



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

## PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2022 @ 1000 HRS

### CONFERENCE FACILITIES

#### PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)  
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)  
Steve Barron (SB)  
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)  
Malcolm Payton (MP)  
Tim Wright (TW)

Fiona Thorburn, Deputy Chair (FT)  
Nick Barr (NB)  
Brian Baverstock (BB)  
Angiolina Foster (AF)  
Paul Stollard (PS)  
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Ross Haggart (RH)	Interim Chief Officer
Stuart Stevens (SS)	Interim Deputy Chief Officer
Liz Barnes (LBa)	Interim Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
David Lockhart (DL)	T/Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development
Iain Morris (IM)	Acting Director of Asset Management
John Thomson (JT)	Acting Director of Finance and Procurement
Andy Watt (AW)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance (Item 11 only)
Chris Fitzpatrick (CF)	Business Intelligence and Data Services Manager (Item 11 only)
Kevin Murphy (KM)	Group Commander Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

#### OBSERVERS:

Robert Scott, HMFSI

#### 1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and participating, or observing via MS Teams.
- 1.2 Attendees were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.

#### 2 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 David Farries, T/Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery  
Mark McAteer, Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications

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- 3 CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE**
- 3.1 The Board agreed that the *Draft Budget Strategy, Command and Control Futures Update, Legacy Insurance Claim* and *Industrial Relations* items would be taken in private due to matters subject of legal proceedings (Standing Orders 9D), confidential commercial/financial information (Standing Orders 9E) and the confidential nature of the issues (Standing Order 9G), respectively.
- 4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
- 4.1 There were no declarations of conflict of interests made.
- 5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**
- 5.1 **Thursday 27 October 2022**
- 5.1.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 5.1.2 **The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**
- 5.2 **Matters Arising**
- 5.2.1 There were no matters arising.
- 6 ACTION LOG**
- 6.1 The Board considered the action log and noted the updates.
- 6.2 **Members noted the updated Action Log and approved the removal of completed actions.**
- 7 DECISION LOG**
- 7.1 The Board considered the Decision Log, noting the impact assessment provided for decisions made 12 months ago.
- 7.2 In relation to the Gaelic Language Plan, RH provided a brief update on continuing engagement with, and the recommended amendments by, the Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The Bòrd na Gàidhlig have requested a meeting be arranged in order to discuss further. RH informed the Board that the recommendations not accepted were neither strategic nor financially driven. The Board noted the continuing work of the Strategic Leadership Team in the development of this plan.
- 7.3 **Members noted the updated Decision Log.**
- 8 CHAIR'S REPORT**
- 8.1 KD presented the Chair's Update report, noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 October 2022. In addition to the written report, KD provided a verbal update on the following key areas:
- Ongoing engagement with Scottish Government (SG) relating to Command and Control Futures (CCF), pay award and industrial action planning, potential implication of resource spending review and budget announcement.
  - Recruitment planning for Chief Officer vacancy.
  - Attendance at various Long Service Good Conduct and Graduation events.
- 8.2 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**
- 9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**
- 9.1 RH presented the Chief Officer's report, noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 October 2022. In addition to the written report, RH provided a verbal update on the following key areas:
- Industrial Action (IA) planning, update in the private session.

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- Developments on Command and Control Futures (CCF), notably the termination of contract with Systel, however the project remains live, update in the private session.
- Continuing planning ahead of budget announcement later today. Formally stood up Resource Spending Review (RSR) Programme of Work, which will be governed through the Portfolio Office and John Thomson, Acting Director of Finance and Procurement will be the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO).

### 9.2 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

## 10 **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### 10.1 **Change Committee (CC)**

10.1.1 FT reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 10 November 2022 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, highlighting the following:

- Discussed the importance of business cases and were given assurances that business cases would be prepared for all new projects.
- Discussed and requested retrospective business case to be produced for the Low Carbon Appliance project.
- Update provided on the Safe and Well Project noting that the evaluation report would be presented at the next meeting (February 2023).
- On Call Improvement Programme update.
- Progress of the Portfolio Office.
- External supplier engaged to review the Service's maturity for change. Findings to be brought to the Committee's workshop on 25 January 2023.
- Private session updates provided on CCF and approach to the Change Portfolio in relation to the RSR.

### 10.1.2 **The Board noted the verbal update and draft minutes.**

## 10.2 **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)**

10.2.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 13 October 2022 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. The following key points were highlighted:

- Update on Internal Audit review, particularly the early sharing of proposed scope of audits to afford the Committee an opportunity to feedback/make recommendations.
- Post Pandemic Final Report was complimentary on the pace of change within the Service, however reported that policies were not developed at the same pace. Other areas highlighted included the Agile Working Policy requiring to be clearer, need to identify and avoid the risk of returning to pre-covid practices in order to maintain benefits.
- Commended the efforts and work undertaken relating to assurance mapping.

10.2.2 BB noted that a further Special Private meeting was held on 9 December 2022, highlighting the following:

- External Audit's (Deloitte) report on the annual accounts was still incomplete and would potentially be finalised by 20 December 2022. Underlying issues were attributed to resourcing and pace of response to requests for further information.
- Since this special meeting, Deloitte's have advised that the audit would not be finalised until 6 January 2023, therefore the statutory deadline for laying the Annual Report and Accounts before Parliament by 31 December would not be met.
- Audit Scotland and SG have been, and would continue to be kept up to date on the situation.
- Brief discussion on the potential consequences of failure to meet the statutory submission deadline.
- Anticipated unqualified audit opinion being issued.

10.2.3 The Board were advised that other public sector bodies were in a similar situation.

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- 10.2.4 BB noted that the External Auditor's report and Annual Report and Accounts would be presented to the Committee on 19 January 2023 and Board on 26 January 2023 (Special meeting).
- 10.2.5 RH advised the Board that the Service explored the option of convening special ARAC and Board meetings to progress more timeously. However, given Deloitte's notice of the revised completion date, the existing Committee and Special Board meetings would be adequate. RH noted the importance of not compromising the thoroughness and quality of the audit nor the Service's own internal governance processes.
- 10.2.6 **The Board noted the verbal update and draft minutes.**
- 10.3 **People Committee (PC)**
- 10.3.1 MW reported the Committee held a public meeting on 3 October 2022 and referred the Board to the attached approved minutes, noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. A subsequent public meeting was held on 8 December 2022 and MW provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:
- Presentation of the Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22.
  - Revised format of Training, Safety and Assurance Performance and Risk Report.
  - Joint workshop scheduled with Service Delivery Committee (9 March 2023) focusing on training.
  - Updates on Learning Needs Analysis, Graduate Programme and Skills Banking.
  - Updates on planning for Industrial Action.
- 10.3.2 **The Board noted the verbal update and approved minutes.**
- 10.4 **Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**
- 10.4.1 NB reported that the Committee held an Assurance Mapping Workshop on 21 November 2022, noting the wide-ranging discussion and support for this work within the Service.
- 10.4.2 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 29 November 2022 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:
- Quarterly Performance Report – good discussion on availability performance indicators and Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV).
  - Independent Audit/Inspection Action Plan update - supportive of the renewed focus to progress/close actions.
  - Update on Unwanted Fire Alarm Systems (UFAS) noting the high dependence on the new Command and Control Mobilising System (CCMS).
  - Deep dive on HFSV which provided a greater understanding of cause and effect of this activity. Further report on the next steps on the future of HFSV to be prepared for the May 2023 meeting.
  - Update on Clinical Governance and future annual report.
  - Risk spotlight focused on the effect and impact of Cost of Living Crisis.
  - Update on the resilience of existing CCMS systems.
- 10.4.3 The Board enquired whether there were any emerging risks or trends linked to the current cost of living crisis.
- 10.4.4 SS noted that the challenges relating to the current crisis were highlighted at the recent Committee meeting. SS further noted that Prevention and Protection were developing a communication strategy to highlight the challenges and mitigate the risk of potential alternative heating/lighting/cooking methods. There had been no emerging trends identified to date, however Fire Investigation teams were mindful of the potential links to the crisis. The Service facilitated a Cost of Living/Fire Safety event in October.

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10.4.5 The Board further commented on the potential increased risks due to the large population of refugees, in particular those housed in cruise ships, and sought assurance that there was fire safety advice/support being given. SS noted that the Service had previously supported refugee relocation, the ongoing work with Scottish Government's Settled scheme and that Fire Safety Enforcement were involved and supportive of this campaign.

10.4.6 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

### 11 CORPORATE RISK AND PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 PROGRESS

11.1 RW, supported by CF, presented a report advising the Board of the quarterly progress made against the strategic outcomes and objectives. He noted that individual Committees undertake detailed scrutiny of performance and risk and this report presented a high-level overview to the Board. The following key points were highlighted:

- Number of strategic risks noted as Very High (4) and High (5).
- Annual Operating Plan actions were reporting one Red (timescales), 9 Amber (some slippage) and 12 Green.
- (HFSV and HFSV for High-Risk Vulnerable Groups were below target with 44% lower than the 3 year pre-pandemic average. HFSV recently spotlighted by the Service Delivery Committee and work continues to improve performance.
- Three fire fatalities recorded during the second quarter bringing the year to date total to 15.
- Fire casualties figure increased to 184 following a quality assurance check, however this is still a reduction on the target. Explanation provided on the reasons for the discrepancy/recording issue and the potential benefits of increased automatic processes for capturing data.
- UFAS slightly off target but continuing to decrease against the 3-year average.
- Overall incidents attended recorded the highest half-year activity for the Service in the last 10 years.
- Accident Dwelling Fires (high-severity) currently off target on the 3-year target.
- Retained Duty System (RDS) and Wholetime Appliance Availability remain off target. Recent discussions at the Service Delivery Committee highlighted the challenges and different methodology of capturing data and the benefits of increased automated processes.
- Freedom of Information requests remains off target but recorded an improvement on the previous quarter.

11.2 In relation to fire casualties, due to the ongoing quality assurance process, the Board suggested that the indicator should not be recorded as on target. CF advised the Board that although the quality assurance process was ongoing, he was confident that there was a reduction in accidental dwelling fire casualties. RW noted that a caveat could be included in future reports for clarity.

**ACTION: RW**

11.3 In regard to RDS Availability, CF noted the recent discussions at Service Delivery Committee on the methodology for recording availability was not comparable with Wholetime. SS assured the Board that the Service respond to all emergency calls and there was no indication that appliance availability was impacting negatively. SS further noted the improvements in the On Call recruitment process which would ultimately help availability. Further discussions to be held on how to present that data in a clear and understandable way.

**ACTION: SS/NB/RW**

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- 11.4 Brief discussion took place on the approach to methodology of indicators, targets, outcomes, strategic objectives/measures and the need to present succinct performance information.
- 11.5 RW advised the Board that the requests for revisions to milestone due dates have been made at the appropriate management meetings. RW noted that this clarity on the governance route and requests for extensions would be provided in future iterations. RW further noted that there was potential for further delays in some areas due to capacity or resource.

**ACTION: RW**

- 11.6 RH commented on the potential delays and the challenges in relation to resourcing/capacity due to the changes in prioritisation since the development of the AOP.
- 11.7 RW briefed the Board on the AOP Actions noting the following key points were highlighted:
- Objective 1.2 (Fire Safety Enforcement) was slightly off target (timescale) however, this was linked to work ongoing at a UK wide level.
  - Objective 3.4 (Communications and Engagement Strategy) was off target, however, this would be submitted to the Board in Quarter 1 2023/24.
  - Objective 4.1 (Carbon Management Plan) potential for further delays relating to capacity.
  - Objective 4.4 (Portfolio Office Management) potential for further delays relating to capacity.
  - Residual action Objective 4.2 2021/22 (Wide Area Network) had been completed. Four other residual actions remain red with narrative of completion within this reporting year.
- 11.8 In regard to the Carbon Management Plan, the Board were reminded of the challenges in capacity and resources, the dependence on separate ring fenced funding and the commitment to use the most carbon reducing option in all replacement/refurbishment works.
- 11.9 **The Board scrutinised the Corporate Risk and Performance Quarter 2 Progress Report.**

*(Meeting broke at 1115 hrs and reconvened at 1125 hrs)*

## 12 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – OCTOBER 2022

- 12.1 JT presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 31 October 2022. JT outlined the analysis of the financial position and referred Members to Appendix A of the report, which identified the current resource position showing an underspend of £0.586 million and a forecast year-end overspend of £0.472 million. The following key points were highlighted:
- Forecast includes monies relating to the National Insurance revisions, support staff pay offer and legacy insurance claim. The forecast does not include uniformed pay offer (under negotiation) or additional SG funding for Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and support staff pay offer.
  - Forecasted Employee costs report an overspend in Operations Control (OC) and Support staff and underspends in Wholetime, On Call and other Employee costs.
  - Overspends forecasted in Supplies and Services, Transport and Third-Party Services.
  - Underspend forecasted in Property costs.
  - No budget virements during this reporting period.
  - Budgeted savings - additional column added to capture year to date savings. Red

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- RAG status reported against transport and agency costs.
- Main financial risk remains an overall overspend due to the uncertainty relating to uniformed pay offer and additional SG funding.
- Anticipated that final quarter spend will be reduced due to review of vacancies, RSR and impact of potential industrial action.
- Anticipated transfer of costs to resources relating to People, Training, Finance and Assets System (PTFAS) project and year to date Command and Control Futures project (CCF) costs.

- 12.2 The Board sought assurance and the level of confidence on achieving a balanced budget. JT reminded the Board that historically the final quarter spend was accelerated to realise full budget spend and any accelerated/reduced spend would continue to be managed appropriately. The Service would also start to implement savings anticipated as a result of the RSR. JT noted that uncertainty remained on the additional funding from SG and the uniformed pay offer.
- 12.3 In regards to agency staff, JT explained the reasons why they are required ie specific skills sets, etc and noted the Strategic Leadership Team's focus on reducing/removing the dependence for agency staff.
- 12.4 The Board queried the potential to accrue monies relating to the uniformed pay offer, should an agreement not be reached prior to the end of the financial year. JT noted that until the position was known, the Service was unable to seek approval for an accrual or overspend from SG.

- 12.5 **The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 31 October 2022.**

### 13 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – OCTOBER 2022

- 13.1 JT presented a report advising the Board of the actual and committed expenditure against the 2022/23 capital budget position for the period ending 31 October 2022 and sought approval of budget virements of £3.9million between projects. Recognising current risks, all efforts will be made to spend out the current anticipated budget of £36.64million by 31 March 2023. Current spend to date was approx. £28.17million (77%) of the revised budget. The following key points were highlighted:
- Due to changes in SG funding to Grant in Aid, the Service were actively seeking to fully maximise spend on decarbonisation projects. Thanks were extended to all those involved in this process.
  - Significant slippage in various projects with an accumulative total to date of £4.936million.
  - Review to accelerate capital spend within the capital programme was undertaken and completed.
  - Budget internal virements for ICT (£0.370million).
  - Other budget virements (for approval) between projects to the value of £3.900million in relation to PTFAS and CCF.
  - All projects are recorded as Amber pending Board approval of budget virements.
  - Main key element remains the shortfall in capital budget and inability to fully spend on capital budget should approval for virements not be given.
- 13.2 IM advised the Board that the proposed virements would be used to accelerate improvements to dignified facilities at Inverness Fire Station, various decarbonisation projects, fleet and operational equipment.
- 13.3 The Board acknowledged that the virements related to previously approved areas and were simply an adaption of the plan to help achieve maximum spend.

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13.4 Clarification to be provided on the virement amounts being allocated to Inverness Fire Station Development Phase 2 and the Energy and Environmental Improvements.  
**ACTION: IM**

13.5 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending 31 October 2022. The Board approved the budget virements of £3.900million between projects.**

**14 REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:**

**14.1 Draft Corporate Parenting Plan and Action Plan 2023-26**

14.1.1 The draft Corporate Parenting Plan and Action Plan 2023-26 was presented to inform the Board of the outcomes and actions and the publication date (January 2023).

14.1.2 The Board acknowledged and supported the Service's promise, the strength of the plan and the recognition of the Service's role in this important area.

14.1.3 The Board requested that the Communications strategy be circulated for information and awareness.  
**ACTION: LBa**

14.1.4 The Board sought to understand the practical impact being made, the awareness and dovetailing of interdependences (ie Community Empowerment and Community Justice Acts), and how to gain assurance on the Service's full participation in these processes. Further discussion to be held outwith the meeting, with the Chair of the People Committee, to identify how assurances could be gained.

14.1.5 Within future action plans, the Board asked for consideration to be given to include numerical targets/statistics relating to care experienced individual's recruitment into the Service, focussed events and other engagement activities.

14.1.6 **This report was presented for information only.**

**14.2 Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22**

14.2.1 The Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22 had been submitted for information.

14.2.2 General discussion took place on report classification particularly noting the Board's responsibility for Health and Safety. It was agreed that this report should be submitted to the People Committee and Board for Recommendation and for Decision, respectively.

14.2.3 The Board welcomed the reduced timeline in the preparation and presentation of this report, albeit consideration should be given to reduce timelines further going forward.

14.2.4 The Board commented and were briefed on the Health and Safety Improvement plans completion rates, benchmarking opportunities and confidence in the quality/accuracy of data being recorded.

14.2.5 AW acknowledged the comments and reminded the Board of the scrutiny undertaken by the People Committee at their quarterly meetings.

14.2.6 **This report was presented for information only.**

**15 RISK THEMES**

15.1 There were no other new or emerging risks identified during this meeting, however it was noted that some risks have progressed into issues.

15.2 The Board noted the recurring comments regarding capacity issues impacting on the



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Annual Operating Plan and the potential high level strategic risk. RH assured the Board that the Strategic Leadership Team were regularly discussing and prioritising/deprioritising activities accordingly and, if appropriate, would keep the Board informed.

### **16 FORWARD PLAN**

16.1 The Forward Plan was noted and would be kept under review and subject to change.

### **17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

17.1 A Special Private meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Monday 9 January 2023 at 0900 hrs.

17.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1220 hours.

## **PRIVATE SESSION**

### **18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETINGS:**

#### **18.1 Thursday 27 October 2022**

18.1.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **18.2 Thursday 24 November 2022 (Special meeting)**

18.2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

18.3 **The private minutes of the meetings held on 27 October and 24 November 2022 were approved as a true record of the meetings.**

### **19 PRIVATE ACTION LOG**

19.1 The Board considered the private action log and noted the updates.

### **20 DRAFT BUDGET STRATEGY 2023-24**

20.1 JT presented a report to provide the Board with an early version of the proposed budget strategy for 2023/24 for scrutiny. JT noted that key information on budget allocation from SG and Public Sector Pay Policy (PSPP) would not be known until 15 December 2022 and the strategy would subsequently be revised and finalised for approval by the Board on 26 January 2023 (Special meeting).

20.2 **The Board scrutinised the report.**

### **21 LEGACY INSURANCE CLAIM**

21.1 JT presented a report to the Board to inform of legacy insurance claims intimated against the Service.

21.2 **The Board noted the report and future anticipated costs.**

### **22 COMMAND AND CONTROL FUTURES UPDATE/OPERATIONAL CONTROL RESILIENCE**

22.1 AW provided a verbal update on the current position with the Command and Control Futures project.

22.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

### **23 INDUSTRIAL ACTION UPDATE**

23.1 SS provided a verbal update on planning for potential industrial action relating to pay award for uniformed personnel.

23.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**