



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 27 JUNE 2024 @ 0945 HRS

**BRAIDWOOD SUITE, SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,
WESTBURN DRIVE, CAMBUSLANG, G72 7NA / VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)
Brian Baverstock (BB)
Neil Mapes (NM)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Madeline Smith (MS)
Tim Wright (TW)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ross Haggart (RH)
Stuart Stevens (SS)
Liz Barnes (LB)
David Farries (DF)
David Lockhart (DL)

Chief Officer
Deputy Chief Officer
Interim Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness
Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Director of Finance and Contractual Services
Interim Director of People
Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
Business Intelligence Team Leader (Items 11 and 17 only)
Area Commander NMS Project Lead (Item 23 only)
Group Commander Board Support
Executive Officer Board Support
Board Support/Minutes

Andy Watt (AW)
Mark McAteer (MMcA)
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)
Richard Whetton (RW)
Gregor Welsh (GW)
Derek Wilson (DW)
Kevin Murphy (KM)
Heather Greig (HG)
Debbie Haddow (DJH)

OBSERVERS:

Colin Brown, Fire Brigades Union (FBU)
Graeme Fraser, HMFSI

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 KD opened the meeting welcoming those present and those attending/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.

OFFICIAL

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Fiona Thorburn, Deputy Chair (FT)

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

3.1 The Board agreed that the *New Mobilising System Update* would be taken in private due to the confidential nature of the issues (Standing Order 9G).

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 Thursday 25 APRIL 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 25 April 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 25 April 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Meeting with Siobhian Brown, Minister for Victims and Community Safety to discuss PricewaterhouseCoopers business case and future intentions.

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 25 April 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Attendance at Red Plaque unveiling events on 17 and 30 May 2024 to honour fallen firefighters Roderick MacLeod and Roderick Nicholson, respectively. Thanks were extended to the FBU for their work in this area.
- Attendance at the Long Service Good Conduct event, Forfar.

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

10 COMMITTEE UPDATES

OFFICIAL

10.1 **Change Committee (CC)**

10.1.1 SJB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 2 May 2024 and referred the Board to the draft minutes, highlighting the following:

- Discussion around continued improvement in the general oversight of change through the Portfolio Office.
- Periodic update on New Mobilising System with a further specific meeting held on 13 June 2024.

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

(G Welsh joined the meeting at 0955 hrs)

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

10.2.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 26 March 2024 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes (subsequently approved at the 25 June 2024 meeting), noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. A further public meeting was held on 25 June 2024 and BB provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Committee Annual Report to the Accountable Officer and Board, which was overall positive, was presented. There was recognition for the need for further development on risk management and appetite.
- Draft Annual Governance Statement, which was comprehensive and reflected positively on the governance and controls within the Service.
- Internal Audit reports relating to Contract Management, Partnership Working and Risk Assurance Advisory Review were presented and areas of improvement were noted.
- Internal Audit Annual Report was presented with an overall opinion of reasonable assurance.
- Quarterly update on gifts, hospitality and interests was presented and one declaration was highlighted as requiring further scrutiny.
- Full discussion on development plans and implementation of risk management.
- Within the private session, updates were provided on 2 incidents of failure in internal controls and misappropriation of funds.
- Malcolm Payton was announced as Deputy Chair of the Committee.

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

10.3 **People Committee (PC)**

10.3.1 MW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 6 June 2024 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Committee Statement of Assurance was presented and approved.
- People Performance Report included an update on the On-Call and Strategic Co-ordinating Group work and operations control recruitment.
- Update on Colleague Experience Survey which was still subject to analysis. Response rate was lower than anticipated despite the significant levels of communication.
- Update on culture work with the acknowledgement that more work was being done in this area than had been presented. The Committee voiced their encouragement for more timeous progress to be made, where possible.
- Spotlight on the work of the Women's Employee Liaison Forum (WELF) noting the wider impact being made through small changes.
- Training Performance Report reported overall positive trends.
- Acknowledgement of DACO Bruce Farquharson's last meeting and pending retirement.
- Health and Safety Performance Report reported a reduction in verbal acts of violence and an increase in physical acts.

OFFICIAL

- Contaminants update report.
- Verbal update on the changes and preparations for the Health and Safety Annual Report.
- Update on audit inspections relative to the Committee's work which were all progressing towards closure.
- Both the recent Employee Partnership Forum and Partnership Advisory Group meetings were stood down.

The Board noted the verbal update.

10.3.2

10.4

Service Delivery Committee (SDC)

10.4.1

TW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 29 May 2024 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Meeting held in Inverness Fire Station which provided an opportunity to engage with local staff.
- Committee Statement of Assurance was presented and approved.
- Reformatted Service Delivery Update presented and all were encouraged to review to gain a wider sense of the work being carried out throughout the Service.
- Update from HMFSI noting the draft West Service Delivery Area (SDA) report was currently with the Service for comment and preparations continued for the North SDA and Cultural inspections.
- Service Delivery Performance report highlighted a reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) incidents following the introduction of the new response model.
- Risk spotlight on the management of contaminants and the approach being taken by the Service.
- Update on the Service's response to the FBU's Firestorm report.

10.4.2

The Board noted the verbal update.

10.5

Reform Collaboration Group (RCG) Oversight Group

10.5.1

KD reported that the RCG Oversight Group's work had concluded and further work relating to the business case would be taken through the main RCG forum. KD noted her thanks to Board Member's for their contributions during their tenure on this Oversight Group.

10.5.2

MMcA noted that one final meeting would be held to debrief and formally stand down the group.

10.5.3

The Board noted the verbal update.

11

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE Q4 REPORT

11.1

MMcA informed the Board that the Service was represented at the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Awards 2024. Ellen Gayler won the Outstanding Practitioner Awards and Chris Fitzpatrick was runner up in the Inspirational Leader Award category. MMcA noted his thanks and commended both individuals for their work and efforts in this area. The Board offered their thanks and commended the enhanced quality and accessibility of data.

11.2

MMcA introduced GW, who presented the Board with the 4th quarter performance information for the fiscal year 2023-24. The following key points were highlighted:

- Majority of indicators had been previously submitted and scrutinised at Committee level.
- Update on annual performance indicators: KPI32 (Carbon Emission) showing no trend, KPI33 (Carbon funding vs requirement) remains challenging, KPI34 (Recycling rate) improved in last quarter but overall limited context, KPI57 (% ULEV Light Fleet) continues to improve.

OFFICIAL

- KPI21 (UFAS incidents) evidence is positive and desired effect of the policy change.
- KPI9 (Audits completed) significant increase.
- KPI25 (% incident command module completion) exceeded target.
- KPI28 (% training function currency) deviated from target in second half of year.
- KPU38 (% FOI within timeframe) only 70% of target achieved.
- KPI41 (% service desk incidents within SLA) increased activities levels contributed to decrease in performance.
- KPI46 (Off station FTE) remains consistent within the second half of the year but showing long term deterioration.
- KPI6 (HFSV conducted) remains consistent and slightly below target.
- KPI58 and KPI59 (Average age of heavy and light fleet) forecast to improve when new appliances become available.
- KPI26 (% of core skills currency) significantly improved.
- KPI50, 52 and 55 (verbal attacks, RIDDOR and vehicle accidents) remain low.
- KPI62 (Female ratio wholetime) record high ratio due to an increase of 40 female wholetime firefighters.

11.3 In regard to the specialist training on handling animal incidents in Stornoway, the Board queried whether this would be monitored for assurance and potential learning for other geographical areas or types of rescue skills.

11.4 AW advised the Board that this specialist training was part of a pilot of wider rescue work. Both Operations and Training Functions were working together to develop a standard operating procedure/national training standard for animal rescues response. AW reminded the Board that the equipment used within the pilot had been donated and the evaluation process would be taken through Operational Assurance governance route. Further rollout would take place once appropriate stations had been identified and all necessary training and equipment had been provided.

11.5 DF noted that the current provision for large animal rescue was available on the heavy rescue appliance on the mainland, therefore this pilot afforded the Service the opportunity to test different methods of delivery. DF further noted that any additional gaps in service provision would be identified through Operational Assurance and partners at emergency incidents.

11.6 The Board commented on the potential for consideration to be given to developing a performance indicator specifically for innovation outcomes. RW noted that there were ambitions to develop performance indicators relating to innovations.

11.7 In regard to funding for carbon reduction (KPI33), the Board queried how widely the Service explored options for funding. MMcA advised that he represented the Service on the Community Improvement Board, where it had been identified that the Scottish and UK Government funding streams were fragmented and at times contradictory. Scottish Government have taken note of the request to streamline funding arrangements to improve accessibility.

(A Foster joined the meeting at 1015 hrs)

11.8 The Board commented on the cost implications that can be associated with delivering against carbon reduction targets and queried the level of assessment undertaken to determine any benefit. SO'D noted that the funding available was at the margins. SO'D further noted the opportunities through the Community Resilience Hubs to drive and secure core funding to channel toward environmental improvements. SO'D advised that the Service were mindful of the resources that may be required and as such a full evaluation would be taken to determine whether any option was worth pursuing.

The Board scrutinised the Quarterly Performance Report for Q4 2023-24.

11.9

(G Welsh left the meeting at 1020 hrs)

12 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER 4

12.1

MMcA presented a report advising the Board of the quarterly progress made against the strategic outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2022-25 in relation to the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), Corporate Measures and Portfolio Office Programmes between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2024. The following key points were highlighted:

- Total of 20 actions, of which 12 actions were reporting Blue, 2 actions were Green, no actions were Amber, and 6 actions were Red.
- Two actions (digital fireground radios and contaminants) would be carried forward into 2024/25 and incorporated into new actions scheduled to be completed by 31 March 2025.
- The remaining 6 actions are to be carried forward as residual actions and would continue to be reported/monitored until complete. The current completion percentages and proposed completion dates were noted for 5 actions. Due to cost implications, the action relating to the ISO 55001 Asset Management Accreditation would be closed and transferred to business as usual to ensure monitoring and achievement of standards aligned with the ISO 55001.

12.2

The Board noted that the level of completion for all outstanding actions was substantial and queried whether the actions had been sufficiently achieved. MMcA advised that most of the actions would be completed in the next reporting period (Quarter 1) and that the Service wanted to be able to demonstrate publicly that these had been completed. The Board noted the position and asked that consideration be given on the merit in further reporting on these actions beyond Q1.

12.3

The Board commented on the significance of the action relating to risk management, particularly in terms of risk appetite and consideration should be given to ensure full completion. The Board sought clarity on the specifics of the risk management training and what this comprises of.

ACTION: SO'D

12.4

The Board noted the unprecedented amount of work placed on the Service due to legislative changes and queried whether there was any scope for improving planning capacity processes for these situations. DL advised that the Service did not have the ability to predict changes to legislation or how they would impact practically on internal resources. The Board to consider the potential to seek advance indications for any future legislative changes through the Service's positive relationship with the Sponsor Unit, participation on Scottish Government working groups, the programme for government and the King's speech.

12.5

In regard to the Phase 2 Grenfell report, the Board were advised that the previous working group would be stood up to review and implement any recommendations.

12.6

It was agreed that a session re horizon scanning/government priorities should be added to the programme for the Board/SLT Development Days (12-13 November 2024).

12.7

The Board scrutinised the Annual Operating Plan Progress Report – Quarter 4.

13 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURES

13.1

KD noted her thanks to Steve Barron, who recently resigned from Board, for his work and contribution throughout his tenure. KD further noted Steve's actions in relation to the Employee Partnership Forum, his belief in improving industrial relations and the valuable contribution of Rep Bodies and other professional associations.

OFFICIAL

- 13.2 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval to changes in the Committee's membership following a Board Members resignation. The following key points were highlighted:
- Madeline Smith appointed to the People Committee.
 - Malcolm Payton appointed to the Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub Committee (RANSC).
 - Mhairi Wylie appointed to the Chair of Employee Partnership Forum (to be reviewed in 2024/25).
 - Deputy Chairs for the People Committee and RANSC would be announced in due course.
 - Malcolm Payton appointed as Deputy Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (as agreed on 25 June 2024).

- 13.3 **The Board approved the Committee membership restructure, which would be implemented immediately.**

(Meeting adjourned at 1040 hrs and reconvened at 1050 hrs)

14 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT MAY 2024

- 14.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 31 May 2024. SO'D 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 £0.045 million and a forecast year-end underspend of £0.334 million. The following key points were highlighted:
- First monitoring report of this financial year which provides an early indication of progress against the budget at this stage.
 - Wholetime Employee Costs were reporting a significant underspend which was attributable to higher levels of retirements. Actions were being taken to address this situation and increase the recruitment appropriately.
 - Operations Control Employee Costs were reporting an underspend and actions were being taken to improve retention and recruitment.
 - Support Staff Employee Costs were reporting an underspend across various Directorates.
 - On-Call Employee Costs were reporting an overspend primarily due to the recent pay awards.
- 14.2 The Board queried whether the funding error (£0.3million) formed part of the underspend. SO'D noted that this had been built into the budget on the expectation that this was coming forward.
- 14.3 The Board queried the confidence level on the forecasted swing from Wholetime employee to On-Call spend. SO'D advised that these were 2 distinct variances driven by different factors, notably retirement levels of Wholetime and the On-Call pay award/activity levels. Confidence levels were high at this stage of the financial year. In relation to On-Call, SO'D confirmed that there were seasonal factors however these were not predictable.
- 14.4 The Board sought clarity and assurance on the likely impact on overtime costs due to Wholetime retirements/vacancies. SO'D noted that there was correlation between vacancies and overtime costs, however there were other factors that impacted on overtime costs. This area would continue to be closely monitored. RH reminded the Board that the Service predict and react to future recruitment needs as required. However, there is invariably a delay between retirements and recruitment, and this is addressed by overtime.

14.5

OFFICIAL

14.6 In regard to the variation analysis of the Corporate Finance Directorate, SO'D advised that this was a complex area and consideration would be given to present this information differently going forward.

14.7 The Board commented positively on the format of the report. In regard to the progress on budgeted savings, the Board noted that the addition of some narrative would be helpful to provide a greater understanding. SO'D confirmed that the savings to date were built into the budget and would consider how this information would be presented going forward.

The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 31 May 2024.

15 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2024/25 – MAY 2024

15.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the actual and committed expenditure against the 2024/25 capital budget position for the period ending 31 May 2024. It was currently anticipated that with the planned action, the approved budget of £43.026 million be spent out by 31 March 2025. The following key points were highlighted:

- First monitoring report of this financial year which provides an early indication of good progress against the budget at this stage.
- Forecast underspend in Property Major Works which reflects the efforts required to get major projects started.
- Positive report from the Capital Monitoring Group on progress against critical decisions which would allow projects to be advanced.
- Substantial challenge remains in relation to the NMS Project and achieving full budgeted spend. Work would continue to identify potential alternative projects and any proposal virement would be brought back to the Board.

15.2 The Board commented on the lack of spend against project work in the first quarter and for consideration to be given to developing a 12-month rolling programme for the design team. SO'D noted that discussion had taken place on future planning/management of projects coming through for the next financial year, albeit the budget for next year was still unknown. SO'D reminded the Board that the design team work was outsourced. SO'D noted that the Service would work hard to catch up within the current year and improve on the process for the next financial year. It was also noted that SSRP had created some uncertainty relating to where investments should be made, however, this position is now clearer.

15.3 The Board noted the importance, given the forecasted underspend, to redirect money as quickly as possible to other areas ie dignified facilities, contaminants, etc.

15.4 In relation to the community resilience hubs, SO'D noted that the business case had been submitted to Scottish Government for Portree however, this would feature in the 2025/26 budget. SO'D reminded the Board that it was a partnership approach and provided a brief update on progress to date. Any future land purchases would depend on SSRP and the requirement of partners to ensure success and funding.

15.5 SO'D advised the Board that the Service were reviewing the light fleet and this was an area that could be expedited and would help to reduce carbon emissions.

15.6 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed capital expenditure for the period ending 31 May 2024.**

(G Welsh rejoined the meeting at 1130 hrs)

16 ARRANGEMENTS AND OUTCOME OF ANNUAL REVIEW – EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOARD

16.1 MMcA presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the SFRS Board. The following key points were highlighted:

- Continuing use of hybrid meetings which demonstrates good practice and cost savings.
- Detailed scrutiny of the New Mobilising System project which demonstrates good practice.
- Benefits of both Committee and Board workshops which are carried forward into formal meetings.
- Positive feedback from new Board Members on the induction programme and start to their role.
- Outputs of Board members appraisal process are incorporated into the planning arrangements and carried forward to shape the Board's role and practices.

16.2 The Board queried and were advised that the intention remained to hold 2 Board meetings with engagement events throughout the country.

16.3 The Board commented on the lack of assessment on their effectiveness and encouraged consideration to be given to a more rigorous evaluation process eg external audit. MMcA noted the comments and would consider how the process could be improved.

16.4 Brief discussion took place on how the Committees could formally assess their effectiveness, identify whether they are scrutinising the appropriate areas, are the suite of indicators appropriate for the business of the Committees and potential opportunity to contribute to the development of the performance management framework. The Board were asked to consider and feedback on their experiences on other Boards. This would form part of the discussion at the Board Strategy Planning Workshop in the autumn.

ACTION: BST

16.5 The Board were reminded that the Committee Annual Assurance process provided assurance that the Committees were complying with their terms of reference but recognised that improvement could still be made.

16.6 **The Board approved the arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the SFRS Board.**

17 BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY REVIEW

17.1 RW presented a report to the Board to provide an overview of the Business Intelligence (BI) Strategy 2021-24 highlighting the successes and the ongoing commitments. The following key points were highlighted:

- Review undertaken as the current strategy ends and covers the key aspects which outlined the principles and priorities, highlighted areas of success and commitment to develop this area of work.
- Work progressed by the BI team with support and input from across the Service to develop the product.
- Continue journey with other public sector bodies, fire and rescue services and NFCC.
- Work to begin on Digital Data and Technology Strategy and the opportunities this will bring.
- Innovation will be required across the sector to move from artificial intelligence to artificial general intelligence.

17.2

OFFICIAL

The Board queried whether the Service had the ability to evaluate/monitor the impact, due to the improved access to data, on decision making. RW noted that development of the data skills element was required to move forward, and this was a challenging area. The Service had recently completed the Scottish Government data maturity process. The conclusions highlighted the weaknesses in skills development and positive progress by the Service and their use of data to make decisions.

17.3

The Board commented on the progress that the Service had made in this area through their proactive approach and making products available within the Sector. The Board noted the links required with the broader Digital Strategy to improve quality and robustness of statistics in the future. The Board further noted the potential increase of cyber security threats due to the growing resilience on datasets.

17.4

Brief discussion took place on the potential for research partnerships, externally focussed data sharing opportunities, national research and development centres for fire and rescue services and opportunities for the Service to proactively lead in this area.

17.5

The Board suggested the potential to incorporate a means to reference and highlight where data has helped to influence core decision making within reports to Board/Committees. It was noted that this would require a review of the Corporate Report Template and further consideration would be given to this.

17.6

The Board noted the report.

18 RISK THEMES

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

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 On behalf of the Board, KD extended her congratulations to KM following his recent successful promotion and appointment to the role of Local Senior Officer for East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. KD noted her thanks to KM for his hard work, support and contributions during his tenure on the Board Support Team.

20.2 The next public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 29 August 2024 at 1000 hrs.

20.3 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1145 hrs.

PRIVATE SESSION

21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING:

21.1 Thursday 25 April 2024

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

21.2 Thursday 30 May 2024 (Special)

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

21.3 Thursday 6 June 2024 (Special)

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

21.4 **The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2024, 30 May 2024 and 6 June 2024 were approved as a true record of the meetings.**

21.5 Matters Arising

OFFICIAL

21.5.1 There were no matters arising.

22 PRIVATE ACTION LOG

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

22.2 **Members noted the updated private Action Log and approved the removal of completed actions.**

23 NEW MOBILISING SYSTEM UPDATE

23.1 DL presented a report to the Board to provide an overview of the New Mobilising System (NMS) project delivery and progress to date and the next steps for scrutiny.

23.2 **The Board scrutinised the report.**