



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2023 @ 1000 HRS

**CONFERENCE ROOM, COWCADDENS COMMUNITY FIRE STATION,
91 PORT DUNDAS ROAD, GLASGOW, G4 0ES / VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Tim Wright, Chair (TW)
Angiolina Foster (AF)

Paul Stollard, Deputy Chair (PS)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Stuart Stevens (SS)	Deputy Chief Officer
David Farries (DF)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Service Delivery
Andy Watt (AW)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
Chris Fitzpatrick (CF)	Business Intelligence and Data Services Manager (Item 9.1 only)
Kirsty Darwent (KD)	Chair of the Board
Robert Scott (RS)	HMFSI
Marysia Waters (MW)	Head of Corporate Communications
Kevin Murphy (KM)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Iona Milne	Business Support Executive / Minutes

OBSERVERS

John McKenzie, FBU

1 WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present and participating via MS Teams.

1.2 Those participating via MS Teams were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question. This meeting would be recorded for minute taking purposes only.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Assistant Chief Officer David Lockhart, Director of Service Development

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

3.1 The Committee agreed that the *Operations Control: Existing Systems Resilience* item would be taken in private due to the confidential nature of the issues (Standing Order 9G).

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 There were no declarations of conflict of interests made.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 24 AUGUST 2023

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

5.2 Matters Arising

5.2.1 There were no matters arising.

5.3 **The minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 KM confirmed there were no outstanding actions on the action log.

7 SERVICE DELIVERY UPDATE

7.1 SS presented the update report detailing relevant matters from a Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Service Delivery perspective, which comprises Service Delivery and Training, Safety and Assurance Directorates, for the quarter, albeit some issues may precede and extend beyond this period. The following key points were highlighted:

- Storm Update - The past month there has been a significant period of operational activity due to storm related events primarily Storm Babet. Due to the early warning from SEPA it enabled the Service to pre plan and send specialist resources to the areas that were most at risk. The crews in the Brechin area performed approximately 200 rescues. There were a number of residents that did not evacuate after the recommended evacuation was announced and SS raised this at the Strategic Resilience Partnership at Scottish Government around the methodology for alerting communities to flooding or other significant events. Swiftwater Rescue Technician (SRT) crews were deployed to Brechin and the surrounding area. The teams went above and beyond and were there for a prolonged time due to being cut off. The rescues carried out were supported by partners, primarily the coastguard. The whole event is subject to a National Debrief next week. Two weeks prior there was another significant flooding event.
- Bonfire Night - There were 9 acts of violence to crews on bonfire night and 6 acts of violence preceding bonfire night. There were no injuries to the crews. As part of "Operation Moonbeam" there will be a debrief. Scottish Government are having an independent review of anti-social behaviour and SS has offered SFRS support.
- Digital fire ground radios – As of 27 November 2023 the radios have started to be distributed. Edinburgh LSO area have received the first batch of new radios and this will be followed on by the Grampian areas and a national roll out by the middle of next year.
- Operations Control (OC) recruitment – Currently in the process of recruiting fifteen operators. Comms have done a great piece of work promoting this.
- Dedicated Working Collaboratives with Police Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service – Police referrals have increased by 100 and Scottish Ambulance Service referrals, which is a new referral pathway, has seen 103 individuals being referred to SFRS.
- Low Carbon Appliance – The first low carbon appliance is operational and on the run at Clydesmill Fire Station.
- ISAR – ISAR team have returned from Morocco. The Mental Health Strategy has benefited colleagues within this team.
- Training Strategy – The Training Vision and Strategy 2023-2028 has been presented to SLT and will be presented at the People Committee on the 7 December 2023 and then SFRS Board for information on 14 December 2023.
- BA Recovery Plan – Input from AW and the Group Commanders leading this plan is very reassuring regarding the approach to BA training going forward.

7.2

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Regarding the storm update, the Committee enquired if the Service have the right equipment for flooding. SS advised there are 20 SRT teams and 66 Flood Response teams who all have specialist equipment and all firefighters in Scotland have flood response PPE. The storm events reinforce conversations that have already taken place in terms of the need for further investment for suitable equipment to respond to climate change events. Feedback from crews has been captured within the Operational Assurance (OA) process. The Committee enquired about sledges for water rescue. DF advised that through the Ops Strategy it was identified that the best people to identify the equipment needs of the Service and subsequent deployment are those that are carrying out the work. Purchases of equipment as a result of operational learning should go through the OA process and then National Safety Assurance Board or Operations Function then back to the Asset Management Liaison Board. Procuring and funding for the request will then need to be selected appropriately.

7.3

In regard to the storm update the Committee asked what the impact would be to the Service operationally regarding the aftermath of the flooding. SS advised there is no operational impact but there is a personal impact as businesses and homes have been damaged. SS advised that it is worth recognising in Scotland that national responses are generally done well with good processes in place, as shown in the 5 days of Storm Babet. DF advised the Service is highly involved in Community Planning with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and if long term recovery is identified the Perth, Kinross, Angus and Dundee area (PKAD) and Local Senior Officer (LSO) will understand the needs of their communities. The Service always responds to community needs whether it is Prevention and Protection colleagues supporting premises to coming back online or for the public through Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV).

7.4

RS highlighted the following statement from the recently published Climate Change: managing the operational impact on fires and other weather – related emergencies report. *“The SFRS has developed its water rescue capability and has a significant level of resources and capabilities to respond to flooding incidents and is well equipped to undertake rescues there. We assess the rescue capability as good. The wider aspect of flooding involves a partnership approach with other agencies and the SFRS is well engaged.”*

7.5

RS advised the Committee that HMFSI were fully satisfied with how the Service responded to Storm Babet.

7.6

The Committee enquired if the Service has a role in making the calls for evacuations. SS advised the Service is partly responsible at Local Resilience Partnership level and at Strategic Resilience Partnership level input is provided at an early stage. The Brechin crews were on the scene very early knocking on doors but cannot compel the public to evacuate.

7.7

The Committee recognised the report and noted there are items that do not get commented on. Regarding the Operational Strategy - 6 ‘Concept of Operations’ that highlights areas of future focus, the Committee enquired if there was a timeline for this. DF advised there were no timelines attached to the 6 ‘Concept of Operations’ as the themes covered all operational activity.

7.8

In regard to the FSE section of the report the Committee asked if it was common practice for staff to be awarded a rate of pay while studying rather than after. DF advised this would be checked.

7.9

The Committee enquired why the New County Hotel section was in the report as it was currently ongoing. DF advised the section was included in the report to remind the Committee work is still ongoing.

7.10

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AW advised that teams had been working hard regarding the BA Recovery Plan and pre-course learning would be delivered in Q4 this year with the practical element commencing in Q1 next year.

7.11

The Committee stated that at a previous meeting it was uncertain if the Trainee Firefighter Foundation Programme intake would take place at the start of next year and asked if there had been any update. SS advised there was a course planned and a date was still to be confirmed but this would be subject to understanding the upcoming budget announcement.

7.12

AW informed the Committee of the acronyms used in the report.

7.13

Regarding Training Strategy/Vision the Committee asked if there were mechanisms in place for feedback. AW advised feedback was being gathered and the success of the Strategy will be judged by KPIs.

7.14

The Committee scrutinised the report.

8 INSPECTIONS/AUDITS

8.1 UPDATE FROM HM FIRE SERVICE INSPECTORATE

8.1.1 RS presented his report to the Committee to provide an update on HMFSI inspection and reporting activity. The following key points were highlighted:

- Service Delivery Area Inspection report covering the East Service Delivery Area (ESDA) has been published. The report was published on 19 October 2023. The format of the report is formal as it is laid in Parliament. After it is laid in Parliament the Chief Officer receives the report which is then passed to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) for action. The Service have already taken steps regarding the recommendations within the report which shows a great relationship between the Inspectorate and the Service. The West Service Delivery Area (WSDA) inspection has commenced and is scheduled to be completed by early 2024 with the final report due late spring/summer 2024.
- Climate Change – Impact on Operational Activity report was laid in the Scottish Parliament on 25 September 2023 and has eight recommendations and four areas of good practice. The Service are learning lessons from real events and adapting its approach which HMFSI was encouraged to see.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Provision in the SFRS report is ongoing. Formal consultation process has concluded and the report will be laid in the Scottish Parliament in the middle of December.
- Organisational Culture draft Terms of Reference (ToR) was sent to SLT for consideration. Reflecting on the feedback from SLT the HMFSI will now be taking a different approach to what was initially set out. A workshop will now be held with SLT, and another with representative bodies, to determine the ToR together.
- HMFSI are grateful for the Service supporting the secondees to HMFSI and an advert is currently out for two new secondees.

8.1.2 SS advised the Service Delivery Area Inspection report has been received by SLT and the action plan will be ready for the next SDC meeting.

8.1.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

(C Fitzpatrick joined the meeting at 1043hrs)

8.2 Independent Audit/Inspection Action Plan

8.2.1 RW presented the report to the Committee providing an update on the following action plan:

8.2.2 Arrangements for Firefighting in High Rise Buildings Action Plan

One action has been completed in the last quarter; four actions are now complete with four actions remaining. The four remaining actions are now marked amber due to a slip in the original timelines. Action one is not complete and will miss the intended completion date. Meetings are planned to take place in December to determine further revision to the policy. Further update to the timeline or work will be provided in due course. Action four remains amber whilst only estimated reporting- 60% completion. The owners are confident the report will be completed by the end of December. Action five has provided a revised update at the Senior Management Board (SMB), the slippage to the timeline is due to capacity and other factors in Edinburgh. Action six remains on track.

8.2.3 The committee queried why action one is still amber with 60% to complete and no end date. RW advised that after the meetings in December there will be a revised date if needed.

8.2.4 RS advised HMFSI would like a conversation regarding developments that have occurred in relation to HSE determination on National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidelines. SS advised the Chief Officer and himself had met to discuss this and there were a series of actions arising from it around which a conversation with HMFSI would be welcome. The Committee asked if there would be more actions added due to this. SS advised there is potential for more actions to be added.

8.2.5 The Committee scrutinised the report.

9 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE REPORTING

9.1 Quarterly Performance Report for Q2 2023-24

9.1.1 DF introduced CF who presented the performance report for Quarter 2 and highlighted the following key areas:

- KPI 1-3 has largely seen no change in terms of performance.
- KPI 4 - Fire fatalities have seen an increase from last year.
- KPI 5 – Fire casualties figures remain low.
- KPI 6 – Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) have seen a 9% reduction and the reduction is mainly in the North and West Service Delivery Areas. Community Safety Engagement teams and LSOs are working on an improvement plan.
- KP1 7 – Visits to vulnerable groups is the same as last quarter at 47%.
- KPI 8 – Partner referrals made up 43% of all HFSV.
- KPI 10 – Accidental dwelling fires are at the lowest point.
- KPI 12 – Total incidents for the quarter are significantly lower due to the reduction of UFAS.
- KPI 14 – Response times have increased due to the high recording of incidents in the West and East during December 2022 and have pushed the response over 9 minutes. National response time is flattening out.
- KPI 15 – Call responses are seeing fewer fluctuations.
- KPI 16 – On-call availability is at its lowest point which is 74% for the quarter.
- KPI 17- Wholtime availability has increased by 1%.
- KPI 21 - UFAS numbers have fallen significantly and are currently at 3,663 UFAS incidents against target, last year that was 7,846.
- KPI 30 - Assist other agencies is now reporting outwith the expected range of variation for the last five quarters.

9.1.2 The Committee thanked CF and the team for the great work.

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9.1.3 In regard to KPI 17 the Committee asked for clarification. CF advised the data set used in terms of reporting captures call sign information and potentially one vehicle can have more than one call sign. The practices within the OC environment are being looked at to see how this is recorded.

9.1.4 The Committee enquired if CF was confident the reporting process was robust. CF advised that the Service cannot carry out 100% checks. Where there are fire casualties, training is in place for front line employees to ensure the correct data is captured. A training package is currently live on LCMS. The package would be rolled out in an East Service Delivery LSO area to gain an understanding of how the package is perceived. DF advised the training package was articulated to allow employees to know how the data is used and why it is required. The training package will go onto the annual training calendar and be part of the induction for supervisory managers.

9.1.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

9.2 UFAS Update

9.2.1 DF presented a report to the Committee to provide an update on the progress against the work plan and give an overview of performance following the implementation of the new Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) response model. The following key points were highlighted:

- First substantive update since the implementation of the AFA response model.
- Now in the process of finalising a closing report for the project.
- The closing report will have an evaluation element in it but a 6-month evaluation report will be taken to SDC at the appropriate time.
- Contact and relationships have been made with British Security Industry Association (BSIA) and other organisations.
- NFCC are talking about the initiative UK wide.
- Home Office are keen to ensure SFRS learning is incorporated UK wide.
- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) have expressed a number of concerns which were taken on board.
- Local Authorities (LA) asked for an exemption, which was respectfully declined.
- 54% drop in UFAS incidents overall.
- Average of 51 non-attended incidents per 24-hour period.
- A total of 4,691 incidents non-attended.
- UFAS now account for 19% of all incidents, down from 31.5% from the same period last year.

9.3.2 The Committee noted this report is not an evaluation report and an evaluation report will be presented at the appropriate time.

9.3.3 The Committee enquired if owners of significant national assets such as National Trust have approached the Service. DF advised several different sectors have approached the Service collectively such as Heritage Society and Faith Groups. The relationships have been very good and the dedicated UFAS team have met with the groups and LSOs are having individual discussions. The team have looked at individual circumstances and offered assistance but have been firm on the exemptions, in particular to the length of time as the implementation date was delayed by 6 months to allow for premises to be suitably prepared. There have been some specific requests and concerns from premises that do not have 24/7 coverage on site.

9.3.4 The Committee asked for DF and the UFAS teams to encourage additional systems to be put in place, for example, sprinkler systems for sites which have significant national assets and no 24/7 coverage on site. DF advised Operational Intelligence will be gathered on those premises and if there are salvage plans in place, it will sign post there are national treasures.

9.3.5 The Committee noted that a number of concerns were being received post implementation rather than pre implementation, despite considerable outreach having taken place at the consultation phase.

9.3.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(C Fitzpatrick left the meeting at 1132 hrs)

(M Waters joined the meeting at 1133hrs)

10 **SFRS COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

10.1 MW presented a report to the Committee to provide a progress update on the handling of complaints in compliance with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Complaints Policy as outlined in the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP). The following key points were highlighted:

- First time the annual report has been produced in line with the new MCHP from SPSO and are now reporting in line with other public services across Scotland.
- Reporting deadlines have changed, the reports are required to be published by the end of October. This is in line with the SPSO requirements.
- Really good completion rate. Performance at Stage 1 is 3 days on average for complaints to be closed, compared to the national performance target of 5 days. Performance at Stage 2, which is the formal investigation stage, the average is 14 days compared to the national performance target of 20 days.
- Complaints are broken down into subject matter but the majority sit within Service Delivery such as driving and conduct.
- For the size of the organisation, the number of complaints received is small. London Fire Brigade (LFB) is the nearest comparator, and they receive slightly less complaints but the SFRS is a bigger organisation.
- Integration of the statistics has been improved with the help from the Data Services team and there is now a dashboard and Power BI is used to integrate the data.

10.2 The Committee advised that the report was valuable, however, queried why LFB was the nearest comparator and why they received less complaints. MW advised the answer was unknown but speculated that in smaller communities complaints can be made more easily, compared to bigger places such as London. The Committee asked MW to consider adding a second comparator such as Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. MW to consider this.

10.3 The Committee asked for any standout themes and the organisational learning from those themes. MW advised it is difficult to interrogate the trends due to numbers, spread and that there is a reduction in complaints upheld this year. There has been an increase in behaviours identified on social media and the Social Media Policy has been revisited with staff being reminded of their responsibility on social media. The dashboard is shared with LSOs and their teams so they are able to look at data and what areas for improvement can be identified. AW advised a Driver Safety Group sits under the National Safety Assurance Board structure which considers all the information and learning around driving and helps shape and influence the content of the driver training.

10.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

11 **SFRS COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

11.1 MW presented a report to the Committee to provide a progress update regarding the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Compliments process outlined in the SFRS Compliments Handling Policy and Procedure. The following key points were highlighted:

- Compliments are difficult to capture as there are not many received formally but the Service receives more at station level which is harder to collate.

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- The increase in compliments was following the Jenners Incident.
- Compliments on social media are noted by the Communications Team.
- LFB is the comparator and received more compliments.

11.2 The Committee enquired what process LFB uses to capture the compliments. MW advised the process is unknown.

11.3 The Committee proposed adding both compliments and complaints into the group of areas that the Service would be consulting on with Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

11.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12 SERVICE DELIVERY RISK REGISTER

12.1 Committee Aligned Directorate Risks

12.1.1 SS presented a report to the Committee containing the identified Directorate risks and controls aligned to the business of the Committee. The following key points were highlighted:

- Reduction in risk rating SD003 (Operational Availability Systems) however the impact has increased.
- Reduction in risk rating SD014 (Category 1 responder under Civil Contingencies Act (2004) from 20 to 4.
- Reduction in risk rating SPPC001 (Accurate Performance Management Information).
- Main risk relates to supply issues and ongoing supply chain issues and costs and is ongoing.

12.1.2 The Committee asked at what point does the supply chain issue change to business as usual. DF advised through the Asset Management Liaison Board, it is apparent the milestones and delivery dates are changing constantly. Maintaining the risk rating at the level is beneficial to allow for reallocation of funds.

12.1.3 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12.2 Risk Spotlight: Communications Challenge Relating to Adjustment to Service Delivery Resources

12.2.1 MW presented the risk spotlight to the Committee to provide an update on the communications challenge relating to adjustment to Service Delivery resources. The following key points were highlighted:

- Reputational damage can result in legal challenge or overturning of the decisions made.
- There are rules to follow for consulting any changes made to the Service such as National Standards for Community Engagement, Common law precedents and statutory requirements under the Fire Scotland Act.
- Public Involvement and Consultation team and Consultation Policy in place.
- Where it is determined there is no requirement for a consultation there can still be a significant media and political engagement required after any change.
- In regards to the Operational Changes 2023/24 Media and Political Engagement Summary Report and Analysis, the dates in the paper are for a period of time and engagement is still ongoing. The amount of work has been considerable and compares to the volume of work for a consultation.
- There is a lack of public understanding as to how the Service operates. A lot of work went into explaining how the Service operates. This was also highlighted in the Leadhills public engagement process where the community did not understand what the volunteer station responded to.
- A lot of criticism received is about making the data available and having that straight away for the people we are engaging with.

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- Resources was an issue as there was not a team to field the level of enquiries and this should be considered in future planning.
- FBU issued a national release which had gone to elected members, so within 24 hours the team were working on a reactive basis.
- Despite all the engagement sessions working well, it does not alter the public position MSPs take.
- A process is required for the invitation of elected members onto premises.

12.2.2 SS stated the brief was helpful and shows the extent and significant amount of engagement taking place. The lessons learned from this can be used going forward.

12.2.3 The Committee supported and recognised the seven considerations for future communications/engagements and commented time and preparation is key. SS advised North Wales had provided lessons learned.

12.2.4 MW noted the number of resources used were significant due to individual meetings and national meetings. The Service is more organised for next year due to a better understanding and a draft process is now in place. MW advised Freedom of Information (FOI) requests will be ongoing.

12.2.5 The Committee enquired what steps are taken to capture learning. MW advised there is a Consultation Policy, toolkit and guidance available on the ihub which were reviewed. Legislation and Case Law are evolving and processes need to reflect this.

12.2.6 The Committee enquired what incidents might trigger public interest. MW advised any Service change will result in a degree of political or public opposition. The Public Involvement and Consultation Team will be developing engagement processes as business as usual in the next few years.

The Committee noted the report.

12.2.7

13 FORWARD PLANNING

13.1 Committee Forward Plan

13.1.1 The Committee noted the forward plan.

13.2 Items for Consideration at Future Integrated Governance Forum, Board and Strategy/Information and Development Day Meetings

13.2.1 There were no items noted.

14 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

14.1 KM confirmed that there were no formal actions recorded during the meeting.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 27 February 2024.

15.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1219 hours.

(The meeting broke at 1219 hrs and reconvened in private at 1222 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 24 AUGUST 2023

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

17 OPERATIONS CONTROL: EXISTING SYSTEMS RESILIENCE

17.1 DF presented a report to the Committee providing an update on the current Operations Control (OC) legacy systems.

17.2 **The Committee noted the report.**