our commitment to cultural change – Making Avon Fire & Rescue Service a better place to work action plan which outlines what we will do to address the outcomes of our cultural review.
- 2.22 In doing so, despite our recognised capacity challenges, we have not simply ‘tick boxed’ our way to addressing the issues we faced but, instead, we have collectively embraced the fact that change doesn’t happen to us; we are the change we want to see which has not only ensured we delivered robust, independently scrutinised evidence against our improvement journey, but also that we have set ourselves a strong foundation on which to maintain the ongoing improvement and transformation of our Service moving forward.
- 2.23 The final programme summary¹ is illustrated in Figs. 2(1) and 2(2) overleaf.

¹ Subject to the Fire Authority’s approval of the motion relating to acceptance of the outstanding Improvement Programme recommendations contained within the minutes of the PRSC meeting held on 4 September 2019 tabled at Item 7.2 of the agenda of the Fire Authority’s meeting on 25 September 2019.

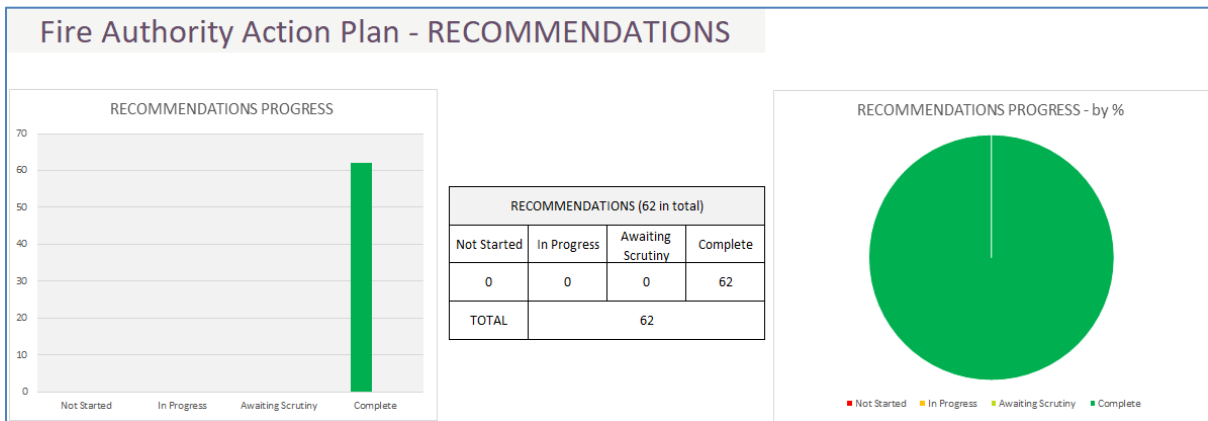


Fig. 2(1): Fire Authority Action Plan ‘recommendations’ as at 4 September 2019

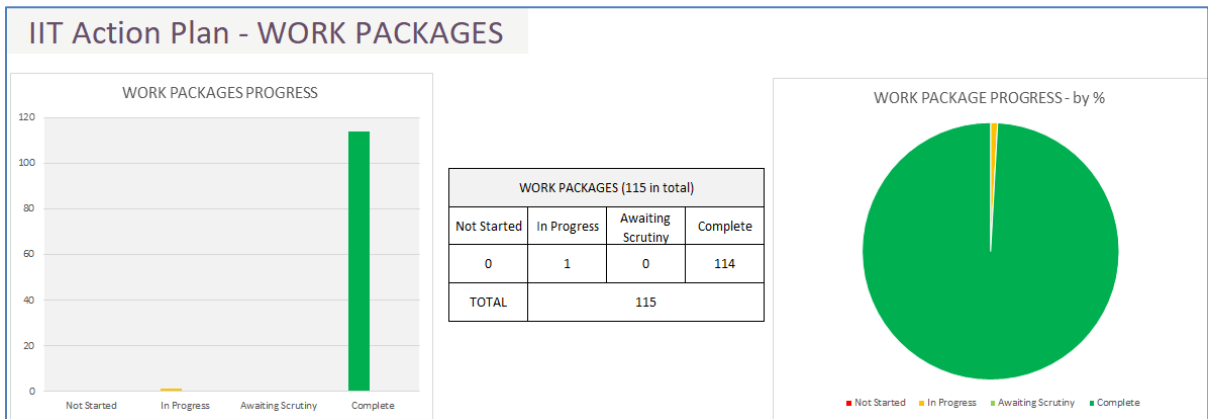


Fig. 2(2): Internal Improvement Team ‘work packages’ as at 4 September 2019

(Note: A complete summary of all 62 completed Fire Authority recommendations is available from the Programme Management Office on request.)

3. Critical success factors and lessons learned

- Continued engagement and leadership from Project Executives.
- Governance arrangements such as IIB and IWG to enable effective scrutiny and decision making.
- Dedicated IIT with the right blend of skills and experience who worked well together and supported each other as and when required.

- Time invested in interpreting the 62 recommendations and development of a comprehensive IIT Action Plan including deliverable work packages and enrichment (where required).
- In-house programme management expertise enabled the programme to be initiated quickly and monitored effectively.
- The ability of the whole team to flex to provide capacity proportionate to workloads and priorities.
- The addition of Project Delivery Officers (PDOs) enabled the IIT to provide more 'hands-on' support to the Programme.
- Using effective tools to monitor progress and collate evidence.
- Investment in risk modelling software and new IRMP Risk Register enabled the team to provide risk-led and evidence-based data to underpin Service Plan proposals.
- Accessibility of data sources, such as historical incident and people data, helped to produce the enhanced baseline report.
- The availability of dedicated support to manage the ebb and flow of HMICFRS demands over the course of inspection regime

4. Effectiveness of management strategies

4.1 Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1.1 We continued to engage with and update stakeholders on the improvement journey throughout the Programme and the Service Leadership Board (SLB) has continued to visit every staff group and Watch.
- 4.1.2 With the new Service Plan a clear vision has been communicated for 2019-2022 to make our Service stronger and our communities safer. The IIT played a critical role in developing the Service Plan and influencing the unprecedented amount of consultation.
- 4.1.3 The amount of time and effort invested in visiting every Watch by PDOs paid dividends. Feedback from the LGA's interim peer review was that this role was (quote) "inspired". However, the timing and consistency of Programme updates has sometimes

been a challenge for the PDOs who found it difficult not to be drawn into wider Service discussions.

- 4.1.4 It would be fair to say that communication with on-call and corporate staff could have been more proactive and timely.
- 4.1.5 Staff have been completing evaluation questionnaires after their programme updates and was scored on a 1 – 5 satisfaction response with 1 being very poor and 5 being extremely high. Feedback is summarised below:

5 – 69%
4 – 21%
3 – 10%
2 – 0%
1 – 0%

- 4.1.6 A separate activity log has also been maintained throughout the Programme. It is worth noting the following:

- 207 station and unit visits
- 153 internal meetings
- 181 meetings and events with external stakeholders
- 68 Bulletin, intranet and email updates
- 36 training sessions, workshops, conferences and events

4.2 Risk and issue management

- 4.2.1 The Risks and Issues Register has been formally reviewed by the IIT on 13 occasions over the course of the Programme and reported high risks to the IIB and SLT on a monthly basis. All risks were managed well and were often prevented from becoming real issues.

4.3 Resource management

- 4.3.1 The main success factor in delivering the Improvement Programme was having a dedicated IIT. However, while it proved beneficial to expand the size of the team due to emerging demands for the Service Plan and HMICFRS it was, on occasion, a challenge keeping all PDOs fully utilised on a consistent basis.

4.4 Benefits management

4.4.1 Although a Benefits Register template was developed at the start of Stage 2, it has not materialised as a working management tool. This is aligned with organisational project management maturity and will be developed further as a legacy action.

4.5 Quality management

4.5.1 In January 2019, the LGA was invited to carry out an interim peer review to assess the direction of travel of our improvement journey. This was a bespoke peer challenge designed to provide an interim, external and independent view on the extent to which we were making progress against the Fire Authority's Action Plan.

4.5.2 In the main, the report was positive and commended the Authority and the SLT for "creating the sense of optimism" for the future. Overall observations included:

Optimism. SLB a force for good.
Established Trust.

Strong IIP Governance.
IRMP and Service Plan produced.
Leadership Charter.
Staff Engagement.
Organisation ready to move on.

Senior level capacity.
Officers & Members
cohesion.

Risk of overcompensating.
Space needed to deliver.
Unify Authority
Middle management focus.
Clear role for Members.

4.5.3 The LGA will return in December 2019 to carry out a final review.

4.5.4 Programme quality was assured through proactive staff engagement, from both the IIT and SLB. Feedback told us that staff felt informed and appreciated the effort invested in communication across a number of spectrums. The Staff Engagement Network has also proved to be a useful communication conduit for discussing key issues. It is now operating independently to the programme and will continue to operate as 'business as usual'.

4.5.6 Towards the end of Stage 3, staff were invited to become Culture Change Advocates to help enable and facilitate the desired outcomes outlined in 'Making Avon Fire & Rescue Service a better place to work'. Over 50 people have volunteered to date

and have helped to shape the new Values and Behavioural Framework.

4.6 Information management

- 4.6.1 There have been no reported breaches of the Data Protection Act and Data Protection Impact Assessments have been carried out on key activities such as the Service Plan and business cases on response standards and response to Automatic Fire Alarms.
- 4.6.2 Minutes have been taken at all relevant meetings such as the Improvement Boards, SLT and IIT. Even though minutes are not required at the IWG meetings, notes were still taken to evidence decisions taken and comments made. Recommendations are then recorded in the minutes of the PRSC and finally ratified by the Fire Authority.
- 4.6.3 We have continued uploading all evidence to www.basecamp.com for Member scrutiny as they didn't have access to our IT network.
- 4.6.4 The version control and evidence collation measures outlined in the Programme Plan continued to work effectively and there is an accurate audit trail of controlled documents. Old versions are stored in a 'previous' folder so that it's always clear which is the current version of any controlled document.
- 4.6.5 Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) were updated on a quarterly basis to ensure scope and timescales remained realistic.

4.7 Monitoring and control

- 4.7.1 There have been eight meetings of the Independent Improvement Programme Board (IIPB) which provided external scrutiny of the Programme.
- 4.7.2 There have been 15 meetings of the IIB which provided internal scrutiny. Project Executives have provided written progress reports into the IIB on a monthly basis. In more recent months, the reports have been streamlined to focus on the outstanding work packages.

4.7.3 In line with the requirements of the (then) Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service outlined in his letter dated 19 July 2017, we have provided comprehensive updates to the Home Office on a six-weekly schedule (as well as responding to ah-hoc Ministerial correspondence relating to the Improvement Programme and HMICFRS inspection outcomes). As of September 2019, this correspondence has included 16 routine updates and one extraordinary Ministerial update.

5. Legacy actions

5.1 All Fire Authority recommendations (62/62) have been either signed off as 'complete' or been scrutinised by PRSC and recommended to the Fire Authority to be considered 'complete' as per the Programme's agreed governance arrangements.

5.2 Of the 115 deliverable work packages developed towards the start of the programme, just one remains outstanding.

Review the Fleet asset refresh programme to determine if efficiencies can be made in line with Section 3 duty e.g. extending the replacement cycle of fire appliances and other ancillary vehicles.

5.3 Given that this work package did not directly contribute to the completion of its 'parent' Recommendation 60, the IIB has already agreed that this piece of work will transition to 'business as usual' following the closure of the Improvement Programme and be completed by the newly appointed Head of Transport by March 2020.