

Local issues raised

Departments

This document reports any dept-specific issues raised, which sit alongside the Summary of Themes reported from multiple locations. Local issues and wellbeing matters which relate to specific individuals have been excluded for confidentiality reasons

Communications



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Large workload for a small team, waiting for roles to be filled Challenging to reach a large audience on different working patterns, aware there can be gaps in comms. Can only communicate what the team know about, not always told in a timely way IRS access is useful but the job is harder when it goes down Working relationships It is a close knit team but that can make it harder to challenge each other or address issues Don't always feel heard because it is a small team Other staff don't understand the comms role and some think of it as an admin team. Can feel like people approach the team just to 'tick a box' Professional skills not always recognised or respected, some people don't recognise the benefits of the profession, some do not want to take their professional advice that there are better ways to do things Some have experienced rude or sarcastic remarks from a small number of firefighters or managers and can find it hard to stand up to them Would help if firefighters better understood their own role in comms, e.g. use of Twitter for safety advice at incidents 	 Proud to work for the Service Supportive manager who is a good mentor Team is a lot better than it used to be Have good access to training Cross-cover builds skills and makes it different Going out to stations has resulted in a change in behaviours towards the team On Call are more engaged with communications 	 More responsibility and opportunities within roles/ department Role specific training More influence at strategic level Have some objectives that are linked to strategic priorities

Community Fire Safety



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity High workloads, some feel overloaded. Have vacancies or leavers not replaced Timeframes can be challenging Some feel that some teams within Community Safety are better resourced than others Difficult to resource all the event requests that are made, especially weekends Demands from partner agencies can put pressure on the team Some feel working with police is all one way, what do police do for fire? Big turnover of operational line managers affects stability / continuity Some would like more engagement from operational staff for prevention work Can be stressful when all the phones are going. Working hard to cover gaps so people don't realise the team is struggling (SWF) Flexible working can make it difficult to cover some times of the week Perception that some team members are unwilling to cover all locations Need more joined up working with other departments /stations / teams so there is visibility of work / calls that might be generated Some feel there could be more clarity on targets and outputs; some feel there needs to be a better Community Safety strategy to deliver against Get requests for historic data the team doesn't hold, can be stressful CRM is not user friendly, using work-arounds, have to duplicate work in different systems, some think processes are over-engineered and could be simplified Civica does not accommodate recording overtime correctly iPads don't have mobile data even though staff need to access information when out and about 	 Proud of work Good work with the community Good team Supportive management in some teams Talented workforce Volunteers are great Cadet instructors go above and beyond Some have good training opportunities Flexibility 	 Some would like more strategic direction Some would like more guidance and support Better communication in the department Some would like the whole team to be located together More opportunity and notice to be able to attend events and working groups at KP Presentation training White board for planning and briefings Table and chairs for events HGV training for CSOs so they can take bigger vehicles to events Clarity on career paths and which roles are grey book / green book Progression opportunities Shadowing other roles More people could come to see what we do

Community Fire Safety



Local issues raised - cont.

Working relationships

- Some stations are more co-operative with community safety work than others
- Some find there is less of an 'us and them' attitude from firefighters now
- Staff at non-KP locations can feel forgotten about

Management of change

- Slow to get direction on future plans, e.g. how many courses/school visits to plan for
- Poor communication on moving Community Builders into groups and unclear on work allocation
- Hay review of which roles were grey book or green book was seen by some as not progressed because grey book staff didn't like the
 outcome

Recognition and reward

- · Some people don't feel they get much appreciation
- Some feel that other teams do not like CFS winning external awards, but it is good for external funding applications
- Some feel there is little recognition of the number of calls handled and that the team is giving safety advice by phone, not just booking
 visits

Communication

• Some feel that **communication** in the department could be improved

Training and development

- Green book staff don't get as many progression opportunities as grey book
- Some struggle to access training because of workload
- · Some have to find their own development opportunities

Community Fire Safety



Local issues raised - cont.

Facilities and equipment

- CSOs are provided with a gazebo that can't be put up by one person, and smaller gazebos are too small
- Could do with a phone system better suited to call handling (SWF)
- Office and toilet at South Woodham Ferrers require renovation, appears to have been missed (other offices at SWF were redecorated)
- Some females find the uniform poorly fitting

Fairness

- Some perceive that grey book staff are prioritised over green book, e.g. on how quickly issues are resolved, and on terms and conditions
- Some feel that there is not always a fair **allocation of work** across team members, some are allowed to 'get away' with not doing tasks that others are expected to do

Facilities



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Some individuals are experiencing high workloads Can be difficult when team members are absent Not always able to attend meetings because of work Some have not had regular appraisals Working relationships Some do not feel very integrated with the Property team Some individuals have experienced interpersonal issues in the team Management of change Had been issues with the job evaluation process and felt there 	 Good team Enjoy the job Air con was installed when requested Some report good relationships with line manager Some have had good support from HR 	 Some would like more development opportunities Some would like more visible line management Progress with vacancies in catering More time for training temps or a bank of cover for front of house Quicker resolution to interpersonal issues
 could have been better support through it Training Can be inconsistent training on systems so people do things in different ways 		

Finance



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Some report high workloads, it is a small team for the amount of work, some feel under a lot of pressure. Team members left but were not replaced. Some feel the Service needs its own qualified Finance Director Some are concerned about a perceived lack of succession planning (generally) and contingency in the team Some feel processes could be more streamlined or automated but there is little appetite for it Procedures are not always followed by others in the Service, causing work for finance, some perceive there is no 'comeback' Some perceive there is silo working and finance is not always notified in a timely way IT systems don't integrate so there is duplication Working relationships Some feel there could be a more supportive management style Some feel finance is left to 'say no' to decisions because others don't want to make decisions Some do not always feel valued 	 Proud to work for the Service Good team Flexibility Some are positive about line management Team is able to utilise their strengths 	 Resilience in the team and cross-skilling to cover Succession planning More development opportunities Better use of IT, less paper Information about future collaboration Make the hard decisions Make managers accountable Communicate the finance policies/processes

Fleet Services (Includes Technical Services)



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Some feel vehicles are taken for granted by some operational staff and having multiple drivers means there is no accountability for damage Staffing changes mean it is not always clear who is responsible for a vehicle Less variance in fleet vehicles would be more cost effective Work is made harder when operational staff do not understand vehicle regs Some feel the service is more reactive than proactive Some feel there is no need for reporting time in 6min blocks IT systems don't integrate, data extraction can be clunky and they don't always suit Fleet, e.g. Civica recording times for overtime Locked down mobile phone functionality, can't send photos of vehicle issues when off site Working relationships Can feel isolated from HQ Technical Services do not always feel integrated within Fleet, their main interactions are with operations and health and safety Some feel there can still be some lack of engagement from some operational staff, but it is getting better Line managers do not always take on board engineers' advice when out on jobs Some feel there is a lack of respect towards Fleet staff from either HQ or operational staff Some feel there is a need for more consistent line management and for issues raised to be dealt with 	 Pride in what the team does Good relationships and teamwork within the team Team managers are approachable Technical Services manager is supportive to the team Good team briefings and comms within the team Good training Workload is manageable Flexibility 	 Clarity and transparency on potential move Consistent and stable decision making – not changing minds Clearer direction and information not in 'management speak' Confirmation of direction on fleet collaboration Review of car lease scheme More practical hands-on training Resolve issues with incorrect pay / overtime Recognition of market rate in pay Opportunity to build relationships with other departments More social interaction, e.g. Christmas party Fewer restriction on phone functionality Better end user engagement More SLT visibility

Fleet Services (Includes Technical Services)



Local issues raised - cont.

Management of change

- Potential **collaboration and relocation** is a big cause of concern. There has not been sufficient communication leading to rumours and it impacts morale. Some are concerned about potential for job losses
- · Not clear on what happened following the review of Lexden site
- Changes in SLT mean having to explain again how Fleet works
- Some feel **decisions** are made by people who do not understand Fleet. It is not always clear who is making decisions or how to feed in ideas or how the department is represented at SLT
- · Lack of continuity of staff on Fleet projects
- Some feel staff are not engaged enough before decisions are made, e.g. on fire engine renewal
- Some feel the green book Hay review of pay was poorly handled with poor communication and felt unsupported through the process

Recognition and reward

- Would like more recognition of their contribution, e.g. thanked for working over Christmas
- Experienced a number of issues with pay when Civica introduced
- Some feel pay is not in line with **market rate.** Pay rises are absorbed into market rate, so no actual increase in pay. Some feel the national skills shortage is not recognised
- Some are not clear on the rationale for the pay structure, spot points etc.
- Would like paper **payslips** and believe they were promised these

Communication

- Need comms which recognises not everyone sits at a computer
- Don't always get corporate announcements

Training and development

- Lack of career progression opportunities
- Training could be better tailored to individual needs / different learning styles
- Talent pool does not meet the needs of Fleet
- Appraisals could be better tailored towards Fleet

Fleet Services (Includes Technical Services)



Local issues raised - cont.

Facilities and equipment

- Lexden site has broken windows, broken heating, leaking roof, staff concerned about asbestos
- · Limited parking at Lexden
- Wifi is poor
- Link phones do not work properly
- · Would be more efficient if they had oil guns

Policies and processes

- Policies/processes don't always suit Fleet, or there is a lack of understanding of how Fleet operates
- Mixed messages on whether annual leave can be carried forward

HR (includes Fitness, HR, L&D, Occ Health, Pensions)



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Very heavy workloads in some teams, exacerbated by work generated by Civica implementation. Some duplication of effort and time spent logging work on system Some would like more strategic planning and co-ordination of work. There are some big pieces of reactive work Projects are started but not completed, making it harder to get buy-in when they re-start Some would like more direction and clarity on role Lack of stability in the team. Fixed term contracts cause insecurity Limited contingency in some smaller teams, e.g. pensions Posts in the team were lost on the expectation that Civica would reduce workloads but this has not happened Some feel HR caseloads are too big and they cannot give enough support to managers Some experience more out-of-hours work than was anticipated/communicated. Some think the Thursday HR cover until 8pm does not feel voluntary and could be more effective with a mobile phone from home as calls are rare Limited resource for On Call recruitment, e.g. training places, and lack of clarity on who does what in the process Can be difficult to arrange fitness tests with some On Call stations Difficult to get some information since Civica was introduced, e.g. starters and leavers list, historic data Some are concerned that Civica will not be fully utilised and they will always have to 'make do' iPads for fitness tests don't always stream the soundtrack correctly which is stressful for candidates, it worked better when the soundtrack was loaded to the iPad but IT policy changed 	 Proud to work for the Service Flexibility Manager is supportive Things are going in the right direction Behaviours are improving Positive relationships within own teams Approach of more informal resolution and mediation Ability to go out to stations Get regular appraisals and 1:1s Customers do not direct their frustration at the team personally More positive relationship now with stations, particularly since visiting stations 	 Complete the HR restructure [live issue at time of meetings] Stability in the team More resource; capacity to visit stations more Better working relationships within HR Better communication within HR and between teams within HR More development opportunities and job enrichment Career path Some would like more feedback Better utilisation of skill sets Longer-term talent planning Service needs to be strategic and deliver on projects Better planning iPad for each of fitness team, with working soundtrack

HR (includes Fitness, HR, L&D, Occ Health, Pensions)



Local issues raised - cont.

Working relationships

- Aware of the **reputation** of HR in the rest of the Service, but improving with more interaction with stations
- Pockets of low morale
- Pressure means people can be snappy with each other
- There were a number of instances of individuals experiencing interpersonal issues, e.g. whispering, gossiping, cliques
- Previous **mistrust** from some operational staff towards the fitness team (because of implications of not passing fitness assessment), but this is improving
- · Some would like the teams in HR to work more closely with each other

Management of change

- Some feel the Service needs to be more **proactive** and less reactive
- Many feel the HR restructure was poorly timed, took too long and there was not enough communication and clarity and no response to
 queries, which was a major stressor. There was a particular concern over multi-skilling and what that meant in practice. Some did not
 understand the rationale for decisions made in the process
- The **job evaluation** process/outcome was a stressor for some

Training and development

- Some feel Service managers need more development to manage processes and behaviour
- Some feel more IT training (Excel, mail-merge) would make the department more efficient

Facilities and equipment

Occ Health are tight for space when all are in, but have work-arounds in place and it is more discreet to be located away from the main
office

Policies and processes

- Some feel the department is too **process-driven.** Some feel the department needs slicker process and to work out information-sharing processes
- Many policies are out of date and have been in discussion with unions for a long time. Some feel there are too many policies
- Having no published **fitness policy** makes it difficult for the fitness team to advise people



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Need an ICT strategy, was underinvestment in systems in previous years Maintaining out-of-date systems, takes longer and is a risk Old infrastructure to support, e.g. out of date laptops Have some 'single points of failure' in the team Stressful to determine priority when two system incidents happen at once Can feel pulled in different directions Processes could be streamlined, there is lots of red tape, decision-making can be slow Need access to information on starters/leavers/movers IT call-out rota was a stress in the past but improved since split into week/weekend, more on the rota, more clarity on what is 'urgent' Lack of clarity on out-of-hours support for On Call e.g. not meant to be for password resets but limited communication of auto-reset facility. Can be difficult to push back on non-urgent calls Working relationships IT systems not seen positively by the Service A few said there have been morale problems. Some feel blamed for poor systems or poor implementation that is not their fault e.g. Civica, or users blame the systems instead of own lack of skills Sometimes users moan to each other but don't log problems Going out to stations works well 	 Proud to be part of the Service Flexibility Less stressful environment than some IT teams Restructure and filling posts has helped Loyal team Have more support and face-to-face discussions now Lots of opportunities in the Service Some have been given development opportunities More respect between people and teams now. Stations have all been welcoming. Service users are nice Feel more appreciation, people say thank you Appreciation shown by SLT Police collaboration could be an opportunity 	 Comms to the Service about what ICT do Upgrading the network and investment in infrastructure More development and training Cross-skilling so no single points of failure Continue interaction with stations Have a test lab Better use of technology and less paper based Honesty about systems that are not meeting needs and what will happen More training for end users

ICT



Local issues raised - cont.

Management of change

- Green book **Hay review** went on for a long time, impacted morale and motivation
- Department found out about potential **police collaboration** by accident, but response was well handled by the CFO. Some concerns about potentially working from police site which is portacabins with no access to parking or canteen
- Lack of clarity on **structure** in ICT and manager role, reporting lines, responsibilities
- Handover of projects to business as usual is not always done well

Training

- Need more **informal** sharing of knowledge in the team
- Mixed views on **formal training**, some would like more qualifications

Payroll



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Workload can be stressful for some, particular peaks in the month/year, but noted that is the nature of payroll work Implementation of Civica caused additional work Not many of the team are permanent, which causes uncertainty Working relationships Team was affected by the loss of a popular team member Individuals have experienced interpersonal issues and team dynamics were a concern Communication Information is not always shared well between departments Training and development Small team so not much opportunity for progression Don't always have time for training because of workload 	 Proud of the work the fire service does Positive to run payroll internally Good teamwork Good relationship with HR and Finance Good relationships for the team across the Service Users were patient and most were supportive during system implementation Good opportunities for training 	 Stabilise staffing Going to stations to see Civica from user perspective Some would like more training

Performance and Data



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Workload, can be stressful to get work done when others are off Could provide more data insight with more resource Can be difficult to get people/departments to provide information and complete data, not seen as important, and some want to use manual systems instead of IT Would help to have better co-ordination with projects and more strategic direction Issues with IT systems impact the ability to get data, e.g. IRS. Systems don't talk to each other Facilities and equipment Open plan office noise can be distracting for this kind of work Whiteboard and breakout table would be useful 	 Proud to work for the Service Good team Good manager Flexibility Good training and development Get appreciation 	 More understanding of what the team and other departments do Better visibility of SLT's priorities and rationale Need integrated IT systems and data More joined up working

Property (includes Water Section)



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Workload can be quite heavy Takes a long time to get decisions, e.g. on station closures, plans for workshops building There can be a lot of red tape and bureaucracy Can be difficult to get strategies from other teams to inform the property plan Can be difficult to keep stations on the run during refurbishment, which prolongs timescales Would help to be able to enter data straight into iPads Working relationships Mixed views on management style in the department Some had not met the new DCFO [at the time of discussions] Management of change Morale and motivation impacted by green book Hay review of pay, some felt it was poorly handled and took too long Training and development Limited opportunities for career development 	 Pride in the department and Service Good team Flexibility Training is good Team runs more smoothly now and manager communicates more Water team now included in team meetings People are helpful, good relationship with stations Senior managers give positive feedback on property improvements Software system works well 	 Need a clear strategy More opportunity for career progression or development/ secondment Better understanding of what other departments do

Technical Fire Safety



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity People are feeling extreme workload pressure. Concern about future staffing, time taken to train people, impact of training people on time to deliver work, impact on meeting building regs timescales. Admin resource was cut, temporary admin support ended too soon IT systems are slow and crash. Tablets do not sync properly. Have a number of manual work-arounds for CRM. Some estimate losing 10-20% of time on IT problems. FSO40 forms do not match the screen, takes 30-45mins to input each. Working relationships Line managers have too much work to be able to support the team as much as managers and staff would like Conscious of the knock-on effect of the team not turning work around Some feel isolated being in a distributed team Some feel there is a divide between grey and green book staff Some have previously experienced poor behaviour when not able to keep up with the workload Recognition and reward Small team, feels forgotten about Admin feel they are not always listened to	Good working relationships Colleagues are supportive Some are positive about the training received	 Resolve staffing issues Workforce planning taking account of training time Reasonable workloads Ability to take part in wider Service activity (can't now because of workload) Some would like more department meetings Some would like more contact between Service Delivery Hubs Time for training Would like to replace office Christmas tree at Harlow, would make team feel valued
Training and development No career path		
Some would like more training, e.g. on systems		
 Officers have multiple Task books to maintain Some confusions about DDOR and maintaining competence 		18

Training



Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity High workload. Feels pressurised if there is not enough time to plan training or adjust training based on feedback Some would like to deliver more training to operational staff, not just do assessments Some feel operational staff should take more ownership of their training / learning, e.g. practicing between assessments, attending all days of a course Some feel there should be more post-course follow-up with trainees Can be reactive rather than proactive No time to get organised, e.g. maintaining admin, files Civica is not flexible enough to use for course bookings Training and development Need clear career paths, can be difficult to move out of training Need time for own training and development, difficult to complete Task 	 Proud to work for the Service Team managers are supportive Good team spirit Good health monitoring from occupational health Positive about additional investment in training Get the equipment that is needed Moving in the right direction 	 More resource in training, resource for training and not just assessment More time for team meetings, 1:1s, appraisals, communications cascade Time for own development

Other Departments



Comments have been collated for teams where we saw fewer than three people, to preserve confidentiality. This section reflects feedback from people in the following teams:

- Business Development
- Central Resource Team
- Central Stores

- Health & Safety
- Innovation & Change
- Operations

- Purchase & Supply
- Risk

Local issues raised	Positives	What would help to thrive
 Capacity Can be a lack of appreciation for how long some activities take Short-staffed in Central Stores Service is reactive and could be more proactive Not always a good or timely flow of information between departments IT systems don't integrate and there is duplication There is no availability system for Central Resourcing Team Working relationships Some teams feel overlooked, forgotten or what they do is not understood Management of change Uncertainty around collaboration with the police Subject matter experts are not always consulted or involved in changes affecting their work Training and development Lack of career path in some departments 	 Pride in the job, proud to work for the Service Good relationships within teams Some have good development opportunities H&S roadshow got good feedback 	 Some would like more direction / clarity on priorities Be more proactive and less reactive More integration and interaction between people/teams More interaction with stations Stores and equipment at one site Communication on potential collaboration More opportunities to attend forums / working groups Some would like more development Would prefer Change team to be located together