

# Annual Governance Statement 2016/17 and Improvement Plan 2017/18

## Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260204 or Ged Edwards, Planning, Performance and Communications Manager, on 01743 260208.

## 1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is twofold: it sets out the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2016/17 and AGS Improvement Plan 2017/18 to be included in the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts; and it also details progress on the 2016/17 Improvement Plan.

## 2

### Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the progress made on the 2016/17 Improvement Plan;
- b) Agree to close the 2016/17 Improvement Plan, carrying forward any outstanding issues to the 2017/18 Improvement Plan; and
- c) Agree the AGS and 2017/18 Improvement Plan for inclusion in the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts.

## 3 Background

Corporate governance and accounting regulations require the Fire Authority to publish annually, on a timely basis, an objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the Fire Authority's governance arrangements, including its risk management and internal control mechanisms, and their effectiveness in practice. This is known as the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Fire Authority has delegated responsibility for the development of the AGS to the Risk Management Group.

At its February 2012 meeting the Fire Authority delegated approval of the Statement of Accounts to the Audit and Performance Management Committee. The Statement will, therefore, be signed off by the Chair of the Committee, the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer at the September meeting of the Committee.

The Statement of Accounts contains a statement as to how effective the Authority's various systems of internal control have been in governing the risks, to which the Authority is exposed. Areas of the system of internal control that have been identified as requiring improvement are listed in the AGS and an action plan has been developed to ensure that these improvements are progressed during the coming year. This is known as the AGS Improvement Plan.

This Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress, which the Service makes against the Plan

#### **4 Monitoring Progress against the AGS Improvement Plan 2016/17**

A copy of the AGS Improvement Plan 2016/17 is attached at Appendix A to this report, which shows progress against each of the planned activities.

The 2016/17 Improvement Plan monitored against six areas of activity. The six areas will be carried over into the 2017/18 plan as their completion dates are scheduled beyond 2016/17 reporting year.

1. Service Transformation Programme
2. ICT
3. Health and Safety
4. Operations
5. Payroll
6. Operational Assurance

Some of the tasks within the areas of ICT and Health and Safety have been completed within 2016/17 Improvement Plan. However new activities have been identified and are included within the 2017/18 Improvement Plan.

#### **5 AGS 2016/17 and AGS Improvement Plan 2017/18**

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, officers have reviewed the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control systems, which constitute the Authority's Governance Framework, with the aim of identifying further improvements, where required. This process involves the responsible officers' signing 'Assurance Statements' for each of the areas, for which they are responsible. Officers' statements are then reviewed by the Lead Executive Officer to ensure that the areas identified for improvement are appropriate and achievable.

A requirement of Regulation 6 (3) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations is to review annually the effectiveness of Internal Audit. Shropshire Council provides this service and will report to the Committee on the work undertaken during 2016/17.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's 'Assurance Statements' have then been reviewed in light of this report and the various audit reports received from Internal Audit over the last year. Together these have formed the basis of the AGS 2016/17 and its associated 2017/18 Improvement Plan.

Members are asked to consider and approve the draft AGS 2016/17 and the draft Improvement Plan 2017/18, attached as Appendices B and C respectively, for inclusion in the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts.

## **6 Monitoring Progress against the AGS Improvement Plan 2017/18**

The Committee will receive regular reports on progress made against the Plan throughout its life. As is the case with most plans, the activities included within it are often subject to change. This can be as a result of changes in the external environment that guides our work, as well as the internal environment that dictates whether we have the capacity to achieve our stated objectives.

To ensure there is control over any slippage, the officers responsible for delivering this work must obtain approval from the Service Management Team, if they require any variations to the current Improvement Plan. Any such changes will also be reported to the Committee.

## **7 Financial Implications**

Any significant budgetary implications, brought about by the improvements proposed in the Improvement Plan, have already been considered, either as part of the Fire Authority's budget planning process or within each Department's business planning process.

## **8 Legal Comment**

The AGS is a legal requirement under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom and must be included in the Fire Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.

## **9 Initial Impact Assessment**

An Initial Impact Assessment has been completed.

## **10 Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An Equality Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

## **11 Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2016/17

### **Appendix B**

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17

### **Appendix C**

Draft Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2017/18

## **12 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.

## Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2016/17 (Close Down)

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
<b>Service Transformation Programme and IRMP Action Plan</b>	1	<p>The Programme has been updated, extended up to 2020 and now includes IRMP activities. The Programme forms the basis of the 5 year action plan which is contained within the recently published 2015-2020 Service Plan.</p> <p>An annual benefits review will be presented to the APMC and progress on the three main Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) workstreams will be reported to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) through the Strategy and Planning Working Group (StraP).</p>	Ged Edwards and Andy Johnson	<p>Tablet devices have now been rolled out to all Stations. A questionnaire has been developed to capture feedback from users. The feedback from the questionnaire will form the basis of any follow on actions that may need to be addressed as part of the roll out.</p> <p>The first training session for the IT champions has taken place. The sessions covered their roles and responsibilities, the new IT help desk portal and service desk, mobilisation equipment at stations, Skype for Business and SharePoint including the portal, retained station document sites, creating/saving/searching documents. The champions will be the first point of contact at each retained station to support staff with ICT related issues.</p> <p>Fire Fighter Electronic Individual Development Records (EIDR) application has gone live throughout the whole time element of the Service. The roll out to the retained has commenced.</p> <p>Area Command and Prevention and Protection performance dashboards are now live. A prototype of the HR dashboard has been demonstrated and development work has now commenced.</p>	2020 (to be reviewed every 12 months)

				<p>Area Command dashboard and the benefits it has delivered was demonstrated to APMC in April.</p> <p>The new shift systems in Fire Control and on the Wholetime watches were started at the beginning of January (IRMP 1 and 2 Projects). Both systems involve regular review processes during this first year, making sure they deliver the requirements of the Service, whilst also meeting the needs of our staff. A summary report, outlining the benefits from these projects will come to Members after the completion of this pilot year.</p> <p>The Service is working with West Mercia Police to explore how the additional functions they would like to relocate to Telford Central, can be integrated into the future plans for the site, in the most practical and cost effective way. The outcome from ongoing conversations will be reported to the Fire Authority, most likely at its June 2017 meeting.</p>	
ICT	2	<p>ICT will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide improved provision of management information throughout the Service (SharePoint, BI, System Administrators);</li> <li>• Continue to replace all analogue communications with digital to improve communications and collaboration; and</li> </ul>	Sally Edwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of dashboards have been delivered and this is now business as usual and will continue to improve and enhance the provision of management information.</li> <li>• The replacement of analogue communications becomes business as usual as we prepare for the introduction of ESN.</li> </ul>	March 2017

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address IT Change Management issues.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RDS stations now have IT Champions. We have run workshops to discuss roles and responsibilities and ongoing we will now closely communicate with them as we introduce new systems.</li> </ul>	
<b>Health and Safety</b>	3	<p>Improve the ability to electronically record, monitor and audit the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electronic Individual Development Records for Officers and Firefighters(EIDRs);</li> <li>On station trainers' reviews;</li> <li>Training and Assurance Centre Instructors' reviews.</li> </ul> <p>The use of SharePoint will be explored for this purpose.</p>	Andy Johnson	<p>The Firefighters' (FF) EIDR has now been deployed to all Wholetime staff. Deployment to all On-Call staff has started and will be completed over the coming months.</p> <p>A pilot has been implemented for the Instructors' reviews, with the learning being used to support its full deployment.</p> <p>Following full deployment of the Instructors Reviews process, we shall explore its applicability to the On-station Trainer's Reviews.</p>	April 2017
<b>Operations</b>	4	<p>The process required to ensure our fireground information is maintained in a format that is accessible, timely and accurate is outdated and needs replacing to ensure it takes advantage of the changes being made nationally.</p>	Andy Johnson	<p>A Project Plan has been developed for the new system that will replace our current property information system. This will see the new system being implemented over the coming months.</p> <p>Once completed, this will mean that the information gathered by our Firefighters, during their risk inspections, will remain in electronic format throughout, resulting in more timely and accurate information being available to our Incident Commanders when dealing with any incidents at these properties.</p>	April 2018

<b>Payroll Systems Review</b>	5	Review current internal payroll processes, identify improvements and implement. Continue to develop ResourceLink to improve efficiency. Review current processes/ communications links between the Service and payroll provider to generate further improvements.	Louise McKenzie / Joanne Coadey	ResourceLink work packages have been agreed for the coming financial year (2017/18) and resource needs have now been agreed.  Retained Pay remains the focus for future improvement and some new exploratory work in this area has begun.	Managed through STP
<b>Operational Assurance</b>	6	The Service was looking to repeat the Operational Assurance process, in readiness for future inspection. However, the relevance of the existing Fire Service Operational Assurance process to the future inspection regime remains unclear.	Andy Johnson	Whilst undertaking some form of self-assessment continues to be a priority, in readiness for future inspection, this has been postponed whilst clarity is sought on the likely make-up of the national inspection regime and independent standards body, which is not expected until early next year. This has resulted in the target date for the Service's readiness for future inspection having to be pushed back to next year.  The Service has recently recruited to the Area Manager post, which has this function as one of its responsibilities. Over the coming months, the Service is looking to work with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and West Mercia Police, in its efforts to make sure it is well prepared for the future inspection processes.	April 2018

## Key

Amber – Carried forward

Green – Complete

## **Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17**

To accompany the Statement of Accounts 2016/17

### **Scope of Responsibility**

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Fire Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Fire Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Fire Authority has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016'.

A copy of the Code is on our website at:

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/07-code-of-corp-governance-201617.pdf>

A paper copy can be obtained from the Executive Support function within the Service.

This Statement explains how the Fire Authority has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement.

### **The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Fire Authority is directed and controlled, and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. It enables the Fire Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can, therefore, only provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact, should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority for the period of the 2016/17 accounts and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.

## **The Governance Framework**

The Fire Authority's governance framework comprises many systems, policies, procedures and operations in place to:

- identify and communicate the Authority's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users;
- review the Authority's vision and its implications for the Authority's governance arrangements;
- define and document the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication in respect of the Authority and partnership arrangements;
- develop, communicate and embed codes of conduct, which define the standards of behaviour for Members and staff;
- review and update standing orders, standing financial instructions, the scheme of delegation and supporting procedure notes / manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks;
- ensure the Authority's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2015) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact;
- ensure effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (2014)
- undertake the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities (2013);
- ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful;
- ensure the Authority's assurance arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and, where they do not explain why and how they deliver the same impact;

- enable whistle-blowing and the receiving and investigating of complaints from the public;
- identify the development needs of Members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training;
- establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation; and
- ensure good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working and reflecting these in the Authority's overall governance arrangements.

## **Review of Effectiveness**

The Fire Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control.

The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Authority, who have overall responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, as well as:

- the Treasurer;
- the Fire Authority's Monitoring Officer;
- Legal advisors to the Fire Authority;
- Internal Auditors; and
- Managers within the Fire Authority, who have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring the governance framework is functioning correctly.

Comments made by the External Auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates in their Annual Audit Letters and other reports also contribute to this review.

Throughout 2016/17, the Fire Authority has maintained, reviewed and improved its system of internal control in a number of ways. In particular:

- a) The Authority continues to monitor expenditure for all capital schemes;
- b) Ongoing review of the Authority's employment policies is undertaken and, where necessary, policies are modified or created to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation;
- c) The Service Transformation Programme, which includes Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Projects and activities that Service Managers believe will deliver a sustainable service to the community into the future. Central to the Programme will be the continued investment in technology and systems to improve back-office efficiency and provide operations with technology to improve service delivery. The Programme, which dovetails into the Service's Financial and Service planning processes, will ensure that the appropriate level of control and visibility of all projects, reviews and activities are maintained throughout the lifecycle of the Programme.

- d) The Service has continued to invest significantly in its Information and Communications Technology and command and control infrastructure.
- e) The Fire Authority has received and/or adopted:
  - Statement of Accounts 2015/16;
  - Annual Plan 2016/17;
  - Annual Audit Letter 2015/16;
  - Budget Monitoring reports;
  - Service Measures Performance reports;
  - The Service Plan 2015/20, strategy and budget.
- f) The Fire Authority's Service Management Team of officers carries out a continuous assessment of the implementation of policies and procedures throughout the organisation, including following up on progress made towards last year's Improvement Plan.
- g) Internal audits have been undertaken with a number of planned reviews of systems and internal control procedures across a range of functions in the Fire Authority. Each review contains an opinion on the internal controls in place and any weaknesses result in recommendations for improvement, which are implemented by management. Progress against these recommendations is monitored by the Risk Management Group, with regular reports to the Service Management Team and to the Audit and Performance Management Committee.
- h) Audits completed by Internal Audit during 2016/17 related to:
  - Code of Corporate Governance;
  - Creditors System;
  - Fire Fighters Pension Account;
  - IT Follow Up;
  - Lease Cars;
  - SharePoint Migration;
  - Payroll System;
  - Travel Expenses;
  - Purchasing Cards;
  - General Recommendations Follow Up;
  - Risk Management.

On the basis of the work undertaken and management responses received; the Authority's governance, risk management and internal control processes are sound and working effectively and the Head of Audit is able to deliver a positive year end opinion on the Authority's internal control environment for 2016/17.

Internal Audit will be conducting audits into the following areas during 2017/18:

- Payroll;
- Budget Strategy;
- Capital Budgeting and Accounting;
- Computer Services;
- Assets;
- Banking Arrangements;
- Partnerships;
- Information Transparency;
- Fraud and Corruption;
- Risk Management and Business Continuity;
- Corporate Governance;
- Annual Governance Statement;
- Previous recommendations follow up.

## **The Role of the Chief Financial Officer**

The Authority is compliant with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2015).

A Service Level Agreement has been put in place between Shropshire Council and Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, for the provision of financial advice and representation.

Shropshire Council's Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance, acts as Treasurer to Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority to ensure the sound administration of the financial affairs of the Authority, as required by the statutory duties associated with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Chief Financial Officer's role is discharged through:

- Provision of advice and support on application of accounting policies and procedures and adherence to International Financial Reporting Standards.
- Attendance by the Treasurer or nominated representative at the following statutory meetings held with Fire Authority Members:
  - Meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority;
  - Meetings of the Strategy and Resources Committee; and
  - Meetings of the Audit and Performance Management Committee.
- Regular Chair's briefings and internal meetings, as well as regular liaison with the internal Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer), and the internal Fire Authority Finance Team.

In addition to the provision of section 151 duties, Shropshire Council provides access to a number of services, for example the Fire Authority's Finance Team will have direct access to the Council's Financial Forward Planning Team, and can provide resilience and development through staff rotation and secondments.

The Council endeavours to consult with the Fire Authority on any key or principal decisions, outside the formal services agreed within the service level agreement.

### **Significant Internal Control Issues**

No significant issues were raised in the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter 2015/16. The relatively minor points arising from these reviews are being used to enhance the existing system of controls.

The Fire Authority undertook a review of its systems of internal control, which underpin its governance framework, between January and March 2017. An Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2017/18 has been produced, based on the findings from this process. Progress made against the Plan will be monitored by the Risk Management Group, with regular progress reports to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee and the Service's Service Management Team.

A summary of the areas for further development, contained in the AGS Improvement Plan 2017/18, is given below.

### **Service Transformation Programme**

The Programme which is updated each year, has been extended up to 2020 and includes IRMP activities. The Programme forms the basis of the 5 year action plan contained within the 2015-2020 Service Plan.

An annual benefits review will be presented to the APMC and progress on the three main Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) workstreams will be reported to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) through the Strategy and Planning Working Group.

### **Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

IT will build a stabilised team with the appropriate skills that can deliver the requirements of the 2017/18 Annual Plan and the support of the Command and Control (C&C) System.

Review and continually improve the service desk provision including management of all ICT assets.

Explore potential opportunities for collaboration.

### **Training**

Develop management reporting processes from the new Fire Fighter Electronic Individual Development Record (EIDR) system.

Develop and implement course evaluation process using ResourceLink.

Review and further develop Officer EIDR system, using lessons learnt from developing the Fire Fighter EIDR.

Develop Training & Development performance dashboard and access to Resource Link database in order to effectively administrate courses and provide management monitoring data/reports.

Continue to expand course reports from the Breathing Apparatus (BA) refresher report already developed.

## **Operations**

The process required to ensure fire-ground information is maintained in a format that is accessible, timely and accurate is outdated and needs replacing to ensure it takes advantage of the changes being made nationally. The project plan relating to a new electronic system has been approved and will be implemented prior to April 2018.

## **Payroll Systems Review**

Review current internal payroll processes, identify improvements and implement. Continue to develop ResourceLink to improve efficiency. Review current processes/communications links between the Service and payroll provider to generate further improvements.

Introduction of new ResourceLink Expenses upgrade and focus on modernising retained pay processes.

## **Operational Assurance**

The Service is awaiting an indication as to who will be undertaking the new inspection regime and the areas it will cover, which is likely to include some form of operational assessment. Details about the new inspection will not be available until next year.

Whilst undertaking some form of self-assessment continues to be a priority, in readiness for future inspection, this has been postponed whilst clarity is sought on the likely make-up of the national inspection regime and independent standards body.

The Service has recruited an Area Manager who now has responsibility for this area of work.

## **Technical Services/Area Command**

Ability to effectively track and test operational equipment by the Introduction of Standard Testing and Reporting System (STARS).

## **Health and Safety**

Introduce electronic workflows for the following:

- Vehicle incident report form
- Near miss
- Personal injury
- Suspected Contamination

Signed:

Cllr  
Chair of Audit and  
Performance Management  
Committee

Rod Hammerton  
Chief Fire Officer

James Walton  
Treasurer

## Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2017/18

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
<b>Service Transformation Programme and IRMP Action Plan</b>	1	<p>The Programme which is updated each year, has been extended up to 2020 and includes Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) activities. The Programme forms the basis of the 5 year action plan contained within the 2015-2020 Service Plan.</p> <p>An annual benefits review will be presented to the Audit and Performance Management Committee (APMC) and progress on the three main IRMP workstreams will be reported to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) through the Strategy and Planning Working Group.</p>	Ged Edwards and Andy Johnson		2020 (to be reviewed every 12 months)
<b>ICT</b>	2	<p>ICT will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a stabilised team with the appropriate skills that can deliver the requirements of the 2017/18 Annual Plan and the support of the Command &amp; Control System</li> <li>• Review and continually improve the service desk provision including management of all ICT assets</li> <li>• Explore potential opportunities for collaboration</li> </ul>	Sally Edwards		<p>September 2017</p> <p>March 2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
<b>Training</b>	3	<p>Develop management reporting processes from the new Fire Fighters (FF) Electronic Individual Development Record (EIDR) system.</p> <p>Develop and Implement Course Evaluation Process using Resource Link.</p> <p>Review and further develop Officer EIDR system, using lessons learnt from developing the FF EIDR.</p> <p>Develop Training &amp; Development performance dashboard and access to Resource Link database in order to effectively administrate courses and provide management monitoring data/reports.</p> <p>Continue to expand course reports from the Breathing Apparatus (BA) refresher report already developed.</p>	Andy Johnson and John Harrison		April 2018 (dependent upon supporting departments)
<b>Operations</b>	4	<p>The process required to ensure fire-ground information is maintained in a format that is accessible, timely and accurate is outdated and needs replacing to ensure it takes advantage of the changes being made nationally. The project plan relating to a new electronic system has been approved and will be implemented prior to April 2018.</p>	Andy Johnson and John Harrison		April 2018
<b>Payroll Systems Review</b>	5	<p>Review current internal payroll processes, identify improvements and implement. Continue to develop ResourceLink to improve efficiency. Review current processes/ communications links between the Service and payroll provider to generate further improvements. Introduction of new ResourceLink Expenses upgrade and focus on modernising retained pay processes.</p>	Louise McKenzie/ Joanne Coadey		Managed through STP

Area of review	IRN	Improvement required	Improvement Owner	Progress to date	Completion date
<b>Operational Assurance</b>	6	<p>The Service is awaiting an indication as to who will be undertaking the new inspection regime and the areas it will cover, which is likely to include some form of operational assessment. Details about the new inspection will not be available until next year.</p> <p>Whilst undertaking some form of self-assessment continues to be a priority, in readiness for future inspection, this has been postponed whilst clarity is sought on the likely make-up of the national inspection regime and independent standards body.</p> <p>The Service has recruited an Area Manager who now has responsibility for this area of work.</p>	Kevin Faulkner		Post April 2018
<b>Technical Services / Area Command</b>	7	Ability to effectively track and test operational equipment by the Introduction of Standard Testing and Reporting System (STARS).	John Das-Gupta and Andrew Kelcey		March 2018
<b>Health and Safety</b>	8	<p>Introduce electronic workflows for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle incident report form</li> <li>• Near miss</li> <li>• Personal injury</li> <li>• Suspected Contamination</li> </ul>	John Harrison		March 2018