CIVICA

Modern.Gov helps Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service automate time consuming processes

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England. It delivers prevention, protection and response services across the counties of Devon and Somerset.

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority, which is responsible for the Service, comprises some 26 appointed members drawn from four constituent authorities. The organisation operates a traditional committee system. The democratic services team of two co-ordinate meetings for the Authority and its committees. They use Modern.Gov for agenda and minute construction for internal management meetings – approximately 50 meetings a year in total.

The challenge

Papers for committee meetings can run to over 200 pages, with agendas changing at the last minute, generating a lot of work and costly printing to tight deadlines. The administrative burden was growing and pressure mounting on the small team. So, in 2015 they secured agreement to procure a fit-for-purpose governance system that would help save time and money.

Steve Yates, Democratic Services and Corporate Support Manager for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services, comments:

"The meeting management system we used previously was limited in its scope and not delivering the efficiency we wanted. It only accepted Word documents and there was no automatic pagination so if your agenda changed, you had to manually update all the page numbers.

It became quite stressful at times, particularly when reports were received at the last minute, causing an issue with meeting the statutory publication deadline."

The solution

Steve and his colleagues turned to Civica for a complete governance solution and they haven't looked back.

"Modern.Gov is used by all four of our constituent authorities so our members were already familiar with it. More importantly, it offers all the functionality we need. It accepts all document formats, from Word to Excel, PowerPoint and PDF and it automatically paginates, so it doesn't matter when a report comes in at the last minute. We also use it to manage our register of members' interests and meeting attendance."

Steve Yates, Democratic Services and Corporate Support Manager, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

With the Modern.Gov solution, users can log and report on attendance quickly and easily. Steve continues:

"When we are asked for member attendance statistics, we simply press one button and run a report – by committee, all meetings or individual. We used to have to do a manual trawl but now, one click and it's done!"

Time saving benefits

Steve found that, by automating some of the more time-consuming processes associated with meeting management, the Modern.Gov solution saves him a lot of time.

"Personally, I think the time saved is the biggest benefit of using Modern.Gov. Once we click 'create pack' it pulls it all together. We can trust the pagination and let the printer do its work. From one day, down to 1 to 2 hours for each meeting is amazing. It has freed up so much time for other tasks, which was much needed."

> " We like the fact that Modern.Gov is developed by democratic services officers for democratic services teams, so they understand what we need. The tweaks that result from each update are testament to the very active relationship Civica has with its customers."
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> **Steve Yates,** Democratic Services and Corporate Support Manager, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has been using the Modern.Gov solution for 18 months now. They are working towards paperless meetings, using Modern.Gov's paperless meeting app and are also interested in using the software to manage expenses and support workflow. Steve comments:

 "It would be great to be able to send auto-generated reminders for reports when members have not submitted on time."

In the meantime, he works closely with Civica's Governance and Meeting Management team who are always ready to provide support and enhance the software to meet changing needs.

The outcomes

Automation
of time consuming processes

Single click
to run reports

75% reduction
in administration time per meeting