Performance Report Quarter 3

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

Finance & Audit Committee

1 October – 31 December 2019

DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

Finance & Audit Committee

Priority: Making every penny count

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

Action Code	Action Name
1.4.1.1	KLOE 13: Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place?

Progress comment:

Governance and strategic planning
Sound governance arrangements continue to be in place with no significant strategic issues or areas of concern.

There are robust internal control systems in place with the Service's internal auditors, South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) Internal Audit Services and external auditors, Deloitte LLP. The internal audit strategy and 2019-20 programme of work was approved by the Finance & Audit (formerly Finance & Governance) Committee at its meeting in March 2019. The planned audits for quarters 1, 2 and 3 have been completed, and assurance provided to the Finance & Audit Committee. A report on the outcome of the quarter 4 internal audits will be presented to the Committee in March 2020.

In line with the internal audit strategy, senior Officers and auditors have reviewed and developed the draft 2020-21 Internal Audit Plan, considering current risks and threats to the Service, results of this year's audit programme and the approved strategy. Wider internal and external stakeholders (including external audit and the Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee) have been consulted as part of the development of the draft plan which will be presented at the Finance & Audit Committee meeting in March for approval.

Following the Local Government Association's (LGA) peer review of governance in June 2019, the Authority approved the actions within the improvement plan at its meeting in September. This plan is progressing well, with progress reported to the Authority in December 2019. As part of this improvement plan, the Members' skills audit will begin in January 2020, with a skills survey being sent to all Members. This work will support Members to better shape their development programme for 2020-21.

The Members' Handbook is available electronically via the Service's website and printed copies are made available to Officers and Members upon request. Further updates to the Members Handbook will be made as additional actions from the LGA improvement plan are completed and receive Authority approval.

The working group of Members and Officers, responsible for developing a performance dashboard for the Finance & Audit and Local Performance & Scrutiny (LPS) Committees is due to meet in March 2020, where the dashboard will be finalised and approved. The new approach will take effect from the August LPS meetings where performance for quarter 1, 2020-21 will be reported.

The current Community Safety Plan (CSP) (2018-22) will run until March 2021, due to the financial uncertainty beyond the one-year

Government financial settlement. The new CSP for 2021-2025 is in its early planning stages. To ensure that the new CSP is reflective of the Service's landscape and is considerate of the internal and external risks, threats and opportunities, the Service undertakes a Strategic Assessment of Risk. This document has been developed and finalised internally with approval from the Strategic Leadership Team and is now out for consultation with our key partners, before being finalised and published.

To strengthen internal governance and build Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection process into 'business as usual' practices, work is progressing well to align the Service to the HMICFRS methodologies, diagnostics and judgement criteria. This will start at policy level and be embedded within the internal performance management and reporting processes, through to corporate assurance practices, to produce the annual Statement of Assurance. Modified policy statements will be brought to the Authority meeting in February 2020 for consideration and approval.

Business continuity

The Service continues to have robust business continuity arrangements in place, which were given substantial assurance by internal audit in October 2019 and aligned to the Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guidelines 2018. The Service's business continuity arrangements are continually strengthened via the annual programmes of work, which include exercise and test arrangements, training and awareness campaigns as well as constant horizon scanning. These arrangements include working with Local Resilience Forums to ensure appropriate and resilient planning for potential risks and threats.

Information management and security

Members can be assured that the Service is managing its information compliance requirements. During quarter 3 the Service received 30 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, all of which were responded to within the deadline - achieving 100% compliance. The average response time was nine working days. On one occasion a total exemption was applied and on seven occasions, partial exemptions were applied. The reasons for the exemptions were related to safeguarding national security; protecting personal information; information being accessible elsewhere; and the cost of the request exceeding the appropriate limit.

Four Subject Access Requests under the General Data Protection Regulation were received in quarter 3 and all were responded to within the legal timeframe.

In quarter 3, nine complaints were received, eight of which were resolved within 14 working days, with one agreed extension. The outcome of the investigation for one complaint is still outstanding. Of the eight resolved complaints, one was upheld and related to staff conduct and all others were not upheld. In the same period, ten compliments were recorded relating to community engagement work which included safe and well, school and station visits.

Work is continuing on track to ensure our information security arrangements align to the requirements of the *Cyber Essentials* and the *Minimum Cyber Security Standard*. Delivery of the action plan, which is being monitored at the Cyber Resilience Board (chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer), will reduce the cyber resilience risk.

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

Action Code	Action Name
1.4.2.1	KLOE 14: How are we providing effective health and safety support to our staff?

Progress comment:

The Health and Safety Committee and the associated department continue to monitor the arrangements in place to keep our staff and the public we serve safe. There are no causes for concern to raise with Members and the Service remains in a good position.

The number of days absent due to physical work-related causes (55 days) is down by 79% against the same quarter last year (267 days). The Service is currently on track to achieve the corporate target to reduce the number of working days lost through work related physical injury and ill health by 5% year on year. The embedded Service-wide sickness reporting system and regular work-related absence alignment meetings between Officers is working well.

This quarter has also seen the total number of accidental occurrence reports (AOR) drop slightly from 98 to 77 compared to the same quarter last year, averaging less than one a day over quarter 3.

One AOR can include several event categories and in quarter 3 the total number of events reported via an AOR reduced by 22%, with 92 being reported this quarter, compared to 118 in the same quarter last year. When looking at the type of events reported, the number of physical injury or ill health reports has seen a significant decline, reducing by 40% to 26 in quarter 3 2019-20 from 43 in the same quarter the previous year. This represents 28% of all events reported relating to physical injury or ill health. 36% (33) of the reported events were vehicle related with no cause for concern, and 12% (11) were equipment damage or failure events. There appears to be no real pattern emerging and control measures have been implemented where possible to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence.

In quarter 3 there were two reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive via Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995) (RIDDOR), compared to three in the same quarter the previous year. The two 'over seven-day absences' are made up from an injury whilst playing a team sport in fitness training and a manual handling injury whilst undergoing breathing apparatus training. Within the quarter, there were seven injuries whilst carrying out operational duties, none of which were serious enough to be reported under RIDDOR.

A re-certification audit visit by the British Standards Institute (BSI) was undertaken in November 2019 against the BSI 18001 standard. This audit found two major non-conformities and nine minor non-conformities. An action plan has been produced and is being progressed ahead of the next International Standards Organisation (ISO) 45001 migration audit in April 2020. Officers have completed a gap analysis to identify areas for improvement for the Service to move from BSI 18001 to the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series by March 2021. Good progress is being made in this area and has been assessed by BSI as 57% compliant, therefore the Service is on track to achieve the accreditation by 12 March 2021.

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

Progress comment:

Financial management
The provisional local government finance settlement for 2020-21 was announced on 20 December 2019 and this confirmed a 1.6% increase in funding, as indicated in the fast tracked one-year Spending Round announcement from September 2019. The announcement also confirmed a 2% referendum threshold for fire and rescue authorities for 2020-21. Whilst confirmation of the additional funding for 2020-21 is welcome, the lack of clarity about the longer-term position does little to help with our financial planning. This makes it hard to be clear about timescales for the service changes that are required to deal with our forecast budget gap. We will now have to wait for the outcome of the 2020 spending review.

In our consultation response following the provisional settlement announcement we have again asked for fire and rescue authorities to be given more freedom around council tax increases, supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) campaign for a £5 minimum increase.

We are close to finalising our budget requirements for 2020-21 and a new medium-term finance plan (MTFP) covering the period to 2023-24. Following the funding announcement in December we will be able to set a balanced budget for 2020-21, but financial uncertainty remains, and we are still forecasting growing budget deficits from 2021-22. Officers are continuing to work on the options for savings to help address this so that we have a clear financial picture once we know the outcome of the Spending Review 2020 process. Members were updated on the latest financial position of the forecasted outlook at the Authority seminar held on 18 December 2019.

Work on a new value for money framework and recording template, to demonstrate the wider societal savings that the Service is contributing, is progressing very well. Whilst not always delivering cashable savings, this important area of work shows the impact that the Service has in wider economic terms and it helps to support the national business case for sustainable funding.

The final audit processes for 2018-19 were signed off by the Finance & Audit Committee on 6 December 2019 and we are now planning for the 2019-20 closedown. Deloitte LLP will be carrying out some interim audit work in late February, followed by the final audit work in June 2020.

Procurement

A procurement peer audit was carried out in September 2019 by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service to look at current procurement practices and provide professional advice on further developing efficiency and effectiveness. The audit highlighted strong adherence to procurement practices, thereby providing assurance on legal compliance, and gave recommendations to develop the effectiveness of the function. These included developing the procurement team to improve market engagement and supporting Officers throughout the Service with contract management.

Accordingly, the procurement department has aligned contacts with key categories such as Fleet, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Equipment to improve market knowledge. Furthermore, contract review meetings with Officers will take place during quarter 1, 2020-21.

We have now awarded contracts for our technical rescue vehicles and large 4x4 pumping appliances and are currently progressing procurements for equipment, fire appliances, an asset management system and estates refurbishments.

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

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

Progress comment:

Assets
In recognition of the forecasted increase in capital budgets within the MTFP, work is underway to identify opportunities to either remove or flatten expenditure, thereby reducing borrowing and associated revenue costs.

Training continues across the assets department to improve alignment to the asset management principles of ISO 55001 with a gap analysis being undertaken during quarter 4, 2019-20. An agreed action plan will be implemented in quarter 1, 2020-21.

The Service wide asset management system procurement process is on track, with the contract intended to commence on 1 April 2020. This will be followed by a 12-month transition period and 'go live' on 1 April 2021. As part of the evaluation process, system presentations to a broad spectrum of end users will be delivered in February 2020.

Fleet and equipment
The delivery of the first two new Scania fire engines of 19 remains on track for June 2020, with a planned phased roll-out of the remainder across the Service. As part of the agreed vehicle replacement programme, the Service will look to procure an additional 17 appliances through a tendering process in quarter 4 2019-20. These will also be rolled out through a planned phased delivery. This will result in almost 50% of the frontline fire engines being replaced over the programme period.

Following extensive end user engagement, new technical rescue vehicles are being procured; giving specialist teams the necessary vehicle capabilities to deliver rope, water and animal rescue functions.

Estates
Following sign off of the Environmental & Sustainability Framework, implementation work has started across the Service to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings. The recruitment of 'Green Champions' at each workplace is progressing well with a significant number of volunteers coming forward.

In 2020-21, the auditing of our building stock by independent professional surveyors will produce condition surveys of the estate which will inform work-planning for the next ten years. The rolling five-year cyclical maintenance programme continues across our estate in line with the agreed plan.

Over the quarter, the Estates team undertook a review alongside the Diversity and Inclusion Lead and representatives from the Women's Network to ensure our fire station facilities continue to meet agreed standards.

As part of the One Public Estate, the Service is working with Wiltshire Council on the future planning of Bradford-on-Avon town centre and assessing how this might impact the location of the fire station. The timeline for completion of any works is five years. The team are also working with Wiltshire Police regarding vehicle washing facilities at Warminster Fire Station.

In light of anticipated increased power requirements to support new Emergency Services Network equipment, proposals are under development to upgrade standby power provision across the estate and, subject to approval, could take place in 2021-22.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
The ICT Strategy 2019-24 has been reviewed, updated and published. A supporting plan of activity has also been produced to show high level project scheduling, resource requirements and assurance mechanisms.

Following sign off on the department restructure, work is underway to embed the proposals which make better use of ICT resources and introduces a change assessment board.

Significant work is being undertaken across the department including:

1. *Smarter Working* - to improve alignment, local bespoke systems are being scoped in preparation for transitioning to Office 365
2. *Information Management* - the ICT health check completed in October, showed significant improvements in security and processes and further supported the health and safety of our ICT systems and data. Identified actions from the health check have been scheduled as part of the infrastructure and security plan of work
3. *ICT Resilience* - infrastructure projects are underway including modernisation and changes to back-up systems, servers and storage. This includes server upgrades and provision of new hardware on stations. A new data backup system, which will allow for a full year recovery, has been installed providing assurance to the Service in the event of any loss or breach of systems. A Firewall replacement programme has also commenced
4. *ICT Technology Management* - a cross departmental fireground radio project, linked into the Emergency Services Network project, is underway working with fire service partners in Hampshire and Devon & Somerset.

A hardware replacement programme has commenced with a new procurement process for laptops and equipment. Additional ICT kit has also been installed at Swindon and Poole Fire Stations, this is to test and inform a wider discussion as to what station-based staff require to deliver services more efficiently.

Furthermore, a more proactive ICT service desk customer satisfaction feedback is in development to gain a better understanding of wider Service issues to provide quality evidence for future development.

The SMS messaging system development, to reduce the current three systems into one thereby reducing costs, has been completed and is now being tested by end users.

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
1.5.1.1	KLOE 17: 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?

Progress comment:

Workforce and succession planning
The Service has improving workforce and talent management arrangements that both monitor workforce changes and help determine key departmental issues and skills/competence requirements. At the end of quarter 3, Officers completed the newly revised departmental staffing plan. Establishment information (budgeted posts versus numbers currently employed in those posts) and salary information is provided to heads of department to assist them to better manage and justify their salary budgets and structures.

The average age of our entire workforce is 42, the average age of our corporate staff is 47 and 60% of our corporate workforce is aged over 46. The average age of wholetime staff is 43 with 49% aged over 46. The average age of fire control staff is 40 with 32% aged over 46. The average age of on-call staff is 39 with 32% aged over 46. It is interesting to note that in quarter 3, 32% (11) of all leavers were between the ages of 36-45 and 29% (ten) were between the ages of 46-55. As Members are aware, our Strategic Assessment of Risk identifies our ageing workforce as a strategic issue, and we are looking at succession planning so that we can better manage the challenges and opportunities this presents.

Recruitment
The Service has had a successful positive action campaign to help attract under-represented groups, whilst maintaining robust standards of entry. We have a corporate target to increase the diversity of our operational workforce, by ensuring that 20% of recruitment is from under-represented groups. Initiatives to support achieving this target include:

- Officers analysing the results of the 2017 campaign for wholetime firefighters
- localised and longer-term recruitment campaigns (particularly for on-call stations)
- Officers visiting other fire and rescue services to better understand the initiatives they have set in place to improve the diversity of the workforce
- reviewing *'#HaveAGo'* days to ensure there is a consistent approach that attracts and supports diverse applicants.

Officers are also working hard to streamline the recruitment process through a range of measures such as including our employee benefits in every job advert and in the vacancy information pack. Managers are currently receiving information on:

- development of on-line shortlisting
- introduction of a new application form
- interview skills
- guidance and advice to managers on inducting new starters
- promoting the benefits of working for the Service as set out on the Service's website
- candidates selecting their own interview slots
- the introduction of an online candidate recruitment process feedback form.

To further support our approach to on-call recruitment we have been working with the Ministry of Defence and now advertise all our vacancies on the Career Transition Partnership website which supports military personnel by advising them of our vacancies. We have received the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award.

Average on-call recruitment timescales from application to formal start date in quarter 3 was 27 weeks, which is a reduction of 1.5 weeks on the previous quarter. However, the timescales from employer consent to offer averaged 22 weeks which is an increase from 21.5 weeks in the previous quarter.

Induction
Evaluation of the new corporate induction process indicated that in quarter 3, 78% of delegates who responded to the questionnaire (13 of 27 attendees) reported that their expectations were met and 16% reported that their expectations were exceeded. Participants are asked how sessions could be improved, how they would rate the overall day, and any general comments. Feedback is provided to Officers who presented on the day, so they can understand how their session was received and any suggestions for improvements that were made.

Retention
In quarter 3, pleasingly there were 15 on-call leavers and 26 on-call starters, showing a net increase in on-call staff. All the leavers were male, but noticeably 33% (five) were in 'development' and 47% (seven) had a length of service under five years. It is anticipated that the new on-call pay model will help to improve the retention of on-call staff. Our revised exit interview process is now able to capture more valuable information regarding reasons for leaving with 33% (five) of on-call leavers stating the reason for leaving as work/life balance, level of cover provided or moving away from a catchment area.

There were seven wholetime leavers in quarter 3, and two wholetime starters, showing a net decrease in wholetime staff. The majority of wholetime leavers (six) in quarter 3 had ten or more years' service, and 86% were aged between 46-65 which reflects the main reason for leaving as reaching retirement age (four). Officers have commenced planning for an 'on-call to wholetime' transferability process to commence in 2020. We are also planning a targeted wholetime recruitment campaign in the autumn, as directed by our workforce planning analysis.

In quarter 3 there were two leavers from Fire Control, and three starters, showing a net increase in Fire Control staff. The average length of service for Fire Control leavers in quarter 3 was between five and ten years, and for both leavers the reason for leaving was obtaining employment elsewhere.

There were ten corporate staff leavers in quarter 3, and 16 starters, showing a net increase in corporate staff. Seven of the leavers had under five years' service and half of corporate leavers cited the reason for leaving as obtaining employment elsewhere.

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

Progress comment:

<u>Leadership and organisational development</u>
The Service provides a development pathway which gives all staff information on the learning and development opportunities available to them, both in role and for progression to the next level. This incorporates a blended learning approach including e-learning and is supported by Development Programme Workbooks. In December 2019, a review of these Workbooks was completed which is now being incorporated into the new promotion process and will be rolled out in April 2020. This gives staff ownership of their own development whilst providing a monitoring system centrally for progression reporting purposes.

The Service continues to work in partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in both leadership development and trainer/assessor delivery. The trainer/assessor course is now accredited by Skills for Justice for both organisations and the leadership courses have been aligned to levels 3 and 5 of the Chartered Management Institute apprenticeship qualifications. Arrangements are in place for apprentices to be enrolled onto these programmes with Wiltshire College to accredit the Service delivery input as a nationally recognised qualification, using the Apprenticeship Levy to fund any additional input and support. In addition to this, two firefighters and four control firefighters will commence their apprenticeships with Bridgwater and Taunton College under the Service's registration as a Registered Apprenticeship Training Provider. This enables the Service to recover a proportion of the Apprenticeship Levy. A revised coaching procedure is in place and a coaching network is being established. To complement this, 25 new coaches will be trained at level 3 and 5, enhancing the number of Service coaches available and supporting the mentoring programmes already in place.

<u>Training & personal development</u>
Our training recording system continues to be embedded, and Officers are working closely with our private sector partner and the end users to provide additional training and support. Regular monitoring of competence at all levels across the Service is taking place and achievement targets have been set over the next three quarters to support the full implementation of the system.

Evaluation of training delivery and attendance is monitored through the annual Service training plan with an end of year report compiled to identify future training needs. The Annual Service Training Plan for 2020-21 will be finalised in quarter 4 of 2019-20, to ensure that the required resources are appropriately assigned and targeted.

The Incident Command Suite is now fully operational and delivers acquisition courses for levels 1-3, as well as competence assessments. Arrangements will be in place from quarter 4 for two mobile 'virtual reality' assessment vans to be used in training delivery, providing a satellite facility for incident command trainers to assess competence at stations. This approach will negate the need to travel to the Incident

Command Suite and is in line with our approach to smarter and more flexible working to help support on-call recruitment and retention. Incident command level 4 competencies for strategic managers have been agreed and aligned to national standards. The network of incident command assessors has been expanded to support the delivery of incident command and training, with additional training for quality assurers scheduled to take place in quarter 1, 2020-21. Officers are currently assessing the impact of phase 1 of the Grenfell Inquiry to support incident command recommendations.

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

Action Code	Action Name
1.5.3.1	KLOE 19: How are we ensuring that we support the health and wellbeing of our staff?

Progress comment:

The Service has a robust and audited health and wellbeing programme to support staff, which is overseen by senior Officers. Health and wellbeing arrangements are available to all staff and outlines all the support mechanisms available, including mental health support, Blue Light Champions and other external self-service provisions.

We have 29 Blue Light Champions who promote national campaigns such as World Mental Health Day, International Stress Week, and Time to Talk. Mental wellbeing sessions are integrated into the Supervisory Managing Performance and Wellbeing training.

The Health and Wellbeing team is part of a South West Emergency Services Collaboration Group, set up by Devon and Cornwall Police; since December 2019 the Service chairs the group. This partnership working provides an insight into what initiatives other services are involved in, and what we could learn from them.

In the last quarter, 155 people (96%) passed their fitness assessment. Six people who did not pass were put on fitness improvement plans, in addition to 19 people with fitness improvement plans carried over from previous quarters, representing 2% of the operational workforce. We are currently securing station-based volunteers, who will attend a one-week course to obtain a recognised qualification in order to further support colleagues with fitness in the workplace.

Absence management continues to be a key focus for the Service and improvements identified by our internal auditors are being overseen by Officers. It is recognised that long-term sickness is the largest contributing factor to the absence figures in quarter 3 across all staff groups.

Staff Group	Total number of staff	Number of individuals that have had a sickness occurrence in Q3		% of total sickness absence Q3		Shifts Lost Per Person Q3 2019/20	Shifts Lost Per Person Q3 2018/19	% change
		Short term	Long term	Short term	Long term			
Corporate	276	73	12	40%	60%	2.07	2.21	6%
Fire Control	33	12	3	45%	55%	3.57	3.29	9%
Whole time	408	105	26	39%	61%	2.81	2.50	12%
*On-call	593	94	20	27%	73%	3.37	3.70	9%
Total (excl. *on-call)						2.56	2.44	5%

*On Call is for days lost rather than shifts as we cannot identify their working pattern

This trend is reflected nationally in fire and rescue services. Management of long-term absence is more complex than short-term absence as the illness/condition may be serious and involve surgery and recovery time. With any long-term absence, staff are referred to Occupational Health from 28 days absence for advice and recommendations. Musculoskeletal remains the highest cause of absence and support mechanisms remain with weekly physiotherapy clinics. Through a cost benefit analysis, funding for private investigations is considered if NHS waiting times are delaying treatment and/or recovery to enable staff to return to work. Short term sickness is effectively managed in line with our attendance management procedure which includes return to work interviews and occurrence monitoring.

The Service has a corporate target for sickness absence to be no higher than the average reported for other comparable fire and rescue services in England. Sickness data for quarter 3 is set out above (page 14), alongside quarter 3 for the previous year. The national benchmarking report is not yet available.

With the exception of the corporate staff group, every other group has seen a slight increase in sickness absence in quarter 3 and this is reflected in the average shifts lost per person figure of 2.56 compared to 2.44 in the comparative quarter in 2018-19.

The benchmark for absence in the financial year 2019-20 is 8.20 shifts lost per person (excluding on-call). Shifts lost per person year to date 2019-20 is currently trending at 6.77. If the shifts lost per person in quarter 4 2019-20 is the same as in quarter 4 2018-19 (2.07) then the Service would exceed the benchmark by 0.64 shifts per person.

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

Action Code	Action Name
1.5.4.1	KLOE 20: How are we consulting and engaging our staff and stakeholders making the best use of technology?

Progress comment:

Internal communications and engagement
During quarter 3, regular staff communications have continued to be delivered through the Weekly Update, Firewire and the Service's staff intranet 'CONNECT'. The Chief Fire Officer also produced a video update for staff in December. Support continues to be provided to project teams to develop communication and engagement plans, specifically focusing on the delivery of the Community Safety Plan in 2020, including the HMICFRS improvement plan and budget challenges as well as the delivery of new processes such as promotion and 1:1 reviews. This helps ensure staff are aware of all the key improvements being made across the Service. The staff survey went live in November 2019 for six weeks, and results are now being analysed. A high-level summary will be presented to Members at their March meeting. An internal communications and engagement plan for key messages and improvements is also underway.

Smarter Working
Managers are working to the detailed programme for migration and adoption of SharePoint within Office 365. This involves staff workshops, training, clarifying requirements and migration of files to ensure compliance with information legislation, as well as improving remote and collaborative working in a secure environment. An annual evaluation of the programme has taken place, identifying cashable and non-cashable efficiencies as part of the Efficiency Plan. Further work will start to scope the use of Office 365 for automating process improvements, allowing us to further exploit the technology we have and make further efficiencies.