



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – PEOPLE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2024 @ 1300 HRS

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

PRESENT:

Mhairi Wylie (Chair) (MW)
Neil Mapes (NM)
Fiona Thorburn (FT)

Andrew Smith (Deputy Chair) (AS)
Malcolm Payton (MP)

IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Lyndsey Gaja (LG) | Interim Director of People |
| Andrew Watt (AW) | Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance |
| Liz Barnes (LB) | Interim Deputy Chief Officer Corporate Services |
| Craig McGoldrick (CMcG) | Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Head of Training |
| Jim Holden (JH) | Head of Safety and Assurance |
| Jacqui MacDonald (JMac) | Area Commander Control (Item 13.2 only) |
| Kirsty Darwent (KD) | Chair of SFRS Board |
| Heather Greig (HG) | Board Support Executive Officer |
| Debbie Haddow (DJH) | Board Support/Minutes |

OBSERVERS

Fiona Griffith, People Manager
Mike Collier, Group Commander

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 The Committee Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present and attending via MS Teams, in particular, DACO Craig McGoldrick to his first meeting.
- 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.
- 1.3 On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Fiona Thorburn for her commitment and efforts throughout her tenure and wished her well for her pending retirement.
- 1.4 The Chair announced that Andrew Smith had agreed to assume the role of Deputy Chair for the Committee.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Madeline Smith, Board Member
David Farries, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Fiona Munro, Head of People
Geri Thomson, Deputy Head of People
Richard Whetton, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance

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Chris Casey, Group Commander, Board Support Manager

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

- 3.1 The Committee discussed and agreed that the *Key Case Updates 2024/25 – Quarter 1* verbal report would be heard in private session due to the small number of individuals involved and confidentiality in line with Standing Orders (Item 9D). The draft minutes/verbal update of the *Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub Committee* would be taken in private due to the confidential nature of the issue (Item 9G).
- 3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 4.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024

- 5.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 5.2 **The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**
- 5.2 Matters Arising**
- 5.2.1 No matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6 ACTION LOG

- 6.1 The Committee considered the Action Log noting the updates and agreed the closure of completed items.
- 6.2 **Members noted the updated Action Log and approved the removal of completed actions.**

7 HIGH LEVEL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT Q1 2024/25

- 7.1 The High Level Key Performance Indicator Report Q1 2024/25 was presented to the Committee for scrutiny of the KPIs 22-29 (Training), KPIs 46-49 (People) and KPIs 50-56 (Safety and Assurance) and was taken as read.
- 7.2 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

8 PEOPLE: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING

8.1 People Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25

- 8.1.1 LG provided the People Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25 to the Committee for scrutiny of the People KPIs from the Performance Management Framework and the further details within the People Performance Report. The following key areas were highlighted from the Executive Summary:
- Ongoing work of the On Call Strategic Co-ordination Group relating to enhancements to recruitment and retention. One area of focus was the delivery of modularised task and task management courses and identifying opportunities to pilot this delivery method.
 - Increased absence rates within Operations Control (OC). To be discussed later on the agenda (Item 13.2).
 - Increases in both Wholetime retirements and recruitment. Factors that influence retirements included age, level of service and recent changes to pension regulations.
 - Milestones of culture action plan reached included the launch of the confidential call line in May 2024. Colleague Experience Survey closed, and analysis had been undertaken in quarter 1 with an update provided at the Board meeting (29 August 2024).
- 8.1.2 In regard to assurances on the pension schemes and funding, the Committee queried how this was provided. LG reminded the Committee that there were 2 pension schemes, Firefighters Pension Scheme and Local Government Pension Scheme (Control and Support

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staff). LG outlined the funding arrangements for both schemes, the Service's representation on the Advisory Board, close working with the Scottish Public Pensions Agency and the various specific updates on Pension Remedy workstream activities provided to the Board. LG noted that a risk spotlight had previously been presented to the Committee and agreed to provide further details off table around the different pension remedy workstreams in operation within the Service.

ACTION: LG

- 8.1.3 The Committee were reminded that a session relating to reviewing risks would be scheduled for the upcoming workshop (24 October 2024).
- 8.1.4 The Committee sought assurance on the ability to access psychological support services and whether the options for physiotherapy provision were reviewed. LG outlined the different approaches available to access psychological support including crisis, post incident and management/self-referral support and the various organisations involved.
- 8.1.5 LG reminded the Committee that the physiotherapy provision was reviewed last year and this was currently being provided by 2 inhouse physiotherapists. The provision was scheduled to be reviewed in March 2025 and the evaluation/analysis report would be provided to the Committee for information.
- 8.1.6 The Committee noted that the 2nd highest reason for absence was recorded as "other reasons". LG advised that this category was broken down into approximately 15 sub-categories and provided an example of some of the reasons.
- 8.1.7 The Committee queried whether the NHS waiting time impacted and delayed staff returning to work. LG noted that NHS waiting times did impact on timescales and the Service had acknowledged this.
- 8.1.8 In regard to supporting newly recruited OC staff, LG advised the Committee of the different methods of support available. LG noted that feedback was being sought following the latest OC intake to identify whether additional support measures could be provided.
- 8.1.9 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

9 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, CULTURE AND FAIR WORK

9.1 Culture Action Plan – Update Paper

- 9.1.1 LB provided an update to the Committee on the progress of future pathway activities detailed within the Culture Action Plan and delivered via the Culture Development Group (CDG) and associated sub groups. The following key points were highlighted:
 - Summary of previous work undertaken and the identification of 3 key priorities.
 - Summary of the current work in progress, including the launch of the confidential reporting line, colleague experience survey and management development framework (MDF).
 - Recent HMFSI inspection provided a helpful external oversight.
 - Outline of the areas of focus for the newly formed sub groups – Operational Learning, Management and Development, Professional Standards and attraction and engagement.
- 9.1.2 In regard to mental ill health, the Committee queried whether there was an opportunity for the Service to enhance the understanding and awareness of how this can manifest itself. LB advised that this was being considered. For example, within the discipline work and both parties were already being offered support and monitoring. LB further advised that the sub group members would be appropriately trained and would build experience over time as they would have freedom from their day job to undertake these activities.
- 9.1.3 In regard to the MDF (pilot session), the Committee queried how assurances on the outputs/outcomes could be provided. LB advised that the pilot sessions had allowed feedback to be gathered. Due to resourcing challenges, LB noted that a train the trainer

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approach was being used and that there was an initial focus on newly promoted Crew Commanders with wider roll out thereafter. LB further noted that the resourcing challenges related to both delivery of training and individuals being released to attend.

- 9.1.4 In regard to the CES focus group updates, LG advised that 15 individuals had volunteered to date and further engagement with local management teams would be undertaken to try to ensure a wider cross section of staff. LG noted that the focus groups would commence in October 2024 and would review the quantitative data to consider the influencing factors/experiences. The Committee commented on the limited number of participants to the survey and the limited membership of the focus groups. LB noted that potentially the same individuals would be involved, however there were other mechanisms for individuals to share their view ie stations visits, future pulse surveys, etc.
- 9.1.5 LB advised that the cultural roadmap was being developed and recruitment was ongoing for dedicated resource. LB noted that the roadmap could potentially be available for the next meeting (December 2024).
- 9.1.6 In regard to the MDF, LB advised that the initial focus was newly promoted Crew Commanders and Operations Control. LG noted that the aspiration for a roll out across all supervisory managers, however this was dependent on facilitation and consumption capacity. LB further noted that when capacity allowed the intention would be to incorporate this into every promotion process.
- 9.1.7 In regard to the HMFSI inspection, LB reminded the Committee that the HMFSI would immediately inform the Service of any critical issues identified during their inspection.
- 9.1.8 The Committee queried how the Service would address the culture for change. LB advised that once the culture action plan was included in the portfolio programme the Service would start to look at this area. LB noted that there needed to be a realisation that change was not a standalone issue and that it was the new normal of continuous change. AW commented on the differences in training required for the various roles within the organisation to ensure accurate messaging and leadership at each level.
- 9.1.9 The Committee commented on the opportunity to highlight areas of ongoing good work and positive culture in the organisation within the report.
- 9.1.10 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

10 TRAINING

10.1 Training Function Update and Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25

- 10.1.1 CMcG presented the high-level overview of the Training function activity and performance over Quarter 1 2024/25 and highlighted the following key points:
- Update on BA recovery plan progress including delivery of bespoke one day training and the revised approach to scheduling and identifying individuals to attend the course.
 - Update on the Wildfire training rollout and mop up sessions as required.
 - Reminder that from Q1 2022-23, KPI22-24 were re-baselined and mandatory timescales were re-introduced.
 - KPI22-24, whilst offering assurance, were not solely within the control of training. Training function remains committed to working with stakeholders to achieve targets.
 - KPI28 (% training function currency) decreased performance rates directly correlated with the intentional reduction in planned courses.
- 10.1.2 The Committee noted that the leading causes of accidents/injuries were attributable to situational awareness and asked how this was being addressed through training. CMcG noted lack of concentration was a main factor and this was a focus for training, such as risk assessments, identifying and communicating risks during incidents/trainings and raising awareness/responsibilities across all roles. JH advised that a safety and assurance training

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framework was being developed and would stipulate the levels of training and awareness required for all levels within the Service. JH noted that the IOSH training had been refreshed and rolled out within the Service.

- 10.1.3 The Committee commented on the limited/shared computers at certain locations and queried the potential solution. CMcG noted that individuals were responsible for updating their own training records and this could cause issues with accessing computers/connectivity. The Service were aware of these issues and were identifying improvements that could be made. CMcG advised that training could be delivered remotely to a group and offline packages were also being developed/accessed if necessary.
- 10.1.4 In regard to KPI22 (core skills modules), the Committee sought assurance that the Service would review and monitor the achievability of training for On Call staff. CMcG commented on the number of mandatory modules required, flexibility to react to risk and individual needs and other non-training requirements. CMcG noted that the modules only formed part of the training delivery methodology. CMcG outlined the various tracking methods that could be used to check performance for individuals/stations.
- 10.1.5 AW noted that the Service were aware of the challenges and would continue to work closely with On Call colleagues to focus on addressing these issues.
- 10.1.6 In regard to VR (virtual reality) training, AW commented on recent discussions and the potential opportunities this would afford the Service.
- 10.1.7 AW advised the Committee that a meeting was scheduled with HMFSI to discuss the proposed future thematic audit on training.

10.1.8 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(Meeting broke at 1424 hrs and reconvened at 1430 hrs)

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY

11.1 Health and Safety Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25

11.1.1 JH presented the Health and Safety Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25 to provide an overview of progress against the Annual Health and Safety Improvement Plan 2024/25 and the Health and Safety KPIs. The following key areas were highlighted:

- Increase in verbal and physical attacks from 2 to 5 and 2 to 3 incidents, respectively.
- One RIDDOR reportable event during this quarter however, this was subsequently downgraded following quality assurance process.
- Update on non RIDDOR events noted including causation and continued monitoring/investigation.
- Reduction in Near Miss reporting which could be attributed to the increase in the previous reporting periods. Front line update briefing to be issued.
- Reviewing current electronic management system with a view to identifying a suitable replacement.
- Vehicle accidents continue in a similar trend. Recently trialled training programme to be rolled out across the Service.
- Low speed manoeuvres handbook and management guidance has been developed and approved.
- Good progress continues in relation to the improvement plans with increased engagement with business partners.
- Incorrect Operational Assurance chart has been included within the report; however, no events have occurred during this reporting period.
- Update on face fit testing which was 75% complete across the Service.

11.1.2 The Committee queried whether assurance could be given that there was the right reporting culture for accidents, near misses, etc across the Service. JH noted that following the recent

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Safety Culture Survey, actions were created to develop the culture further and the responses received were positive. JH further noted that the front-line update briefing would be the first formal communication to highlight how near misses, etc fit into the reporting structure and how this information is used. JH highlighted that the draft Safety Culture Framework was being developed and would address specific areas that were identified with the safety culture survey as well as streamlining the reporting process.

11.1.3 Discussion took place on the importance of creating a safe environment for reporting events without the fear of repercussions, raising awareness of the benefits and improvements to firefighter safety through reporting events and responsibilities of individual roles.

11.1.4 The Committee requested further details on the breathing apparatus near miss incidents. JH advised that these related to equipment which had been used in a controlled situation (non-operational) and summarised the issues encountered. If deemed appropriate, equipment was impounded and formally inspected internally and/or by Draeger.

11.1.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12 AUDIT/INSPECTIONS

12.1 HMFSI Inspection Action Plan Updates and Closing Reports

12.1.1 JH and LG presented the report updating the Committee on the progress against the action plan developed in response to the HMFSI Report relating to Mental Health and Wellbeing Provision and Management of Health and Safety. The following key points were highlighted:

- Management of Health and Safety action plan – Explanation provided on the revised timescales for Action 3.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 7.1.
- Health and Wellbeing action plan would be presented at the next meeting (December 2024).

12.1.2 In regard to the revised due dates, the Committee commented on the need to include the authorising process for this within the report.

12.1.3 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12.2 Internal Audit and Inspection Updates

12.2.1 LG presented the report updating the Committee on the progress against the action plans relating to internal audit and inspections where People Directorate is the lead area of the organisation. The following key points were highlighted:

- Sickness Absence Management: Two actions remain in progress.
- Scottish Vocational Qualifications: Good progress with final remaining actions awaiting closure. After the circulation of the report, Azets have confirmed that the evidence provided was sufficient for closure of the remaining actions.
- On Call Workforce Planning: Good progress with final remaining action awaiting closure. After the circulation of the report, Azets have confirmed that the evidence provided was sufficient for closure of the remaining action.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Good progress and remains within planned timescales.

12.2.2 In regard to the Sickness Absence Management review, LG advised that there were significant off systems recording of data and manual processes required to capture and collate data. LG noted that the PPFT project would help to address these issues.

12.2.3 LG advised that Recommendation 4.3 and 5.4 were reporting Amber within the report as the timeline had been exceeded and agreement from Azets had not yet been received. Once received, the recommendation would be amended to Green.

12.2.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(J MacDonald joined the meeting at 1455 hrs)

13 PEOPLE COMMITTEE RISK REGISTER

13.1 Committee Aligned Directorate Risk

13.1.1 LG and AW presented the Risk Report, identifying Directorate risks and controls pertinent to the business of the Committee. It was noted that there were 3 risks reporting risk ratings of 15 or above. The following key points were highlighted:

- Risk POD015 (pension related exercises) noting that the different workstreams were progressing.
- Potential for discussions at the Integrated Governance Forum on where and how cross Directorate risks are allocated to the Committee. Committee commented on risks PPP001 and OD001 having core people implications but were not contained within the report and that OD001 was the featured risk spotlight.
- Risk TSA19 (limited finance/budget) noting that an investment commitment of £6 million had been secure for training assets over the next 3 years and this would help mitigate the risk.

13.1.2 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

13.2 Risk Spotlight: Operations Control Staffing

13.2.1 JMac presented the risk spotlight to provide an update on the recruitment and retention of Operations Control (OC) function. The following key points were highlighted:

- Review of succession planning and recruitment strategy. Difficult to predict accurate retirement rates, as OC personnel can retire between 55 and 68 years of age with the Local Government Pension Scheme. The current trending age for retirement was 60 years old. The prediction for the next 2 years was 10 retirements (6 to date) in 2024 and 4 retirements in 2025. The next peak predicted was in 2030 with 10 retirements.
- Recruitment campaign was launched in September 2024 with 2 further campaigns planned for January and April/May 2025.
- Business case approved for recruitment of an additional 15 temporary OC personnel for a period of 23 months to provide resilience during testing, training and implementation of the new mobilising system.
- Exit interviews were undertaken and provided insight into factors for leaving the Service. An example of these factors were culture/relationship issues, challenging working environment, salary and flexible working. It was noted that the option to work from home was currently not available and would continue to be considered in the future.
- Currently reviewing structure within OC to ensure sufficient resources and resilience within the function.
- As OC staff were predominately female, periods of maternity leave impact on resilience on a regular basis.
- Consideration being given to introduce incremental salary rates/bands from development through to competent status.
- Limitations on the ability to offer flexible working.

13.2.2 The Committee offered their praise on the recent social media post (live call) used for the recruitment campaign.

13.2.3 The Committee commented on the accumulative effect on OC staff due to the nature of their role. JMac outlined the immediate procedures in place for OC staff handling significant incidents for both the individual and teams involved. OC staff also had access to initiate support through the Post Incident Support Policy (PISP). Due to the large geographical areas covered, a cumulative PISP was recorded and reviewed to help identify if early intervention was required for any individuals/teams.

13.2.4 In regard to potential home working, JMac confirmed that this would be restricted to non-emergency response activities.

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- 13.2.5 In regard to the shift pattern, JMac noted that this mirrored the shift patterns on stations with the addition of a 12-hour mid shift. In general, OC staff preferred the 4 longer shifts.
- 13.2.6 JMac advised that it was more likely for OC staff to transfer into Operational roles and there were a few OC staff currently on dual contract (On Call).
- 13.2.7 In regard to accumulative trauma, the Committee queried whether there were regular reflective practices or debriefs. JMac advised the Committee that debriefs were undertaken, staff had access to all health and wellbeing resources and were able to withdraw to quiet rooms if necessary.

13.2.8 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(J MacDonald left the meeting at 1515 hrs)

14 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

14.1 **Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)**

- 14.1.1 MW advised the Committee that the last scheduled meeting (27 August 2024) had been stood down due to no items being tabled.

14.1.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**

14.2 **Partnership Advisory Group (PAG)**

- 14.2.1 LG advised the Committee that the last scheduled meeting (8 August 2024) had been stood down due to no items being tabled.

14.2.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**

15 FORWARD PLANNING

15.1 **Committee Forward Plan Review**

- 15.1.1 The following items were noted for future meetings:

- Risk spotlight on ICT recruitment and retention (FCS018)
- Safecall Confidential Reporting Line to be moved from March 2025 to June 2025

15.1.2 **The Committee noted the Forward Plan.**

15.2 **Items for Consideration at Future IGF, Board and Strategy Meetings**

- 15.2.1 The following items were noted for future Integrated Governance Forum meetings:
- How are risks determined for each Committee.

16 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

- 16.1 One formal action was recorded during the meeting.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 17.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 5 December 2024.

- 17.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1528 hrs.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

The following reports provided for information only were taken as read.

- Training Function Policy Review Schedule
- Safety and Assurance Management Arrangement Framework
- Contaminants Quarterly Report
- Update on the Effectiveness of the 21 Day Arrangements Process
- Training Continuous Improvement Programme – Update Report

(Public meeting broke at 1530 hrs and reconvened in Private session at 1540 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION

18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024

18.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 6 June 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

19 REMUNERATION, APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATIONS SUB COMMITTEE (RANSc) UPDATE

19.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 6 June 2024 had been circulated to the Committee and a verbal update from the meeting on 12 September 2024 was provided.

19.2 **The Committee noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

20 KEY CASE UPDATES 2024/25 – QUARTER 1

20.1 LG provided a verbal update to the Committee providing an overview on employee relations cases which have resulted in claims to the Employment Tribunal.

20.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**