

Kathryn Billing  
Chief Fire Officer  
Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service

14 December 2021

Dear Kathryn,

## **CORNWALL FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS – CAUSE OF CONCERN**

We inspected Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service between March and May 2021. During the inspection we identified an area of concern. We sent you the cause of concern and made recommendations as follows:

The service still does not have effective systems in place to manage risk-critical information to make sure it is collected, shared and reviewed in a consistent and timely manner.

By 31 August 2021, the service should:

- have a plan in place to manage the backlog of outstanding site-specific risk visits;
- make sure that it regularly updates risk information on mobile data terminals, so that firefighters responding to incidents can see the most up-to-date information;
- make sure that the systems it has in place to share risk-critical safety information between departments are effective; and
- review the plans it has in place to undertake site-specific risk visits to make sure they are achievable with quality assurance and strategic oversight arrangements in place.

2. You kindly submitted an action plan to HMICFRS on 31 August 2021 setting out how you would address the area of concern and the recommendations.

3. You gave a further update of your progress against the action plan, which we reviewed in early November. We explained that while we didn't expect to see all the remedial work completed, we were looking for evidence of progress. Thank you for providing the further update.

## **Governance**

4. The service has shown a clear commitment to carry out the action plan. It will use existing governance and reporting arrangements to oversee the plan's completion. This includes the Strategic Quality Assurance Board that convenes every six weeks. Progress against the action plan and any problems that arise will be escalated to the senior leadership team and the neighbourhoods directorate leadership team monthly.

5. The service updated fire authority members at the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 November 2021. They intend to provide further information on 20 January 2022 at a formal public meeting. Further meetings are yet to be scheduled.

## **Action plan**

6. The service has developed an action plan covering the cause of concern identified in our letter to the service of 29 June 2021. The action plan has four main objectives aligned to our recommendations, which are further broken down into a series of tasks with clearly identified lead officers and anticipated completion dates. But we note from your progress update of 3 November 2021 that some of the early dates on the action plan haven't been met.

## **Outcomes to date**

7. The service has in place appropriate governance structures and some resources for the commitments in the action plan. Some of the actions have already been completed. For example, the council internal audit team has done an end-to-end review of the current site-specific risk process to identify areas for focus.

8. We would like to see continued progress against the action plan outcomes. The service needs to make sure that it supports the implementation of these outcomes and continues to communicate them effectively across the service and to the public.

9. We will continue to monitor progress against the action plan to determine if the service provided to the public of Cornwall has improved. This may include a revisit to the service in spring 2022.

Yours sincerely,



## **Wendy Williams**

HM Inspector of Constabulary  
HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services