Audit Improvement Plan Activities

DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE

Audit Improvement Plan Activities

KEY FOR RECOMMENDATION PRIORITY

Priority 1	- Findings that are fundamental to the integrity of the Service's business processes and require the immediate attention of management.
Priority 2	- Important findings that need to be resolved by management.
Priority 3	- Findings that require attention.

Planned and Reactive Fleet Maintenance – Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Service Support

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
It was noted that some training courses are overdue, as highlighted in the 'F&E Staff Training (Aug 2024)' document. These courses relate to routine refresher training and specific technical updates. While training is generally up to date, the overdue training indicates that there is room for improvement in tracking and ensuring that all staff complete their mandatory or refresher courses on time. A more proactive system is needed to highlight overdue training and send reminders to relevant staff members to complete courses.	2	Fleet Workshop staff complete all statutory learning via the DWFRS Grow / Learning Hub portal which is recorded within Gartan Expert as competencies. All technical training including refresher training which is not a condition of trade competence is managed by the Fleet Maintenance Manager and is currently monitored using a local excel spreadsheet. The Fleet Maintenance Manager is tasked to investigate whether an alternative training software solution can be	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** A formal system should be introduced within the fleet management software (or HR platform) to track training completion and automatically highlight overdue courses. Regular reminders should be sent to staff and their supervisors to ensure timely completion of mandatory training. **Responsibility:** Head of Assets **Target Date:** 30 September 2025	Tracking of training completion has been incorporated into the new Transend Fleet Management System.	Complete

	Priority				
	 	adopted to both monitor and push training needs messages/reminders, we will aim to have this in place by September.			

Corporate Performance Management – Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Service Support

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
The Service has a well-structured performance framework grounded in the 12 KLOEs, which aligned to Community Safety Plan (CSP) priorities, and undergoes annual review; however, the audit noted some areas that could strengthen Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reliability and strategic oversight. Specifically: • Where KPIs are considered to lack clear definitions and targets it can lead to interpretive variance, for example, where 1-to-1s completion rates have ranged from 16% to 95% across departments, meaning total percentages can be misleading. • Some non-targeted KPIs are reported to monitor current performance against previous quarters and years; however, there is not a clear rationale documented to support the non-targeted approach.	3	The Service will develop a document, as part of the annual strategic planning process, which confirms the rationale for non-targeted KPI's, which are used as a monitoring tool and do not require a targeted approach. This document will also include clear definitions and targets for departmental KPI's to align with the overall Service requirements.	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** A. Ensure that department KPI's are reflective of the corporate KPI definitions, scope and measurement criteria to ensure consistency across services with built in reviews in the corporate calendar. B. Review the non-targeted KPIs and record documented rationale where the KPI is used as a monitoring tool, rather than a target to improve auditability and transparency. **Responsibility:** Area Manager Service Improvement **Target Date:** 31 October 2025	This is now standard practice as part of the Service Delivery Plan (SDP) creation process.	Complete

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
The review noted that format consistency was strong, with all reports incorporating standardised elements, such as appendices detailing the 13 KLOEs, sub-diagnostic questions, and qualitative commentary for each. However, report length and complexity were significant. Each quarterly report contains detailed narrative paragraphs under each sub-question, highlighting the baseline assessments, which result in documents that are comprehensive but can be often overwhelming.

Although no control failure was identified and the Service uses these reports successfully to provide scrutiny over performance every quarter, the volume, density, and uniformity of reporting could risk impairing scrutiny, especially at strategic levels. This may delay the identification of risks or reduce the ability of Members to interrogate performance effectively.

The Service Improvement Team is already working on strengthening the reports with a dashboard approach, which is positive, however this should be formalised. | 3 | The Service will continue with the approach undertaken over the past two quarters of exception-based reporting and add a contents page with a RAG summary. | **Recommendation/Corrective Action:**
A. Continue with the exception-based performance reporting format to streamline information presented to governance committees.
i. Focus detailed reporting only on key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) or KPIs rated amber or red (i.e., underperforming or at risk).
ii. Provide a concise summary of green/on-track items, aggregated unless specific scrutiny is required.

Add to reports a:
iii. high-level visual summary page, with RAG dials or performance bulletins, to aid rapid understanding.
iv. Include hyperlinks or appendices for drill-down access to full data, where necessary.
v. Pilot site suggestion: Service Delivery Team – due to its coverage of all priorities. | A. The Service Delivery Team (SDT) now use only exception-based reporting as part of its performance management reporting. Reporting templates have been updated for clarity and direction.

B. As part of the annual review reporting has been adjusted, with dashboards being more widely implemented. | <mark>Complete</mark> |

	B. The annual review of reporting should specifically consider within the procedure tailored reporting by audience: i. For Strategic Leadership Team and managers: include detailed diagnostics, root cause analysis, and operational actions. **Responsibility:** Area Manager Service Improvement **Target Date:** 31 October 2025		

ICT Asset Management – Assistant Chief Officer – Director of Corporate Services

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
The DWFRS Asset Management Policy Statement states, "Has effective information and communication technology which enables the efficient delivery of its services". We confirmed that there are multiple policies that provide guidance on ICT asset management, however there is not an overarching asset management policy that is specific around who is responsible for updating asset information and reporting asset information to the ICT team throughout the assets lifecycle, including procurement and disposal. There is currently a risk around inaccurate asset data of non-ICT assets, as there is ineffective communication of asset data from the Operational Communications team, specifically we concluded that there is a lack of confidence in the accuracy of Operational Communications assets information in the ICT inventory. This is due to informal and irregular communication between teams and a lack of Service Level Agreement (SLA) regarding the reporting of asset information to the ICT team. The lack of policy around roles and responsibilities for the full asset lifecycle increases the lack of ICT team oversight of correct asset data.	2	ICT Hardware Asset Management policy review is underway to collate multiple points of information into one, aligned to data asset management. This will provide clarity on process and responsibilities for recording and managing ICT hardware assets in house across ICT and Operational Communications, with SLAs agreed across departments to assure compliance.	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** • Collate all ICT Asset Management Policy information into one policy. • Include in the policy information around roles and responsibilities for all assets, including those not owned by the ICT team. This would increase confidence in the accuracy of non-ICT asset information. **Responsibility:** Head of ICT **Target Date:** 30 September 2025	Completed policy is out on consultation ready for publication pending feedback.	Complete

This results in: • The information available to the Fire Service being inaccurate and ineffective. • A risk of inappropriate data being migrated to the new Manage Engine system.				
Main Finding	**Priority**	**Management Response**	**Implementation Plan**	**Management Update**	**Progress**
The DWFRS Asset Management Policy Statement states, "Has effective information and communication technology which enables the efficient delivery of its services". There are multiple findings that affect the confidence of the accuracy of the information in the ICT Inventory; we found issues around policies as mentioned above and we noted that the asset management system is manual via free text entry and therefore there is a risk of human error whenever there is an addition or change to asset information. We also confirmed that there is similar asset information across multiple sources and systems including Notes, Operational Communications internal spreadsheets and Operational Communications managed systems. This results in decreased efficiency of service as multiple sources of information are required to be updated if there is a change to an asset.	2	Work is already underway to implement Manage Engine Asset Management processes. This involves moving process off NOTES systems, and collation of a single source of the truth regarding ICT assets. This information will need to be accessible by all and meet several departmental requirements in relation to understanding what they own, procure, align and prioritise business continuity with. Data cleansing will occur as part of this work to assure a good standard of information within the new system and can continually be maintained in business as usual.	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** • Collate all Asset information into one system, this is the plan with Manage Engine. • Remove all redundant sources of information where applicable. • Perform a data sanitisation exercise for all asset information before migration to the Manage Engine Asset Management System. **Responsibility:** Head of ICT **Revised Target Date:** 28 February 2026	This work is underway with additional modules being added to ServiceDesk Plus (Manage Engine). Completion changed to early in the new year due to alignment to other departmental timelines for addition to the system.	Off Track

People Development – Assistant Chief Officer - Director of People Services

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
DWFRS has developed a strong and well-documented framework for people development, with defined processes in place for 1:1 review, leadership development, Succession Planning (SP), and promotion. Each is supported by structured procedures, such as the ED 2 Uniformed Promotion Procedure, ED 12 Development Pathways and CPD Procedure, and the Succession Planning Guidance (March 2025) — and corresponding tools, including the 9-box grid for talent identification, career progression flowcharts, and a comprehensive suite of leadership development programmes. Despite this strong foundation, audit testing identified that these processes are not formally integrated in practice. There is currently no system-level prompt, data link, or structured mechanism to ensure that information from one process (e.g. SP risks or development needs) is actively used to inform another (e.g. leadership training allocation or promotion decisions). For example: • The 1:1 review template does not include a prompt to reference SP outputs or promotion readiness. • Leadership development attendance is prioritised based on SP indicators.		The importance of an integrated workforce and succession planning process that links to our promotion and progression activities is recognised and fully supported. Since the launch of the 1:1 system in 2020 there was always an ambition that this would be the first stage in the development process. However, each of the key linked processes highlighted (promotion process and our leadership offering) have undergone further reviews/changes or did not have sustained funding to support the realisation of these plans. We are close to finalising the Crew and Watch Manager promotion processes and now have a sustainable approach to our leadership development that will	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** A. Introduce a shared development prompt or field within the 1:1 review process to ensure managers record links to promotion readiness, SP flags, or leadership development activity. B. Provide existing training materials or written guidance to all line managers to support consistent use of the 1:1 process for development planning and linking outcomes to succession and promotion pathways. C. Progress will be measured by tracking completion of manager training and inclusion of the new prompt in all 1:1 templates.	All developments to the 1:1 system are on hold pending the introduction of the new HRMIS.	On Track

• Promotion assessment forms do not include a reference to the candidate's development plan or 1:1 outcome. These observations were supported by feedback from interviews with the Leadership and Organisational Development Lead, HR Lead for Promotions and Succession and the Senior HR Officer, who confirmed that the four processes often operate in isolation, with linkages depending on individual manager discretion rather than embedded process. The current separation limits the organisation's ability to take a joined-up approach to workforce and leadership planning. Without structured integration, there is a risk that development needs are identified but not acted upon, or that succession risks are not addressed through coordinated development or promotion opportunities.		enable this integration to begin to take shape. Detailed guidance documents are in place for all staff and line managers. This also includes 'How To' videos to ensure individuals get the best out of their 1:1 one to one. The accompanying procedure also enables a discussion to take place should the individual wish to be considered for future promotion opportunities. A key focus of our Digital Transformation programme is to move away from Lotus Notes to Office 365. The 1:1 process is a Notes based system and the ability to amend the current system is limited as we do not have Lotus Notes developers. A new 1:1 system is part of the programme of work, and this is due to be completed by the end of April 2026. This does therefore impact on our ability to undertake some of the recommendations and	**Responsibility:** HR BP & Employee Relations Manager **Target Date:** May 2026	

		associated delivery timescales.			
		As a result, the following response is proposed: -			
		A) Existing 1:1 Guidance Notes will be reviewed to ensure Managers include a discussion about promotion readiness that can be recorded with the 'Development' section of our current 1:1 process. This can be replicated in the new 1:1 system when built. The Guidance Notes will also reference any Leadership Development activities that the individual can access, ensuring this is also recorded on the Development Plan to ensure this is tracked and followed up.			
		B) We do not have the resources to undertake Manager Training sessions and therefore will need to rely on Managers taking time to familiarise themselves with the changes to the Guidance Notes and accompanying communications.			

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
		i) Once the Guidance Notes have been updated Managers will be made aware of this update, to enable them to refresh their knowledge and awareness. ii) We will also ensure that they newly developed Management in Lifesaving makes reference to this. C) Completion of this task will need to be confirmed through existing SDT reporting arrangements, with Managers responsible for undertaking spot checking of 1:1s undertaken within their teams/department. The Standards and Assurance Team could complete a quality assurance check of this work.			
The 1:1 review process is a key part of DWFRS's people development framework, supported by clear policy (ED 9 – 1:1 Review Procedure V2.0) and user guidance for staff and managers. These documents outline expectations for discussions on performance, wellbeing, development goals, and behaviours aligned to the Core Code of Ethics.		1) A review of the existing guidance can include the development of a checklist which can be added to the 1:1 guidance material. 2) Through existing reporting mechanisms, SDT meetings,	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** Develop and roll out a short manager briefing and checklist to support consistent completion of 1:1 review. The checklist will focus on ensuring that discussions capture development goals, promotion	All developments to the 1:1 system are on hold pending the introduction of the new HRMIS.	On Track

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
Audit testing confirmed that 1:1 completion is well-monitored, with Q1 2025 data showing a strong compliance rate of 90%. The Collect system provides alerts, and People Partners follow up on outstanding reviews. This reflects positively on DWFRS's commitment to regular staff engagement. However, a review of 20 anonymised 1:1s (One to Ones for Audit – June 2025) showed variation in content quality. While some reviews included clear development actions and wellbeing discussions, others were brief, lacked follow-up, and made little or no reference to progression. This variation appears to stem from differing manager approaches. As confirmed by the Senior HR Officer, the People Team monitor completion of 1:1s but does not quality assure content unless concerns are raised. Without consistency checks or development prompts, there is a risk that 1:1s become transactional rather than developmental, limiting their value for progression and workforce planning.		Managers can confirm that they are using the checklists to support completion of 1:1 reviews. 3) With the introduction of a new Compliance and Investigation Team, consideration could be given to future monitoring and quality assurance by this team once fully established and embedded.	interest, and behavioural feedback aligned with the Core Code of Ethics. The success of this action will be measured by: • Incorporation of the checklist into 1:1 guidance material, and • Managers will be accountable for ensuring the checklist is used consistently during 1:1 reviews, with compliance monitored through existing quarterly reporting mechanisms rather than direct oversight by HR People Partners. **Responsibility:** HR BP & Employee Relations Manager **Target Date:** May 2026		
DWFRS has a structured approach to succession planning. Departmental succession plans are completed using a consistent tool, including the 9-box grid and risk matrix, and are reviewed by People Partners as part of the annual workforce planning cycle. This supports the identification of high-potential staff, retirement risks, and critical roles. However, there is no formal mechanism to track whether development actions identified in these plans have been followed up. Once the		The Department Succession Plans should be reviewed by the Manager on a six monthly basis, with the support of their Human Resources People Partner (HRPP). This should ensure that Managers keep actions under review.	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** A. Add a simple follow-up step to SP review checkpoints for managers to confirm whether identified development actions have been progressed or need further support. B. Include this follow-up step in the SP tool/template so managers can record the status of actions during reviews.	The HRPP managers guidance has been updated to reflect these changes.	Complete

plans are submitted, it is left to individual managers to progress development activity, and there is no checkpoint to confirm that actions have been implemented. As a result, there is a risk that staff identified as high-potential or in critical roles may not receive timely or targeted support, potentially impact future leadership capacity or creating gaps in key service areas.	We can address these actions by building on our current Department Succession Planning process, with a few simple updates to help us keep better track of development actions: • update the guidance so managers are prompted to check on any development actions agreed previously and note any progress or support needed. • add a dropdown option in the existing SP toolkit so managers can record the status of those actions – for example completed, in progress, or not started. • Review who should be responsible for reporting, to make sure there is a clear and consistent way to check and report on progress as part of the annual SP cycle.	C. Require managers to review and report on the follow-up status as part of the annual SP review cycle, with HR providing support only where escalation or oversight is needed. **Responsibility:** Head of People Support **Target Date:** January 2026	

Main Finding	Priority	Management Response	Implementation Plan	Management Update	Progress
DWFRS's promotion process is well-structured, fair, and aligned with national frameworks such as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Leadership Framework. Clear guidance, standardised scoring tools, and behavioural assessment criteria support		We can address these actions by making some straightforward updates to our promotion process:	**Recommendation/Corrective Action:** A. Add a prompt to promotion application and panel assessment forms asking whether the	Once complete, updated forms will be used in all promotion processes with clear guidance given to all panel members on	On Track

consistency and transparency across promotion decisions. As confirmed during the interview with the Strategic HR Lead for Promotions and Succession Planning, while some managers informally consider this information, it is not recorded or embedded in the process. This limits the service's ability to ensure promotion decisions are informed by prior development activity or aligned with succession and workforce planning.		• Add a question to the promotion application and panel member guidance/forms asking if the candidate has a current development plan or is flagged for progression through succession planning • Ensure these updated forms which are used in all promotion processes, from Crew Manager to Area Manager • Ensure clear guidance is given to all panel members on how to use this information when making decisions through panel briefings and on any written guidance which exists	candidate has a current development plan or is flagged for progression through SP. B. Ensure updated forms are used in all promotion processes (Crew Manager to Area Manager). C. Provide brief written guidance to promotion panel members on how to use this information when making decisions. **Responsibility:** Head of People Support **Target Date:** January 2026	how to use this information when making decisions through panel briefings.