

Performance Report Quarter 2

Finance & Governance Committee

01/07/2018 - 30/09/2018



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Finance & Governance Committee

Priority: Making every penny count

KLOE 13: Are effective governance and decision making arrangements in place?

Action Code	Action Name
1.4.1.50	Are effective governance and decision making arrangements in place?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>Governance and strategic planning</p> <p>Sound governance arrangements are in place with no significant strategic issues or areas of concern. The annual Statement of Assurance required under the National Framework 2018 has been approved by the Finance & Governance Committee and is now published on our website. The process by which this statement is developed received a substantial level assurance from internal auditors last year. The Community Safety Plan was considered and agreed by Members at their meeting in June along with the Service Delivery Plan for 2018-19. In addition, a revised approach to policy statements was approved by Members in June. Work has started on reviewing the strategic assessment of risk; service delivery plan and medium-term finance plan for 2019-20 for approval by Members in February 2019.</p> <p>Information and Communications</p> <p>Members can be assured that the Service is managing its statutory information compliance requirements. During Q2, the Service received 29 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act. These were responded to within the deadline on all but two occasions, owing to annual leave in other departments. 18 requests were received from individuals and 11 from journalists, no trends have been identified from the requests in this quarter. An exemption has been applied to five of the requests. In all but two occasions these were partial exemptions. Eight subject access requests were received under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), a rise in the trend since before the new legislation. All were responded to within the legal timeframe. Well advanced work is continuing and is on track against the action plan for GDPR compliance.</p> <p>The annual IT Health Check was completed this quarter and a small number of minor vulnerabilities were detected. The work required to rectify the areas identified was relatively simple, as the main issues that were found were patching and shared local administrator passwords. Our patching process and associated procedure are being further strengthened following wider stakeholder consultation at the Information Governance Group. All the areas identified by the IT health check will have been mitigated by the end of December 2018.</p> <p>During this quarter eight complaints were received, and all of these were resolved within 14 working days. Three relate to incident attendance; one related to recruitment; one the conduct of a member of staff completing a fire safety inspection; one staff conduct outside of work and two related to noise on a fire station. Seven of these eight complaints were not upheld - the complaint upheld related to staff conduct outside of work and management action has been taken.</p> <p>Overall the position with regards to information governance remains a strong one with no significant areas for concerns to raise with Members.</p>	

KLOE 14: How are we providing effective health and safety management systems to support our staff?

Action Code	Action Name
1.4.2.2	How are we providing effective health and safety support to our staff?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>Health and safety</p> <p>The Health and Safety (H&S) Committee and associated department continue to monitor the arrangements in place to keep our staff and the public we serve safe.</p> <p>The quarterly trend for days lost is down by 28% (147 days), this is showing good improvement over the same quarter last year. An embedded Service wide sickness reporting system and regular work-related absence alignment meetings between Health and Safety and Human Resources are working well and ensuring assured data quality.</p> <p>There has been a rise of 11% in the amount of adverse occurrence reports reported which might be caused by the training given by the H&S department to staff and the simplicity in using the new reporting system across the whole of the Service. Whilst some categories are showing small increases, only one area has seen a larger than expected rise and that is vehicle damage or failure. Slow speed collisions with stationary objects appear to be the only emerging pattern. Ongoing work with the driver trainer had identified this and monitoring arrangements have been put in place to monitor the level of any emerging patterns.</p> <p>There were five reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). The five 'Over 7-day Absences' are made up from slips, trips and falls and hit or struck objects, two injuries involved broken bones caused by falls from height.</p> <p>The southern part of the Service continued to secure the BSI 18001 health and safety accreditation following a very positive audit by auditors approved by the British standards institute. A comprehensive eight-day audit is currently being undertaken in the northern part of the Service. If all goes well, the achievement of the corporate target to achieve the BSI standard across the whole Service will be achieved ahead of scheduled March 2019 completion date</p> <p>Overall, there are no real causes for concern to raise with Members with regards to health and safety.</p>	

KLOE 15: Do we have robust financial management and procurement plans in place to ensure long term viability and value for money (VFM)?

Action Code	Action Name
1.4.3.16	Do we have robust financial management and procurement plans in place to ensure long term viability and value for money?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>Long Term Financial Sustainability</p> <p>The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) has a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in place, developed with Members, covering the financial years to 2020-21. The plan demonstrates how the Authority is able to balance its revenue and capital budget requirements over this time period, making effective use of its reserves and balances. Progress has been made in starting the budget process for the 2019-20 budget. The financial planning principles and assumptions on which the 2019-20 budget and next MTFP will be based was presented to the Authority for their approval in September. Members are supportive of asking Government for additional freedoms and flexibilities to raise council tax by £5 without the need to hold a referendum.</p> <p>Early contact has been made to constituent Authorities to obtain initial thoughts on taxbase and collection fund surplus estimates for 2019-20, however at this early stage in the year, it is too early to confidently reflect accurate estimates. Provisional estimates may be available in December, the impact of which will be detailed in the budget seminar planned for 15 January 2019. First phase Zero Based Budgeting sessions are near completion with budget managers, however there is still some work to do to clarify and finalise. Consolidated reports are to be drawn up for Service Delivery Teams in October and November. Salary budgets are currently being reviewed and will be refined as more information becomes available, e.g. pension contribution rates, departments restructuring etc.</p> <p>The current MTFP updated when setting the budget for 2018-19, identified gaps of £0.340m, rising to £2.640m (2019-20 to 2022-23). Plans are in place through the Communities Programme to identifying crewing savings, whilst not switch crewing the Aerial Ladder Platform's (ALPs) and to look for further savings as part of fleet review within the capital programme. The MTFP will be adjusted accordingly to reflect any changes and updated in the coming months to be reported on at the January Members Seminar, in advance of setting the budget and precepts at the Authority meeting in February.</p> <p>Achieving Value for Money</p> <p>By the end of 2017-18 we had achieved 97% of the targets in our Efficiency Plan 2016-17 to 2019-20. We have a Value for Money (VFM) framework, and throughout our priorities and KLOEs within the Service Delivery Plan (SDP), all Heads of Departments (HOD) are developing their VFM evaluation criteria based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and corporate targets. Our Business Case process is now embedded and includes an assessment of VFM, capturing any efficiencies expected, for inclusion on our efficiency and savings register which has been developed in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) proforma template.</p> <p>We have a VFM Framework and evaluation methodologies are being developed for a suite of Corporate Targets and KPIs, against priorities 1-5 by Heads of Department. Once completed these will be built into our performance management system.</p>	

Moving forward we will continue to identify our strengths and weaknesses to improve our use of resources and we will be developing benchmarking of our performance with our peers where possible. We will consider the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) VFM benchmarking club for some corporate functions, where appropriate and applicable.

Our Procurement Plan for 2018-2022 is widely available on our intranet, CONNECT. Meetings are being arranged with budget managers to review and update their contracts on the contracts register.

Our Contract Register continues to be updated, however there are still contracts outstanding from the GDPR Project that need to be progressed onto the system. We have commissioned a contract management e-learning module, and a responsible procurement e-learning module, for development and implementation over the next 6 months. Training dates have now been assigned for our in-house procurement awareness training.

Progress on significant procurements is being reported via the Support Service Delivery Team on a monthly basis and all savings and efficiencies identified will be added and reported on the Efficiency Register.

Good Financial Governance

Financial performance is monitored by the Authority and is updated on a quarterly basis through reports to the Finance & Governance Committee. The Authority also receives six monthly and annual reports on Treasury Management activity. The Strategic Leadership Team continues to monitor and review key areas of revenue and capital spend as part of our performance management arrangements.

The Finance Team have been progressing new style budget reporting for Budget Managers and this is being well received. During 2018-19, increased focus will be to continue to help Heads of Departments and budget managers to be better equipped to carry out their financial planning and monitoring responsibilities. Budget managers will receive regular training on the use of our financial management system, Agresso. This will enable them to make the most of the financial information that is available to them, helping to drive forward innovation and efficiency within their teams and departments and securing on-going value for money improvements.

We received a very pleasing unqualified audit opinion and value for money judgement at the July meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee, culminating in the Annual Audit Letter being issued and presented at the September meeting by KPMG, the external auditor. As the contract with KPMG has now ceased, we will be engaging with our newly appointed external auditors Deloitte LLP in planning and commencing the audit for 2018-19.

Gateway Assure, our internal auditors complete an annual review of key financial controls. At the end of 2017-18 they concluded that 'Adequate' controls were in place, with no substantial weaknesses identified, and only a small number of minor improvement items which we are progressing. We are currently in the process of scoping the key financial controls audit for 2018-19.

KLOE 16: Are we making the most effective use of our assets to deliver our priorities?

Action Code	Action Name
1.4.4.28	Are we making the most effective use of our assets to deliver our priorities?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>ICT</p> <p>Several projects within the Availability Section of the ICT Roadmap are under review to ensure technology developments are accurately reflected within project scope. There has also been a minor delay in signing the contract for the WAN replacement to ensure there is absolute clarity in terms of final contract costs. It is expected that this will not delay the delivery date of the new network.</p> <p>The Information Management Section of the Roadmap is on target. Some systems development has slipped slightly; this being mainly due to client unavailability. Software development continues to be prioritised to meet business needs.</p> <p>A number of ICT systems have recently gone live, these include Risk Assessments Phase2 (H&S), all Estates Management updates and Operational Effectiveness Phase3. A British Standards Institute (BSI) audit recently took place and the in-house developed Estates management system received high praise from the auditors.</p> <p>The Resilience section of the ICT Roadmap is progressing and on target. The review of Mutiny has been completed and the decision taken to remain with the current product as it represents best value. Work is also continuing to improve the response of the storage system by implementing secondary storage. Initial investigation has begun to determine the direction we wish to take when we begin the backup replacement project. This work will start during quarter 3.</p> <p>The Technology Management section of the ICT Roadmap is progressing well. Where there is a need to undertake unplanned work, this is prioritised and managed effectively within the team to avoid any delays in delivering against the agreed plan. There have been no significant impacts to date.</p> <p>ICT Service Management is also on track. The release of the new ICT portal was delayed while other background work required to support this were delivered, but this is now live, with a feed into Continuous Service improvement. Work has now begun to identify future training needs for ICT Technicians. The ICT Service Portfolio has been reviewed in light of the move to SaaS (Office 365) and the associated change in responsibilities relating to a number of systems.</p> <p>Fleet</p> <p>A draft Integrated Fleet Asset Management Plan (IFAMP) has been completed and will use Integrated Property Asset Management Plan (IFMP) as a template for structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project team have introduced a single software system for the identification and management of the fleet maintenance department. This system is being embedded at the moment with no significant issues. • This is working across the whole of the Service for workshop technicians and will be rolled out to all station staff so that there is a single defect and maintenance system, currently there are some training issues that are being addressed, with extra mentoring from the project team. 	

- We currently have a vacancy for a fleet manager and are recruiting a replacement. This may have the effect of slowing down progression of the implementation of the fleet plan.
- The procurement process for the introduction of 19 'B' type appliances is due to be sent out at the end of November 2018 with a split delivery date of ten vehicles in August 2019 and nine vehicles in March 2020, this will put the Service back on track for vehicle replacement. In addition, five water carriers are being procured over a three year period which will mean that the planned capital spend for this year will not be realised and will need to be rolled over.
- A white fleet review is being undertaken and is due to report by end March 2019, to be implemented during the next financial year.
- The red fleet review is now integrated into the IFAMP and is being managed accordingly.

Estates

The IPAMP has been finalised and the action plan is now being implemented.

- The IPAMP has confirmed the need to invest in Environmental Sustainability and Equality/Disability Discrimination Act (DDA Access) works.
- Estates will prioritise potential saving initiatives through a combination of saving potential, implementation cost, ease of implementation and reputational benefits. It is therefore proposed to include works in each of the two focus areas within the cyclical programme to achieve economies of scale and value for money.
- The department is starting a waste disposal procurement which will align to our environmental procedure.
- In accordance with the RICS Public Sector Property Asset Management guidelines, building improvements and planned maintenance tasks across the estate are managed under a five year cyclical maintenance programme, enabling the targeting of priority works to the structure and fabric of buildings and its fixed plant and equipment. This avoids "short-term tinkering with a portfolio of property assets" which does not result in fit for purpose accommodation. The condition survey is due to be re tendered for inspection in 2020.
- The capital spend for premises is on target to be spent during this financial year.
- Poundbury south building; At present the Service is waiting for Dorset Police to confirm that they will take up the vacant areas of the south building.
- The Service is represented at all One Public Estate's (OPE) meetings which are chaired by the separate local authorities.
- The Wiltshire One Public Estate is well organised and has had significant success in getting additional government grant money for local development.
- The Service is currently engaged with Swindon BC around joint use of some land in Swindon and OPE grant money has been explored.
- The Service is currently engaged with Dorset County Council, Dorset Healthcare University Trust, Dorset Police and South West Ambulance Trust to consider opportunities for a co-location at Wareham - the Wareham Care Campus.

Equipment

The initial scoping of this document has begun and the basis of an Integrated Equipment Asset Management Plan (IEAMP) document has been created.

- The new Equipment Manager has started and among his initial tasks is the creation of the IEAMP and the alignment of the two legacy equipment teams.
- A partnership research and development group has been set up by the Operational Effectiveness Officer (Service Support) to identify the current and future equipment needs of the Service and the department is providing technical expertise.
- This work is aligned to the introduction of the new software system which has stalled due to the procurement process not highlighting a company that was able to utilise new technology to its fullest and therefore the specification has been reviewed and will subsequently be re tendering in the new year. This will delay the project by approximately six months but will ensure that the service gets a future proofed solution.

Supplies

- At present the service has two stores departments based at Poundbury and Trowbridge. A project has been started to look at the rational for the provision and location of the stores facility. A scoping meeting has taken place with Projects and investigative work is planned.
- There is a national procurement of uniform which the service has been an integral part of. This includes the development of the specification and involvement in user trials. It is expected that the contract will be available for the service from April 2019.
- Work is progressing well with the integration to a single stores ordering system. It is being rolled out to all service users by the end of the year.
- The Personal protective equipment replacement project is in full swing and on target to roll out the new fire kit.

Priority: Supporting and developing our people

KLOE 17: How are we ensuring strategic workforce plans support the attraction, recruitment and retention of the right people with the right skills at the right time to deliver our priorities?

Action Code	Action Name
1.5.1.16	How are we ensuring that our strategic workforce plans support the attraction and recruitment of the right people with the right skills at the right time to deliver current and future Service priorities?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>The Service has improving workforce and talent management arrangements in place that both monitor the workforce changes and help determine key departmental issues and skills/competence requirements. This is coordinated through a cross departmental people delivery team and its associated workforce planning group which are chaired by the Director of People Services. Regular meetings are held with financial services to ensure that appropriate financial controls are in place. To support the tracking of relevant performance information, the Service is currently further strengthening information management systems to ensure that the data being relied upon is robust and timely.</p> <p>Attraction: The Service has a range of projects and initiatives to help position it as an employer of choice including improved flexibility for staff and managers through the smarter working programme. The Service has had a successful positive action campaign to help attract female and other representative groups; whilst maintaining robust standards of entry. The campaign for whole time firefighters has resulted in a good level of interest from these groups however this has not translated into significant changes to the recruitment intake. Officers are currently analysing the reasons behind this and are seeking to support more longer-term campaigns (particularly for on-call stations) through developing more localised recruitment campaigns at station level. Officers are working hard to also streamline the recruitment process through a range of measures from creating an e-recruitment portal through to plans to reduce the time to get newly qualified on-call firefighters 'on the run' from a current average of 27.5 weeks to 56 days.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention: The Service has recently recruited 16 whole time firefighters and it is pleasing to note that the number of on-call firefighters leaving the Service is falling for the first time in many years. There are no discernible trends arising from exit interviews for corporate staff and the issues that are being raised are largely being addressed. The key and long-standing reason for on-call firefighters leaving are complex but are often centred on work life balance tensions. The reconfiguration of resources to support station managers through the establishment of on-call support officers appears to be working in this regard. The on-call salary scheme has been significantly reviewed and consulted upon with the workforce and the representative bodies. Whilst progress is slower than we would have liked, officers are now hopeful of signing off the scheme so that this can be rolled out across the Service to improve the availability of appliances, particularly in the Wiltshire area, which remains challenging particularly at the weekend. This is being closely managed by the strategic leaders and through the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>Talent development: Work is continuing to develop the organisational requirements for talent management and the associated frameworks, procedures and processes. The approach we adopt delivers outcomes aligned to our values and behaviours framework that form the foundations of our approach to leadership development. Our promotion procedure already enables accelerated progression of our talented staff. Historically candidates needed to be competent or substantive in the role below the one being advertised. Our new procedure provides the opportunity for individuals at two roles below the vacancy to apply, if they can demonstrate relevant experience of operating at a higher level. Promotion boards have been run for Area, Station, Watch and Crew Managers in the first six months of 2018/19. Further work is being undertaken to further strengthen these promotion processes with nominated crew and watch managers being engaged in this process as well as individuals nominated through our leadership survey.</p>	

Apprenticeships: Whilst we are embracing the government reform agenda on apprenticeships, Members will be aware from the 2017-18 annual report that we face several challenges.

These include:

- The time taken to agree the funding band has impacted on operational apprenticeship new starts in 2017-18 and has meant that our new whole time firefighter recruits could not be placed on apprenticeship programmes as we had initially hoped.
- There are limited training providers to deliver trailblazer standards, particularly sector-specific ones such as firefighting.
- On-call staff are ineligible for apprenticeships. Since this staff group represents the highest proportion of on-call staff, with the highest turnover and with the highest number of new starters, this will adversely impact on our ability to achieve the 2.3% target.

The impact of these issues has meant that we have not been able to draw significantly on our levy. However, two members of corporate staff have commenced apprenticeships and we continue to look for opportunities to recruit apprentices to appropriate corporate roles.

KLOE 18: How are we making sure that our staff are trained and developed to be able to carry out their role effectively?

Action Code	Action Name
1.5.2.11	How are we making sure that our staff are trained and developed to carry out their role effectively?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>The Service is currently operating through two legacy competence recording systems that record and help managers to oversee the management of critical operational skills sets. A project to introduce a better and more integrated system is well advanced. Officers are hopeful that this will begin to come on-stream by April as anticipated, allowing for a suitable migration and training period during April-September 2019. Competence levels are closely monitored by Area management teams and the cross-cutting Community safety delivery team chaired by the Director of Community safety.</p> <p>We have produced a prospectus for our development pathways which provide staff with information on what learning and development interventions they 'must', 'should' or 'could' undertake. In support of this, we are currently introducing 'Workbooks' for all staff where they can evidence their progress. We continue to make good progress with e-learning and we have progressed with the development of a blended approach to learning and development activities in the first six months of 2018-19, partly through greater use of e-learning tools to provide essential knowledge prior to attending workshops or training courses. This allows more time at face to face events to focus on skills and behaviours and, in some cases, means that the length of time spent on training can be reduced. Our e-learning platform sets out what is available for staff to progress their own training and development. This material can also be accessed at a time and place to suit them. The Service has a significant programme of leadership events and master classes for strategic and middle managers that is working well. This work is directly aligned to the strategic needs of the Service and to the issues aligned to findings from the staff surveys. To support this, all strategic and middle managers have completed several personal assessments ranging from personality profiling through to 360 degree appraisals. The personal review process has been evaluated and improvements have been made. However, more work is needed to make it as effective and engrained in personal development and support as we would like, and a review will be initiated in the new year during Q4.</p> <p>As Members will be aware, the Service has forged an exciting partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institute which has the potential to be extended to other organisations at a sub-regional level, including the police. The leadership programmes that are being developed are at three management levels, supervisory, middle and strategic. A prototype supervisory course was delivered in April 2018 with a second course held in September 2018. The second course included a joint incident command element that is based on the national Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme principles which we are required to organisationally embed. The September 2018 course included attendees from Dorset Police and Wiltshire Police and the feedback has been extremely positive. This multi-agency programme will be a key foundation for developing our leaders. As part of this approach a leadership board has been established to oversee the progress and development of leadership development courses. The middle and strategic level programmes are at the design stage and will be rolled out in 2019 in tandem with a quality assurance framework. To support these programmes and our overall approach to talent management, the Service's approach to coaching and mentoring is currently being strengthened with a paper being presented to People Delivery Team in Q3 (October 2018).</p>	

KLOE 19: How are we ensuring we support the health and wellbeing of our staff?

Action Code	Action Name
1.5.3.13	How are we ensuring that we support the health and wellbeing of our staff?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>The Service has a robust and audited health and wellbeing programme to support staff. This programme is overseen by a cross departmental People Delivery Team chaired by the Director of People Services.</p> <p>Occupational health: Our external operational health provider continues to deliver positively against the performance expectations set out in the contract. Good progress has also been made on fitness assessments across the Service. During quarter 2, ten fitness improvement plans were issued meaning that a total of 25 people were on improvement plans during this period. Staff on improvement plans are being supported and managed by the health and wellbeing team, occupational health and where appropriate physiotherapy. The aim is to help them to achieve the required fitness standard as quickly as possible. Overall, there is a positive, long-term improvement in staff fitness across the Service.</p> <p>Absence management: Absence management continues to be a key focus for the Service and improvements identified by internal auditors are being actioned and overseen by the people delivery team. Long-term absence is closely managed, and it is pleasing to note that long-term sickness for Whole-time Duty System (WDS) and Fire Control continues to fall. Management efforts continue to focus on short term sickness absence and it is pleasing to note that short term sickness absence continues to fall in Fire Control but is slightly increasing in other staff groups. Overall there was a slight increase in total shift days lost for quarter 2 however the position against all those Services participating in the national fire and rescue benchmarking club shows an improving position and it should be noted that a few individuals can have a significant impact on the overall figures.</p> <p>Mental health: MIND Bluelight have been commissioned to provide training for the Leadership Masterclasses and a Mental Health Awareness e-learning package for all staff which was rolled out in August 2018. An internal audit into Health and Wellbeing arrangements was also undertaken during quarter 2 and this indicated that we have satisfactory arrangements in place. The National Fire Chief Council has indicated that it will fund 'Oscar Kilo' (a Police health and wellbeing toolkit). The launch of this was planned for August 2018 but this has been delayed until quarter 4 of 2018-19. Officers are currently to identifying staff groups, that may require bespoke health surveillance. This follows on from the implementation of health surveillance for Safe and Well Advisers that was actively progressed by the Head of Department.</p>	

KLOE 20: How are we successfully developing a values driven one-team culture?

Action Code	Action Name
1.5.4.18	How are we successfully developing a one team culture?
<p>Progress comment:</p> <p>The one team leadership philosophy strives to ensure that all teams and department work together in a manner of mutual understanding to deliver the five priorities set out in the Authority's Community Safety Plan. To this end the Service has established a range of measures in its Service delivery plan to ensure a 'golden thread' from corporate ambition through to on-the-ground action. To support this leadership philosophy the Service has also invested heavily in:</p> <p>Staff engagement: A comprehensive engagement plan is in place which is strategically monitored. Internal auditors have provided a substantial level of assurance against these arrangements. As Members will recall from previous meetings, it has been pleasing to note the positive results in the clear majority of the survey findings. The delivery plan continues to be reviewed to ensure there are Service wide actions to provide regular internal communication with staff and opportunities for effective engagement. We have also been delivering the programme of communication and engagement that resulted from the second Eyes and Ears staff survey. This involves managers presenting the Service wide results to their teams and getting feedback on how to improve the areas of focus, as well discussing local issues and improvements. This programme of work also includes targeted workshops where there are key improvements to be made.</p> <p>Smarter ways of working: A comprehensive corporate programme of work is well underway. An e-learning module has been developed to promote the principles and new ways of working and further workshops with managers are planned to help embed them across the Service. All staff now on Office 365 which enables staff to maximise the collaborative benefits of cloud-based technology, further supporting our commitment to flexible working. The smarter working programme has been evaluated and the programme actions are well on track but with further work needed to fully maximise the benefits of the technology to support remote and collaborative working. It is evident that substantial cost avoidance savings are being realised through increased use of skype meetings and therefore less unnecessary travel. Departments using team sites are recognising the value of this for effective remote and collaborative working and this is supported by flexibility in HR procedures. Managers are receiving training in October to support effective application of these and the wider principles of smarter working.</p> <p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI): An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is established that is chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and involving key members of staff; lead officers from a range of staff networks and representative bodies. A comprehensive assurance process has been developed against the draft fire and rescue service equality framework to underpin the assurance of the policy considered by the Authority at its June meeting. EDI training and awareness is occurring at all levels within the Service and now forms a central pillar of the leadership development programme for senior and middle management. Officers have submitted the self-assessment for this year's Stonewall workplace equality impact. We continue to be active in many external forums and have attended pride events and Dorset Minority Awards.</p>	