



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

## PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2023 @ 0900 HRS

### CONFERENCE FACILITIES

#### PRESENT:

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

Fiona Thorburn, Deputy Chair (FT)  
Nick Barr (NB)  
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)  
Paul Stollard (PS)  
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Ross Haggart (RH)	Chief Officer
Liz Barnes (LBa)	Interim Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
David Farries (DF)	T/Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
David Lockhart (DL)	T/Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Iain Morris (IM)	Acting Director of Asset Management
John Thomson (JT)	Acting Director of Finance and Procurement
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People and Organisational Development
Chris Fitzpatrick (CF)	Business Intelligence and Data Services Manager (Item 11 only)
Ijaz Bashir (IB)	Asset Governance and Performance Manager (Item 14 only)
Stuart Free (SF)	Asset Quality Manager (Item 14 only)
Alex Lane (AL)	National Property Manager (Item 14 only)
Marysia Waters (MWa)	Head of Corporate Communications (Item 19 only)
Kevin Murphy (KM)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer, Board Support
Debbie Hadow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

#### OBSERVERS:

Robert Scott, HMFSI  
Seona Hart, Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

#### 1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and observing via MS Teams. On behalf of the Board, KD offered her congratulations to Ross Haggart on his successful appointment as Chief Officer.
- 1.2 KD also offered her congratulations to Angela Constance and Siobhian Brown, on their recent appointments as Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs and Minister for Victims and Community Safety, respectively.
- 1.3 Attendees were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.

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### 2 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Brian Baverstock, Board Member  
Angiolina Foster, Board Member  
Stuart Stevens, Interim Deputy Chief Officer  
Andy Watt, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance

### 3 CONSIDERATION OF AND DECISION ON ANY ITEMS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE

- 3.1 The Board agreed that the *West Service Delivery Area Offices, McDonald Road Refurbishment and Museum Final Account Update, New Mobilising System Update and Financial Compensation* items would be taken in private due to 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 MEETINGS:

#### 5.1 Thursday 15 December 2022

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

#### 5.2 Thursday 23 February 2023 - Special

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

- 5.3 **The minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2022 and 23 February 2023 were approved as a true record of the meetings.**

#### 5.4 Matters Arising

- 5.4.1 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 **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 15 December 2022.

- 8.2 **The Board noted the report.**

### 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 15 December 2022.

- 9.2 **The Board noted the report.**

### 10 COMMITTEE UPDATES

#### 10.1 Change Committee (CC)

- 10.1.1 FT reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 9 February 2023 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes.

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10.1.2 FT further reported that the first of the regular Special Private meetings focusing solely on the New Mobilising System had been held on 21 March 2023. The NMS would now be subject to a 6-weekly cycle of scrutiny by the Committee.

10.1.3 **The Board noted the verbal update and draft minutes.**

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

10.2.1 LBI reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 19 January 2023 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes. A minor typographical error was highlighted.

10.2.2 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

### 10.3 **People Committee (PC)**

10.3.1 MW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 8 December 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 2 March 2023 and MW provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Performance Framework.
- Risk Spotlight on Support Staff recruitment/retention.
- Update provided on the development of Maintenance and Skills Framework within training, in relation to competency and currency of training.
- Update provided on the progress of Health and Safety Improvement Plans.

10.3.2 The Committee held two workshops on 9 March 2023, the first being a joint workshop with Service Delivery Committee focused on training, and the second focussed on POD specific performance framework expectations. Thanks were extended to all involved in the workshop.

10.3.3 **The Board noted the verbal update and approved minutes.**

### 10.4 **Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

10.4.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 28 February 2023 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, highlighting the following:

- Full discussion on quarterly performance report.
- Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) paper to be submitted to the next meeting to outline the post-Covid landscape and future intention.
- Discussion regarding data quality.
- Post meeting visit to Operations Control (Johnstone) was a worthwhile and informative session. Thanks were extended to SC Julie Crawford and team for hosting the visit.

10.4.2 **The Board noted the verbal update and draft minutes.**

*(CF joined the meeting at 0915 hrs)*

## 11 **CORPORATE RISK AND PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 PROGRESS**

111 MMCA, supported by CF, presented a report advising the Board of the quarterly progress made against the strategic outcomes and objectives between 1 October 2022 and 31 December 2022. Individual Committee's undertake detailed scrutiny of performance and risk and this report presented a high-level overview to the Board. The following key points were highlighted:

- Annual Operating Actions: 13 Green, 7 Amber and 2 Red. Of the 7 Amber actions, one delayed action related to national issues and the remaining 6 actions were affected by resourcing/concurrency of issues. Both Red actions were not anticipated to be delivered within this current year and would be carried over.

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- Performance Management Targets: 7 Green, 1 Amber, 6 Red and 4 Blue (monitoring). The 6 Red targets relate to Home fire safety visits (HFSV), Fire fatalities, Accidental dwelling fires (high severity), Unwanted fire alarm signals and Wholtime appliance availability.
- Due to data quality issues, RAG status would be removed until there was confidence in the data.
- Call handling/response times affected by seasonal variations.

11.2 The Board were made aware that the Service Delivery Committee had requested an update summary on call handling/mobilising/response times to be provided to their next meeting (May 2023).

11.3 In regard to the “monitoring” performance measure, MMcA explained that this related to issues with no specific improvement targets set, and were providing assurance that these issues were still being monitored/trends investigated. An example would be response times.

11.4 In regard to HFSV vulnerable groups, CF confirmed that a shift in activity levels was identified in April 2020. The Board were reminded that a report on HFSV (next steps) would be presented to the next Service Delivery Committee (May 2023).

11.5 In regard to Strategic Risk 19, MMcA confirmed that this was still recorded as a risk however, a Strategic Leadership Team workshop was scheduled to review the strategic risk register.

11.6 In regard to the Portfolio Office Projects, DL detailed the recent and ongoing recruitment campaigns within the Portfolio Office. With specific reference to the turnover of individuals responsible for delivery of projects and programmes, the Service were aware of the challenges and were managing them appropriately.

11.7 **The Board scrutinised the Corporate Risk and Performance Quarter 3 Progress Report.**

*(CF left the meeting at 0935 hrs)*

## 12 RESOURCE BUDGET 2023/24

12.1 JT presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the proposed Resource Budget for 2023/24, noting previous discussions at Board Strategy Days. The following key points were highlighted:

- Initial funding increased by an additional £10.0million.
- Challenges including finalising the uniformed pay settlement to avoid industrial action, anticipated inflation pressures and identifying savings.
- Secured additional funding from Scottish Government at the Autumn Budget Review to support the uniformed pay agreement.
- Balanced budget of £308.133million, of which, £245.8million (80%) was employee costs and the remaining £62.3million was allocated to property, suppliers and services, etc.
- Recurring savings of £11.0million are reflected within the budget.
- Funding for Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) remains outwith the resource budget.

12.2 In regard to future savings, JT noted that the Service understood the position and what was in place fairly reflects where the Service wants to be in future years, but suspects future savings would be required. JT welcomed the additional funding from Scottish

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Government to support the pay award, however, acknowledged that financial savings were still required which would impact on how we deliver our services and outcomes.

12.3

**The Board approved the Resource Budget for 2023/24.**

*(I Bashir, S Free & A Lane joined the meeting at 0940 hrs)*

### 13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 to 2025/26

13.1

JT presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26, noting previous discussions at Board Strategy Days. The following key point were highlighted:

- Proposed expenditure over the 3-year period of £109.0million, approximately £32.5million per annum plus anticipated capital receipts and Net Zero Transition Grants.
- Breakdown of allocation between Property (major and minor works), Fleet, ICT and operational equipment.

13.2

The Board acknowledged the capital budget remained insufficient and the significant backlog was not being addressed. However, the Board commended IM and his team for their efforts and clear focus on achieving the best value with the budget available.

13.3

The Board queried whether they could do anything to highlight and seek further funding. KD reminded the Board that the challenges were being raised and discussed with Scottish Government regularly. During recent discussions with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, the Service reiterated the challenges, in particular contaminants and dignified facilities.

13.4

JT advised the Board that the insufficient capital investment had been flagged within the recent Internal Audit on Capital Investment Strategy. This would be used to reiterate and highlight the issues and inform ongoing discussions with Scottish Government.

13.5

The Board challenged whether the Service should be robustly pushing back on expectations and be more direct and transparent on the inability to secure sufficient capital funding in future years.

13.6

**The Board approved the proposed Capital Programme for 2023-26 recognising that figures for years 2 and 3 were indicative and would be refined in future years.**

### 14 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN: PROPERTY

14.1

IM presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the objectives of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for Property. The following key points were highlighted:

- Forms part of a suite of 5 documents relating to fleet, property, equipment, strategic assessment management strategy and 10 year risk based capital investment.
- For awareness, the Service were working with the North Hub (local councils, Scottish Enterprise, etc) to identify different funding mechanisms.

14.2

The Board reiterated the earlier point regarding more direct messaging relating to insufficient funding, the working conditions within some premises and the purpose of the capital plan to maximise the value and spend of the budget available.

14.3

**The Board approved the Strategic Asset Management Plan for Property.**

*(D Lockhart, I Bashir, S Free & A Lane left the meeting at 0955 hrs)*

*(M Archibald joined the meeting at 0955 hrs)*

### 15 SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN 2023-2026

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- 15.1 LBA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the SFRS Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2026, noting the Bòrd na Gàidhlig support for the plan. The following key revisions to the plan were highlighted:
- Commitment to produce educational materials (presentation) in Gaelic for Gaelic speaking schools.
  - Commitment for Community Engagement Teams to work and proactively engage with schools relating to safety measures.
  - Combined English/Gaelic version of the Working Together for a Safer Scotland logo would be produced.
  - In specific locations, job vacancy adverts would be produced in both English and Gaelic and Gaelic would be listed as a desirable skill. There were no specific roles where Gaelic had been identified as an essential skill.
  - Signage on appliances as/when they are replaced. One appliance currently on order will feature Gaelic signage.

15.2 The Board noted and thanked LBA and team for their diligence and efforts in this area. The Board further noted the cultural importance of preserving the language and for supporting the culture and wellbeing of Gaelic speaking communities.

15.3 LBA noted her thanks to the team, particularly Maggie Archibald, for their work in this area.

15.4 **The Board approved the second edition of the SFRS Gaelic Language Plan 2023-2026.**

*(M Archibald left the meeting at 1005 hrs)*

## 16 EQUAL PAY AND GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2023

16.1 LG presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the 5<sup>th</sup> Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report 2023. The following key points were highlighted:

- Statutory requirement to publish information on equal pay and gender pay gap, alongside proactively publishing disability and ethnicity pay gaps.
- Slow but sustained incremental progress over the period.
- Positive progress since 2017 includes elimination of the gender pay gap (in favour of men), increase in female wholetime personnel, increase in the number of female Crew/Area Commanders.
- Significant occupational segregation remains between male and female in uniformed, operations control and support staff.
- Levels of non-disclosure of reporting ethnicity and disability information.
- Change in ethnicity may be attributable to a change in the classification of White Other.

16.2 Typographical errors were noted within the Gender Representation amongst Uniformed Staff tables, and Key Themes table (Learning and Development section). LG to review and update as appropriate.

16.3 In regard to the reverse mentoring scheme, LG advised the Board that the purpose of this scheme would be to identify mentoring opportunities and match senior management with individuals across the Service. It was anticipated that this would be a two-way mentoring opportunity.

16.4



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The Board commented on high levels of females within the On-Call Duty system as opposed to Wholetime and queried why there was a difference. Potential to discuss further at the People Committee.

16.5

LG thanked Lucy Begley and her team for their work and effort in compiling this report.

16.6

**The Board approved the Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report 2023.**

*(Meeting broke at 1020 hrs and reconvened at 1030 hrs)*

**17**

**RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – FEBRUARY 2023**

17.1

JT presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 28 February 2023. 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 overspend of £2.549million and a forecast year-end overspend of £2.985million. The following key points were highlighted:

- Adjustment made following the Spring and Autumn budget revisions.
- Additional explanations to be provided in future reports on budget virements and additional funding information to aid understanding.
- Forecast includes both uniformed and support staff pay awards.
- Scottish Government have agreed to provide a letter of comfort (revision to grant in aid letter) to include a statement confirming authorisation of overspend to £2.900million in support to uniformed pay award.
- Budgeted savings reduced to approximately £4.000million noting lower than anticipated apprenticeship scheme income, higher fuel costs and continuation of agency costs.
- Overspend remains as the main financial risk, although this has been mitigated by the Scottish Government's authorisation to overspend.
- Confidence remains high that the level of overspend would not exceed the authorised limit.

17.2

In regards to loan fund interest charges, JT reminded the Board that this related to the inherited legacy loan, and changes in the interest rates have resulted in savings being identified.

17.3

**The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 28 February 2023.**

**18**

**CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – FEBRUARY 2023**

18.1

JT presented a report advising the Board of the actual and committed expenditure against the 2022/23 capital budget position for the period ending 28 February 2023. 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 approximately £36.118million (98%) of the revised budget. The following key points were highlighted:

- Focus remains on maximising capital spend within the current financial year and confidence remains high.
- Some environmental projects may fall short but work was ongoing to progress.

18.2

RH noted his thanks to JT, IM and their teams for the efforts and hard work undertaken throughout the challenging past 12 months and in preparation for the coming financial year. The Board also noted their thanks and support to all those involved.

18.3

**The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending 28 February 2023.**

*(M Waters joined the meeting at 1045 hrs)*

**19**

**COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023-26**

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- 19.1 MMcA, supported by MWa, presented a report to the Board outlining the draft SFRS Corporate Communications and Engagement (C&E) Strategy for 2023-26, noting the purpose of the strategy was to align C&E, long-term vision and delivery of the strategic plan. The following key points were highlighted:
- Outline of principles and standards of communications.
  - Emphasised roles and responsibility of individuals, managers and functions across the Service.
  - Engagement element introduced to receive feedback from stakeholders. Public Involvement and Consultation Team currently developing the wider engagement element.
  - Two main principles were digital first (inclusive and wide-ranging) and staff first (raising awareness internally).
  - Measurement and evaluation of communications.
  - Use of the Objectives, Audience, Strategy, Insights and Scoring (OASIS) model in projects and campaigns.

*(D Lockhart re-joined the meeting at 1050 hrs)*

- 19.2 In regard to external C&E, the Board sought clarification on the difference from previous years. MWa advised that the difference included working and engaging with Local Authorities, Police Scotland, etc. to share comms strategies to avoid any overlap, proactively sharing information with Elected Members and building and developing relationships with media outlets. MMcA noted that the strategy would assist and ensure consistency across external relationships.
- 19.3 The Board commented on the level of detail on the engagement element in comparison to the communication element within the strategy. MMcA noted the comments and reminded the Board that the strategy focused on the principles. An action plan would be developed and progress reports would be brought to the Board. The progress reports would capture the details of the initiatives being taken forward and how the Service were delivering against the strategy. Broader Service developments in public engagement and consultation is also taking place and will be reported to the Board as it progresses.
- 19.4 MWa outlined the importance of the OASIS methodology and audience engagement.
- 19.5 The Board provided feedback on the following issues: Inclusive section (4<sup>th</sup> bulletpoint) should list public ahead of staff, inconsistent naming of the strategy within the document, communication prioritises staff over the public we serve. MWa noted the feedback but expressed her discomfort of prioritising public over staff and also the recognised need for a balanced approach. MWa to consider the comments and review as necessary.
- 19.6 The Board welcomed the use of OASIS and noted that communications was spread between Comms, POD and PICT, which may raise the risk of different approaches/less effective engagement work.
- 19.7 In regard to the Service Delivery Model Programme (SDMP) engagement plan, MWa noted the involvement of the Comms team in public messaging and the ongoing co-ordination with the PICT team via fortnightly meetings.
- 19.8 In regard to business as usual communications ie home fire safety advice, MWa noted the limited involvement in BAU daily engagement, however, guidance and style guides had been developed. MWa further noted that the cascade team brief provided consistent messages for promulgation across the Service.

- 19.9 **The Board scrutinised the report.**



**20 REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:**

**20.1 Corporate Parenting Plan Closing Report 2020-2023**

20.1.1 The Corporate Parenting Plan closing report 2020-2023 was submitted to inform the Board of the actions undertaken to meet our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act.

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

**20.2 SFRS Children's Rights Report 2020-23**

20.2.1 The SFRS Children's Rights Report 2020-2023 was submitted to inform the Board of the actions undertaken to meet our responsibilities around Children's Rights under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act.

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

**20.3 Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report 2021-2023**

20.3.1 The 6<sup>th</sup> Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Report was submitted to inform the Board of progress made from 2021-23.

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

**20.4 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) Preparing for Implementation Work Group – Work Plan Update**

20.4.1 The UFAS Work Plan Update was submitted to inform the Board of the progress against the work plan in preparation for the implementation of the new Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) response model.

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

**21 RISK THEMES**

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

**22 FORWARD PLAN**

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

**23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

23.1 A meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 27 April 2023 at 1000 hrs.

23.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1115 hours.

**PRIVATE SESSION**

**24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETINGS**

24.1 The private minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2023 and special meetings held on 9 January, 26 January and 23 February 2023 were approved as a true record of the meetings.

**25 PRIVATE ACTION LOG**

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

**26 WEST SERVICE DELIVERY AREAS OFFICES**

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- 26.1 IM presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the recommendation to declare the West SDA office block in Hamilton surplus, and offer the site to other public sector bodies as per the guideline contained within the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM).
- 26.2 **The Board approved the recommendation to declare the West SDA office block in Hamilton as surplus, and offer this site to other public sector bodies as per the guidelines contained within the Scottish Public Finance Manual.**
- 27 MCDONALD ROAD REFURBISHMENT AND MUSEUM FINAL ACCOUNT UPDATE**
- 27.1 IM presented a report to the Board seeking budgetary authorisation to meet agreed final account costs certified for payment by our professional quantity surveying contractor Pick Everards (PE).
- 27.2 **The Board approved the variance to the original agreed project costs.**
- 28 NEW MOBILISING SYSTEM (NMS) UPDATE**
- 28.1 DL provided a verbal update to the Board on the new mobilising system. DL noted that a special Change Committee meeting was held on 21 March 2023, where consideration was given to the project brief, governance structures and critical path timeline.
- 28.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**
- 29 FINANCIAL COMPENSATION**
- 29.1 JT presented a report to inform the Board of the proposed financial compensation by SFRS and the Scottish Public Pensions Agency.
- 29.2 **This report was presented for information only.**