



# CULTURE ACTION PLAN STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHT REPORT

<b>STRATEGIC SPONSOR</b>	Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Andy Cole
<b>PERIOD COVERED</b>	September 2024 – January 2025

<b>OVERALL PROJECT STATUS</b>	<b>On Track</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<p>The independent review into workplace culture was published in October 2023 along with the management response to the recommendations.</p> <p>A culture action plan has been developed to address the recommendations from the review and the Inspectorate’s Spotlight report previously raised with Members. The action plan, alongside its governance arrangements was presented to the Authority in December 2023.</p> <p>A programme of staff engagement took place from November 2023 – March 2024 so that our plans take account of ideas staff have for further strengthening our culture and our overall approach. This has enabled us to develop a more detailed delivery plan.</p> <p>The short-term actions (by April 2024) have been completed and good progress is being made against the medium term (by April 2025) actions.</p>

<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	<p>A Culture Development Committee (CDC), chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), is in place and meets quarterly. The committee includes staff from across the organisation, trade union representatives and staff network leads. It also allows for open seats for any member of staff to observe or participate. Our new CFO has advised that he would like to chair these meetings going forward.</p> <p>Our Independent Adviser, DCI Megan Elkins, also attends the Culture Development Committee. We are also working closely with another Independent Adviser Prof Manuela Barreto, whose expertise is in Social and Organisational Psychology. Manuela will support us in ensuring that culture change is successfully implemented and embedded.</p>
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		A Culture Steering Group is in place, comprised of individuals with a responsibility to deliver the actions in the plan.			
<b>PROGRESS</b>		Of the short-term priorities that were to be delivered by April 2024 all actions have been completed.			
		In terms of progress against medium term priorities (by April 2025), only the actions that are in progress or have been completed in this reporting period (September 2024 – January 2025) have been included to avoid duplication with previous highlight reports. Similarly, any medium-term priority actions yet to start, have not been included.			
		<b>Progress against medium term priorities (by April 2025)</b>			
		<b>Theme</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress</b>
		Building trust and confidence	All managers that are promoted, including on a temporary basis, are clear on their role and expectations.	In Progress	Role guides for Crew Manager, Watch Manager and Station completed.
In Progress	Role Inductions for new managers are currently being developed				
Strengthening support, welfare and facilities	Undertake further consultation on workwear	In progress	A project is well advanced for the procurement of a uniform supplier. This includes a number of staff, from across the Service, in place to trial and feedback on potential uniform options.		
Clear cultural expectations for all staff	Review our remote working arrangements	In progress	New Starter network is being set up.		
	i. New Starter network	Complete	A SharePoint site for new starters is in place.		
	ii. Workloads and Expectations	In progress	A discussion paper has been published. We have asked staff to		

					<p>provide their thoughts on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges and frustrations in a) your team b) other teams</li> <li>• What solutions can be put in place a) for your team b) for other teams.</li> </ul> <p>The feedback on this will enable positive changes to be set in place.</p>
			Develop culture assurance framework	Complete	The culture delivery plan is being amended to include a section on 'how are we assuring ourselves'
			Develop a decision-making model	Complete	Model developed and will be distributed alongside 'managing workload' actions.
		Strengthening leadership and engagement in workplaces	Review our leadership development programme to ensure an even stronger focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), behaviours and culture.	Complete	<p>New courses have been developed and will commence delivery in April</p> <p>We are using external trainers to run a bespoke 'Developing Diverse Leaders' course with six members of staff.</p>
			Strengthen coaching arrangements for female staff and under-represented groups	In Progress	We are reviewing our coaching and mentoring arrangements, alongside opportunities to utilise apprenticeship levy funding to increase the number of level 3 and level 5 coaches. This would extend our complement of coaches to include our Leadership Trainers and our HR People Partners.
			Review the quantity and quality of our e-learning with a view to increasing the	In Progress	A review is underway with plans to 'theme' quarterly e-Learning to better support

			level of face-to-face input.		completion and monitoring
			Introduce a 360-degree assessments aligned to the Code of Ethics.	Complete	360-degree assessments, are being built into the leadership development programme.
		Strengthening key procedures and practices	Further strengthen the monitoring, oversight and reporting of our managing performance and discipline procedures.	In Progress	A review of the Code of Conduct and Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol and Discipline procedures is underway and scheduled to be published in April 2025.
			Review the HR departmental structure to have a stronger focus on delivering the HR function through the HR business partners.	Complete	New structure in place and embedding well with ways of working under review.
			Further review maternity and menopause procedures and processes.	Complete	In November 2024 it was agreed to increase Maternity Support/Paternity Leave to 2 weeks full pay
		In progress	The forthcoming Employments Rights Bill is seeking to introduce gender and menopause action plans. Whilst we have a dedicated CONNECT site we are currently creating our menopause action plan.		
	<p>As most of the culture plan actions were set in place for delivery by April 2025 and good progress has been made, we are currently assessing ourselves against an independently developed culture assurance framework. Any outstanding or new actions will be captured in an updated culture action/delivery plan which will be published in April 2025.</p>				
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular communications are included in our Weekly Updates and Fire Wire.</li> </ul>			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FireWire articles on the CDC were published in November promoting open seats and in December with an invitation to provide feedback and suggestions on future meetings via MS Forms.</li> <li>• Updates on progress are provided to staff after every CDC meeting and made available to all staff on “Our Culture” site.</li> <li>• Following a Bitesize Leader Session on Building Resilience, our November culture conversation focussed on the personal experience of how an SLT member (Vikki Shearing) built her personal resilience.</li> </ul>
<b>ISSUES TO RAISE</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report was published in October. The Service received a cause of concern in respect of Service Culture. HMICFRS have confirmed that the existing Culture Action Plan can be utilised as the delivery mechanism providing it covers the relevant issues raised in the inspection report.</li> <li>• We have programmed an internal audit against our culture action plan to take place in Q3 2025/26.</li> </ul>
<b>RISKS</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given our HMICFRS inspection outcome we have added a strategic risk regarding our Service Culture.</li> <li>• We are currently delivering against the CFO delegated elements of the Resources and Savings Programme. This will inevitably continue to cause organisation and cultural strain and is being carefully managed to minimise impacts with positive cultural development.</li> </ul>

<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<p>New CFO to take over chair of Culture Development Committee</p> <p>Continue to deliver the medium-term priorities.</p> <p>Assess progress against our assurance framework.</p> <p>Continue to communicate the progress being achieved on our culture journey.</p>
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