



SCOTTISH  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

**PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD**

**THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2023 @ 1000 HRS**

**BY CONFERENCE FACILITIES**

**PRESENT:**

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)  
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)  
Steve Barron (SB)  
Lesley Bloomer (LBI)  
Paul Stollard (PS)  
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

Fiona Thorburn, Deputy Chair (FT)  
Nick Barr (NB)  
Brian Baverstock (BB)  
Angiolina Foster (AF)  
Tim Wright (TW)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Ross Haggart (RH)     | Chief Officer  |
| Stuart Stevens (SS)   | Deputy Chief Officer   |
| Liz Barnes (LBa)      | Interim Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)              |
| David Farries (DF)    | Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery          |
| David Lockhart (DL)   | Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Development       |
| Andy Watt (AW)        | 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                            |
| Lynsey Gaja (LG)      | Head of People   |
| Lynne McGeough (LMcG) | Acting Head of Finance and Procurement                         |
| Kevin Murphy (KM)     | Group Commander, Board Support Manager                         |
| Heather Greig (HG)    | Executive Officer Board Support                                |
| Debbie Haddow (DJH)   | Board Support/Minutes  |

**OBSERVERS:**

Robert Scott, HMFSI  
Colin Brown, Fire Brigades Union  
Greg Wilson, Station Commander, SLT Support

**1 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

- 1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those present and 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 Malcolm Payton, Board Member  
John Thomson, Acting Director of Finance and Procurement

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

- 3.1

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The Board agreed that the *Employer Liability Claims* and *Strategic Review of Corporate Services* items would be taken in private due to matters subject to legal proceedings and the confidential nature of the issue (Standing Order 9D and 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 27 April 2023

5.1.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, however, the Board requested that an additional action be raised under Item 12 - Performance Management Framework 2023/24. The action related to additional clarity to better understand the golden thread running through the strategic planning process. (Post meeting note: the Action Log was updated to include this additional action.)

#### 5.2 Thursday 25 May 2023 - Special

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

5.3 **Subject to the additional action being raised, the minutes of the meetings held on**  
5.3.1 **27 April 2023 and 25 May 2023 (Special) were approved as a true record of the meetings.**

#### 5.4 Matters Arising

5.4.1 In regards to the minutes of 25 May 2023, the Board asked when the finalised culture action plan would be presented to a future strategy day. The Strategy Day Programme would be updated to include this item, LBa to confirm actual date of presentation.

**ACTION: LBa**

### 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 assessments 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 27 April 2023. KD highlighted one amendment to the presented report, as she was unable to attend the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on 27 June 2023.

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 27 April 2023, and offered to expand further if requested.

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 11 May 2023 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, highlighting the following:

- Continuing discussion on the importance of understanding the totality of change and the organisational capacity/capability.
- Ongoing development of the strategic roadmap.
- Closure of People, Training, Finance and Asset System Project. Positive outcomes included improved Safe and Well system and key enablers/learning to aid the Strategic Service Review Programme.
- Spotlight at the next meeting would focus on how the Service actively manages risk and uses risk in decision making.

10.1.2 In addition, the Committee held a Special private meeting on 26 June 2023.

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

10.1.3

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

10.2.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 27 June 2023 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Committee Annual Report and draft Annual Governance Statement presented. Some improvements were noted in regards to risk management. Standing report to be replaced with more focus given to strategic high risk.
- Risk spotlight on fleet and estate which helped to understand the actual risk and mitigations.
- Internal Audit Annual Report reported a positive (reasonable) opinion.
- Internal Audit Sickness Absence Management report: Significant concerns and disconnect regarding compliance with policy.
- Internal Audit Arrangements for Internal Assessment and Verification of SVQ report: Investigative work and remedial actions undertaken. Further example of non-compliance with policy.
- HMFSI Annual Report which highlighted the focus on risk and assurance and the continuing positive working relationship with the Service to support continuous improvement.

10.2.2 RH supported BB's comments on the positive working relationship with HMFSI and the value this adds to the Service.

10.2.3 In regard to policy implementation, RH advised the Committee that work was being undertaken to tighten up the process of reviewing policies, and also that implementation was consistent across the Service. A report would be presented at the Strategic Leadership Team meeting on 11 July 2023.

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

**10.3 People Committee (PC)**

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

- People Assurance report: Workforce planning remained a considerable concern. This included numbers of leavers, potential future leavers, newly promoted/managerial roles and support staff vacancy levels (12%).
- Health and Safety assurances were taken on the improvements in planning processes.
- Increasing trend (4 year) in Acts of Violence and looking to welcome greater analysis through the Performance Management Framework.
- Increasing trend (4 year) in vehicle accidents.

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- Update on Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Verbal update on Culture review.
- Risk Spotlight on training capacity including the unpredictability of workforce planning.

10.3.2 In regard to vehicle accidents, the Board commented on the previous work done to address this issue and noted that incidents were still increasing. AW advised the Board that this was an ongoing issue and significant work had been undertaken by the Driver Safety Group including the development of a driver framework (pro-active avoidance) and lessons learned post-accident. AW noted that following benchmarking with other fire and rescue services, the Service were performing well in relation to vehicle accidents.

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

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

10.4.1 NB reported that the Committee held a public meeting 30 May 2023 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, highlighting the following:

- Discussions on high risk target for Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) not being met. Committee challenged the vagueness of the statement “competing station priorities” and asked for more detail in future reports.
- Aspiration of outcome-based targets in future.
- Comprehensive discussion regarding response times and analysis.
- Request for further analysis and discussion on fatal fires via the annual report.
- Good progress and closure on actions plans.
- Review of the first clinical governance technical working group report which reflected the good work undertaken in this area over the last 2 years.
- Update on Manchester Arena Inquiry.
- Update on resilience of Operations Control systems including the recent cyber-attack on suppliers, SSS which has delayed the disaster recovery system.

10.4.2 In regard to the cyber-attack, SS briefed the Board on the background of the attack on SSS and measures taken by the Service. SS confirmed that SSS had since been reconnected following assurances being received.

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

## 11 **CORPORATE RISK AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 4**

11.1 MMCA presented a report advising the Board of the quarterly progress made against the strategic outcomes and objectives between 1 January and 31 March 2023. 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:

- Future reports would be presented in a dashboard format.
- Total of 22 actions, of which 8 were complete, 13 were not complete (red) and one further action was progressing well and due for completion in 2023/24 (green).
- Of the 13 outstanding actions, 7 would be incorporated into 2023/24 and the remaining 6 actions would be carried forward as residual actions and remain red.
- Total of 18 corporate performance measures of which 6 remain on target (green), 7 were off target (red) and 5 had no specific targets but continue to be monitored.
- Increase in the number of overall incidents over the year (4,000 more than previous year).
- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests increased by 32%, with 70% being progressed within the timescales.

11.2

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With regard to Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's), the Board requested further information on why the high risk targets were not reached. DF reminded the Board of previous discussions at the Board on performance indicators in the Annual Operating Plan and the in-depth update given at the last Service Delivery Committee. DF advised the Board of the contributing factors including reduced referrals, resources/capacity, changes to smoke detector standards/legislation etc. and the Service would continue to push performance and delivery of medium/high risk visits.

11.3

The Board commented on the constraints/technical skills within ICT and the impact on delivering projects i.e. Safe and Well. The Board were reminded of the high vacancy factor within ICT (25%) and the ongoing challenges in retention/recruitment.

11.4

The Board noted that Covid-19 was still listed as a risk. RH advised that the strategic risks were being reviewed and due to timings, this had not yet been removed.

11.5

In regard to the increased number of incidents, the Board noted that it would be helpful to understand the comparison to pre-pandemic years 2018/19 and 2019/20. The Board also commented on the need to ensure proper analysis was carried out whilst taking into account the 2 abnormal years due to the global pandemic.

11.6

The Board commented on the number of actions not being achieved and queried whether the Service was over ambitious. The Board were aware of the resources required for planning for industrial action and asked whether the Service were content that the corporate ambitions were set aside for this and similar large-scale issues. MMcA noted similar discussions when preparing the 2023/24 plan and that there was agreement to develop a 3-year forward look for the Annual Operating Plan/change plan. Work has commenced on the development of this plan#, and ambitions, resources and interdependencies would be taken into consideration.

11.7

RH reiterated the intentions to review the ambitions of the Service. RH reminded the Board of the significant impact Covid-19, the pension remedy and potential industrial action, all of which were unplanned, had on business as usual, individuals and the Service as a whole. RH noted his hopes going forward that the Service would be more reserved in their ambitions.

11.8

The Board commented on the possibility for an additional risk relating to the difficulties of assessing the risk of unexpected events, and the potential for further discussions.

11.9

In regard to the increased FOI requests, the Board queried whether any patterns were emerging and if the Service's responses were proportionate. MMcA informed the Board that the requests were more complex in nature, more UK wide requests and regularly received from journalists and elected officials. Within Q4, increased requests have been received which relate to the operational change considerations. The FOI Team review and manage all requests appropriately. Consideration was being given to review the website to proactively publish information.

11.10

With regard to the design and implementation of a continuous improvement framework, the Board queried whether the due date (March 2024) was still achievable, as progress was only 20% to date. DL advised the Board that the slippage was due to resourcing challenges within the Portfolio Office and that he remained confident with the estimated completion date. The Board welcomed and encouraged the Service to remain on course with the due dates.

11.11

With regard to the due date of the second test for change, DL would review and update as necessary.

11.12

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### **The Board scrutinised the Corporate Risk and Performance Quarter 4 Progress Report.**

- 12 SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INCOME GENERATION POLICY 2023**
- 12.1 LMcG presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the SFRS Income Generation Policy. The following key points were highlighted:
- Following Internal Audit's Revenue Maximisation audit, the Service reviewed and consolidated all policies into a single policy offering a more efficient and clear in-house process.
  - All activities are held centralised and reported and scrutinised by the Good Governance Board.
  - Opportunity to overhaul all income generation opportunities.
  - Equality Impact Assessment was currently being finalised and therefore not available for presentation in advance of today's meeting.
- 12.2 In regard to the Service's discretion in increasing costs, LMcG reminded the Board that as a public sector organisation we would seek costs at a non-profit rate to avoid any issues with tax implications. Similarly, the rates were the same for public and private sectors organisations, however the Board's comments on different rates were noted. Work would need to be undertaken to identify the level of tax implications and the value in pursuing addition income.
- 12.3 LMcG advised that consideration would be given to including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section as suggested by the Board.
- 12.4 LMcG advised the Board that the target audience was the whole organisation, to ensure that opportunities to generate income were identified and realised. This policy had been simplified and made easier for use and engagement had taken place with internal partners. The Deputy Accounting Manager (Income Generation Champion) would work with Decision Support Business Partners to collate information, offer guidance and advise across the organisation.
- 12.5 LMcG noted that the policy would help to achieve the income budget and would be monitored and report to the Good Governance Board.
- 12.6 The Board commented on the policy being more cost recovery focused rather than income generating and would support future discussion on an income generation strategy and opportunities.
- 12.7 Following a brief discussion, the Board agreed, with the exception of BB, to approve the consolidated Income Generation Policy, with the recognition that further review and strategic discussions would be scheduled at a future strategy day.
- the need for a culture change within the Service to maximise opportunities/achieve full cost recovery,
  - reconsider the charges to achieve full cost recovery and consider potential differentiation in charges for different client groups,
  - consider amendments to the policy to provide clearer guidance and procedural processes,
  - and whether the Service's strategy focus and priority should be innovation, income generation and commercialisation or solely on cost recovery at this time.
- ACTION: JT/LMcG**
- 12.8 **The Board approved the Income Generation Policy to supersede the previous policies and to approve the updated Scale of Charges for 2023/24.**

*(The meeting broke at 1146 hrs and reconvened at 1155 hrs)*

**13 ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOARD**

- 13.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the arrangements for reviewing and continued effectiveness of the SFRS Board, subject to any amendments. The following key points were highlighted:
- Ongoing commitment to review and strengthen governance identified and praised by external auditors.
  - Annual Governance Review presented to the Board in April 2023.
  - Programme of engagement including informal engagement and additional Board/Committee meetings to support in-depth scrutiny of key challenges facing the Service.
  - Plans to reintroduce Board engagement sessions in 2023/24.
  - Effectiveness of Strategy Day discussions and shared understanding of key issues.
- 13.2 The Board commented on the potential need to consider refreshing the approach and focus more on effectiveness, impact of behaviours and comparison against other high-performance boards.
- 13.3 The Board were reminded of the recent externally facilitated session which looked at the qualities of a high-performing board and consideration would be given on how to capture this. Further discussions and consideration would be given on how best to capture/evaluate the Board's impact with a view to continuous improvement.
- 13.4 It was suggested that consideration be given to semi-structured interviews with individual members to help identify strengths or weaknesses in future processes.
- 13.5 **The Board approved the arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the SFRS Board.**

**14 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – MAY 2023**

- 14.1 LMcG presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 31 May 2023. LMcG 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 £0.116 million and a forecast year-end overspend of £0.294 million. The following key points were highlighted:
- Forecasted overspend on employee costs for Control (£0.102 million) and forecasted underspends for Wholetime (£0.082 million), On Call (£0.080 million) and Support Staff (£0.576 million).
  - Other employee costs forecasting overspend (£0.132 million).
  - Property, supplies and services and transport costs forecasting overspend (£0.649 million, £0.002 million and £0.134 million respectively).
  - Virements during this period.
  - Savings forecasted at £10.478 million.
  - Main financial risk remains potential overall overspend.
  - Progress of 2022/23 year end noting a forecasted overspend of £1.600 million (resource) with the caveat that figures are still being finalised. Discussions held and agreement received from Scottish Government re. potential overspend which was previously forecast at £2.900 million.
- 14.2 In regard to overtime, the Board asked for further clarification on what “changes to the business rules” meant. DF advised that the rules were not changed however the Service may change the approach and management of the rules as appropriate, on a daily basis. The Service remained focussed on reducing overtime.
- 14.3 In regard to the forecasted overspend in property costs, IM advised the Board that through phasing of projects/reviewing contracts, he was confident in bringing the budget back in line.

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- 14.4 LMcG provided further details to the Board of the potential overspend on 2022/23 budget, identified accruals and that Scottish Government were content with the potential deficit position. LMcG to ensure that written confirmation was received from Scottish Government as confirmation of the position on the potential deficit.

**ACTION: LMcG**

- 14.5 **The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 31 May 2023.**

### 15 **CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – MAY 2023**

- 15.1 LMcG presented a report advising the Board of the actual and committed expenditure against the 2023/24 capital budget position for the period ending 31 May 2023. All efforts will be made to spend out the current budget of £34.00million by 31 March 2024. Current spend to date was approx. £11.218million (33%) of the budget. The following key points were highlighted:

- New format of report which was aligned with the resource budget report.
- All projects remain on track.
- Challenges remain with supply chains.
- Finalised 2022/23 year-end figures reported an underspend of £138.

- 15.2 IM updated the Board on anticipated future virements in the coming year, the reasons for these and ongoing discussions regarding potential future funding.

- 15.3 Brief discussion took place on the challenges in supply chains and adjustments required to timescales of projects. IM reminded the Board that the rolling 3-year work plan could be adjusted, as necessary, to ensure budget spend.

- 15.4 The Board welcomed the revised format of the report and the finalised 2022/23 year end position.

- 15.5 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed expenditure for the period ending 31 May 2023.**

### 16 **NEW MOBILISING SYSTEM UPDATE**

- 16.1 DL provided a verbal update to the Board on the new mobilising system, noting that an update had recently been given at the Change Committee on 26 June 2023. DL shared a presentation with the Board and highlighted the following key points:

- Entered planning phase with specific dates identified for the Outline Business Case (OBC) (August 2023), Scottish Government pre-procurement gateway (September 2023) prior to invitation to tender (September 2023). OGC Gateway 3G investment decision (February 2024) and award of contract (February 2024).
- Full Business Case (FBC) would be finalised following the procurement phase.
- Good progress being made by Senior Project Manager and wider project team.
- Anticipated indicative costings from potential supplier (30 June 2023).
- Suppliers engagement event was well attended and received. Subsequently, 4 suppliers have positively indicated their interest to tender.
- Final draft of User Intelligence Group specification (July 2023).
- Publish invitation to tender (September 2023) with evaluation of tenders (November/December 2023) and award of contract (February 2024).
- Phase 0 (ensuring business readiness) was ongoing to standardise working processes and data.
- Commencing further communication and engagement with Operations Control (OC).
- In terms of assurance, it was determined that pre-procurement gateway would be undertaken in September 2023.



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- Next step included finalised resources for the planning stage, noting the current allocation. Looking to finalise project management resources (July 2023) to support Phase 0 of the project.

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

### **17 REPORT FOR INFORMATION ONLY:**

#### **17.1 Performance Management Framework Annual Report 2021-22**

17.1.1 The Performance Management Framework Annual Report for 2021-22 was presented to the Board for information.

17.1.2 The Board commented on the value of presenting this report, which was 15 months out of date and that consideration should be given to benchmarking, wherever possible.

17.1.3 MMcA noted the comments and would consider the timings of the report. In regard to benchmarking, a meeting has been arranged with CIPFA to discuss opportunities.

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

### **18 RISK THEMES**

18.1 One new/emerging risk was identified during this meeting, this related to the Service's capacity to react to unplanned events.

### **19 FORWARD PLAN**

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

### **20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20.1 A special private meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 27 July 2023 at 1115 hrs.

20.2 The next public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 31 August 2023 at 1000 hrs.

20.3 The Chair, on behalf of the Board and the Strategic Leadership Team, thanked Nick Barr and Lesley Bloomer for their hard work, focus and contributions, both within and outwith formal meetings, throughout their tenure on the Board and offered best wishes for the future.

20.4 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1245 hours.

## **PRIVATE SESSION**

### **21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING:**

#### **21.1 Thursday 27 April 2023**

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

#### **21.2 Thursday 25 May 2023 - Special**

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

21.3 **The minutes of the meetings held on 27 April 2023 and 25 May 2023 (Special) were approved as a true record of the meetings.**

#### **21.4 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

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**22 PRIVATE ACTION LOG**

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

**23 LIABILITY CLAIM AGAINST SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

23.1 LMcG presented the report to the Board seeking approval in relation to an Employer's Liability claim intimated against the Service.

23.2 **The Board approved the recommendation.**

**24 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

24.1 LBa presented the report to the Board to provide an update in relation to the Strategic Aims for Corporate Services and an overview of the work being undertaken as part of the Strategic Service Review Programme.

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