



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 25 APRIL 2024 @ 1000 HRS

VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)

PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)
Angiolina Foster (AF)
Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)
Andrew Smith (AS)
Paul Stollard (PS)
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

Fiona Thorburn, Deputy Chair (FT)
Steve Barron (SB)
Neil Mapes (NM)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Madeline Smith (MS)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ross Haggart (RH)	Chief Officer
Stuart Stevens (SS)	Deputy Chief Officer
David Farries (DF)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
David Lockhart (DL)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Director of Finance and Contractual Services
Lynsey Gaja (LG)	Interim Director of People
Louise Patrick (LP)	Strategic Planning and Partnership Co-ordinator (Item 12 only)
Asha Narsapur (AN)	Legal Services Manager (Item 18 only)
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
Seona Hart, Fire Brigades Union

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 KD opened the meeting and welcomed those attending 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 Brian Baverstock, Board Member
Liz Barnes, Interim Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Andy Watt, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Mark McAteer, Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications

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

- 3.1

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The Board agreed that the *Update on Claim against Systel* item would be taken in private. This is due to the confidential commercial/financial information (Standing Order 9E).

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 For transparency, the following standing declarations of interests were recorded:

- Madeline Smith, Board Member of Scottish Ambulance Service
- Paul Stollard, Chair of Board of Institute of Fire Engineers

4.2 There were no other declarations or conflict of interests made.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

5.1 Wednesday 27 March 2024

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 March 2024 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 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 which noted events that had occurred since the Board meeting held on 27 March 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Meeting with Cabinet Secretary for Justice regarding the Reform Collaboration Group and to provide a comprehensive project update on the work with PriceWaterhouseCooper. Timelines remain on target.
- Meeting held with Chairs of Scottish Ambulance Service and Scottish Police Authority which provided an opportunity to share mutual concerns regarding the wider public sector and potential opportunities for collaboration at an informal level.
- National Joint Council meetings held relating to potential pay settlement which were progressing well. Further update to be provided in private session.
- Regular meeting held with Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA) to discuss the current state of UK FRS and their perspective on terms and conditions.
- Positive and productive Board Members only session facilitated by Barbara Allison. Note of the meeting to be circulated in due course.

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 March 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Change to written report due to the FRSA meeting on 19 April being rescheduled to 10 May 2024.

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- Update on Strategy Service Review Programme pre-consultation work noting the ongoing engagement with Scottish Government, representative bodies, etc, the preparatory media work to support the launch and support being given to Local Senior Officers (LSO) and their teams. Formal launch date was 30 April 2024. Future opportunities to engage with stakeholders on the future of the organisation and how they can be part of the journey. Thanks were extended to the Communications function for their work in this area.

9.2

In regard to support being provided to LSOs, the Board queried whether this would continue throughout the consultation period and in what format. RH advised that the engagement with LSOs was to ensure that they were fully prepared ahead of any local engagement. DF informed the Board that several sessions with LSOs and Service Delivery Area (SDA) management teams had been held by the Public Involvement and Consultation (PICT) team and supported by the Communications and Engagement team. The focus of these sessions was on the mechanics of the first stages i.e. format of public station visits, open meetings and discussion session in each area and community pop up events. For awareness, the full consultation timeline had been shared with LSO/SDA management teams. Focus group convened with single points of contact from each LSO area to educate their own teams on the expectations of the consultation. DF noted that individual LSO management teams meetings had or were scheduled to be held to allow a deeper dive into the consultation document and the next stages. DF further noted that he anticipated these meetings would continue for the next 9 months, albeit with a different focus, before progressing into the implementation of change stage.

9.3

The Board were advised to co-ordinate with the Board Support Team on the various engagement events in local areas.

9.4

The Board acknowledged and thanked DCO Stuart Stevens and Marysia Waters, Head of Communications and Engagement for their work and efforts in the development of the pre-consultation documentation.

9.5

The Board queried the Service's approach to reach and engage with a diverse and wide cross section of communities. SS advised the Board of some of the measures put in place, including the translation of the consultation document into different languages and specific events being held to support the equality impact assessment of the consultation.

9.6

The Board noted the report and verbal update.

(F Thorburn joined the meeting at 1015 hrs)

10 COMMITTEE UPDATES

10.1 Change Committee (CC)

10.1.1 FT reported that reported the Committee held a public meeting 15 February 2024 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. The date of the next scheduled meeting was Thursday 2 May 2024.

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

10.2 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

10.2.1 TW reported that the Committee held a public meeting 26 March 2024 and noted that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. The date of the next scheduled meeting was Tuesday 25 June 2024.

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

10.3 People Committee (PC)

10.3.1 MW reported that the Committee held a public meeting 7 March 2024 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, noting that a verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. The date of the next scheduled meeting was Thursday 6 June 2024.

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

10.4 Service Delivery Committee (SDC)

10.4.1 TW reported that the Committee held a public meeting 27 February 2024 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, noting that a verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. The date of the next scheduled meeting was Wednesday 29 May 2024.

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

10.5 Reform Collaboration Group (RCG) Oversight Group

10.5.1 FT reported that the RCG Oversight Group's next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 30 April 2024 and noted that the outline business case was currently being considered by the respective Executive teams.

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

11 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF THE BOARD AND COMMITTEE RELATED ITEMS

11.1 RW presented the Board with the Annual Governance Review of Board and Committee related items, which would ensure the continued effectiveness of governance arrangements, for approval. The following key points were highlighted:

- Summary of amendments are listed in Appendix A.
- Revised Committee membership noting that the Deputy Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) was yet to be identified.
- Some further minor amendments have been identified in the summary table within the Scheme of Delegations and these would be amended.
- Consideration had been given to the National Fire Chief Council's National Standard for Governance (not yet published) during the review process.

11.2 The Board were advised that the ARAC Deputy Chair would be identified and implemented at their next meeting (June 2024). The Board delegated the authority to make this decision to the ARAC.

11.3 The Board were reminded of the forthcoming phased evolution of the Change Committee to focus on more strategic planning, resource allocation and finance. Terms of reference were still in development. Changes to Committee membership would not be made before the next Change Committee (2 May 2024).

11.4 Following the next Change Committee meeting (2 May 2024), consideration would be given to identify the most suitable time to implement the changes to the committee membership.

11.5 The following amendments were noted:

- Typographical error was noted in the retirement date for Fiona Thorburn, this should read October 2024 rather than September 2024.
- Suggested amendment to wording within the Borrowing section in the Scheme of Delegations to include the word "authorise".

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11.6 The Board sought further clarity on the integrated assurance mapping process and what the implications were should insufficient assurance be recorded. The Board were reminded that this was introduced last year and the Service were using the standard terminology. RW noted that the Committee Chairs and Integrated Governance Forum had oversight of this, and it would also be included in the Annual Governance Statement. RW noted that should insufficient assurance be recorded, then the Service would have to react and provide assurance. Further discussions to be held off table to provide a fuller understanding of the process.

11.7 **The Board approved the reviewed and amended governance related document of the Board and its Committees, subject to minor amendments as noted.**

(L Patrick joined the meeting at 1035 hrs)

12 SFRS THREE YEAR DELIVERY PLAN

12.1 RW presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Three-Year Delivery Plan and highlighted the following key points:

- Consideration would be given to comments submitted in advance by Board Members. These related to nomenclature wording changes, measurable outcomes to capture success.
- Thanks were extended to all those involved in the development of this plan.

12.2 The Board reiterated concerns on the Service's capacity and capability to deliver the 3-year plan, particularly as the Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP) was not included, and its ability to absorb all aspects of change. The Board were reminded of the discussions held at the recent Strategy Day (18 April 2024) and acknowledged that there was nothing within the plan that could be removed. The Board recognised the challenges in delivering the plan, however, the plan helped to demonstrate the Service's ambition for the future. The Board requested that consideration continue to be given as to how the plan would be achieved and delivered.

12.3 RH advised the Board that full consideration had been given to the development of the plan. RH noted that all Directors have given their commitment to all areas of work within their own directorates and collectively across the organisation. RH further noted that barring any fundamental changes, the plan would be delivered albeit some timescales could potentially be adjusted depending on certain circumstances.

12.4 RW reminded the Board of the improvement in the development and delivery against commitments in previous plans.

12.5 The Board noted the significant increased potential for external factors to impact on the Service's ability to deliver against the plan. Therefore, the Board requested that the rationale for any timescale adjustments should be shared to raise awareness of these external factors.

12.6 Brief discussion on the potential negative implications arising from the distinction between business as usual and change within the Service and how this impacted on personnel. The potential for areas of business as usual to become more dynamic as the Service moves into continual improvement/reviewing of the service delivery model. This area would be considered further at a future strategy planning workshop.

12.7 The Board requested that consideration be given to the ambitions outlined within the 3-year plan are translated into the objectives and appraisal process for senior staff and those involved in change.

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12.8 **Subject to minor amendments in language and narrative, the Board approved the SFRS Three Year Delivery Plan**

(L Patrick left the meeting at 1047 hrs)

13 **DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY UPDATE AND ANNUAL PLAN 2024/25**

13.1 TW presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25, noting that the ARAC considered and recommended the plan at their 26 March 2024 meeting. The following key points were highlighted:

- Extension to Azet's contract for a further year.
- Different approach being taken with fewer more in-depth audits being undertaken in order to achieve the best value in return.
- ARAC had queried whether the 30 days allocated for the Change Management audit were sufficient given the potential future changes facing the Service and it was felt that allocation of days was substantial. As the scope of audit had still to be developed, there were opportunities to direct the focus in particular areas whilst considering any intrusive impact on workloads of individuals managing/delivering change.

13.2 The Board commented on the lack of audits within operational areas planned for the coming year. RH noted that the SLT had discussed the focus of the audit plan and the balance of this against other scrutiny undertaken on the Service. As the HMFSI work was primarily operational in focus, it was felt that this area was already well scrutinised.

13.3 In regard to the Change Management audit, the Board asked for consideration to be given to include processes to capture benefits realisation, as well as business case processes within the scope of the audit. RH reminded the Board that, prior to any audit commencing, the SLT reviewed and agreed the final scope of the audit so there would be an opportunity to feedback to Azets on the potential to include benefits realisation.

13.4 **The Board approved the Internal Audit Strategy Update and Annual Plan 2024/25.**

14 **RISK THEMES**

14.1 The Board noted earlier comments on the tension between being an ambitious Service against the risk of not achieving all that is set out in the 3-year delivery plan. Consideration should be given on how this is reflected within the Strategic Risk Register.

14.2 There were no other new or emerging risks identified during this meeting.

15 **FORWARD PLAN**

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

16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

16.1 The next public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 27 June 2024 at 1000 hrs.

16.2 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1100 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

17 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING:**

17.1 **Wednesday 27 March 2024**

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

17.1.2 **The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

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17.3 **Matters Arising**

17.3.1 There were no matters arising.

18 **UPDATE ON CLAIM AGAINST SYSTEL**

18.1 S'OD presented a report to update the Board on the current position in relation to the claim against Systel.

18.2 **This report was provided for information and was noted by the Board.**

19 **ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS:**

19.1 **National Joint Council Update**

19.1.1 KD provide a brief verbal update on the current position.

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

19.2 **New Mobilising System Procurement Update**

19.2.1 DL provided a verbal update on the current position in relation to the procurement of a New Mobilising System.

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