



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2024 @ 1000 HRS

**GALASHIELS COMMUNITY FIRE STATION,
143 ABBOTSFORD ROAD, GALASHIELS, TD1 3BS / VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Tim Wright, Chair (TW)
Angiolina Foster (AF)
Madeline Smith (MS)

Paul Stollard, Deputy Chair (PS)
Andrew Smith (AS)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
David Farries (DF)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Jonathan Henderson (JH)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
Kirsty Darwent (KD)	Chair of the Board
Chris Fitzpatrick (CF)	Business Intelligence and Data Services Manager (Item 9.1 only)
Robert Scott (RS)	HMFSI
Marc Pincombe (MP)	Local Senior Officer, Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders (Item 7.2)
Kenneth Barbour (KB)	Head of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness
Chris Casey (CC)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Iona Milne (IM)	Business Support Executive / Minutes

OBSERVERS

Gus Sproul, FBU
Mike Colliar, Group Commander

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 None.

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

3.1 The Committee agreed there were no items to be taken in private.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

- Madeline Smith, Board Member of Scottish Ambulance Service
- Paul Stollard, Chair of Board of Institute of Fire Engineers and Consultant for the Metropolitan Police on the National Grenfell Inquiry.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 22 AUGUST 2024

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 22 August 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 There were no outstanding actions on the action log.

7 SERVICE DELIVERY

7.1 Service Delivery Update

7.1.1 AW introduced the update report which detailed relevant matters from a Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Service Delivery perspective, which comprises of Operational Delivery, Prevention, Protection and Preparedness (PPP) and Training, Safety and Assurance (TSA) Directorates. The report covered the period from August 2024 to November 2024, albeit some issues may precede and extend beyond this period.

7.1.2 The Committee were happy to see the progress relating to the fire contaminants Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and asked if there were SOPs or other mitigations for other contaminants that colleagues face for example biological, chemical and radiological hazards. CMcG advised the risk assessment is generally related to collaboration with either Health and Safety advisors, subject experts and from national occupational guidance. The SOPs are developed from the Generic Risk Assessment (GRA) but also informs the safe system of work which is a package of information and from this training materials are built. There is also a GRA for all incidents that ensures control measures are created for any potential lack of welfare arrangements or contaminates/infectious diseases/viruses within an environment. PPE is an important element to ensure that risks are being mitigated and different aspects of this are kept under review to make sure it is fit for the purpose of the task.

7.1.3 The Committee enquired if there were regular reviews of these various aspects. CMcG advised it was captured through Operational Assurance which looks at organisational learning and training and incident reviews.

7.1.4 Regarding carbon monoxide detectors the Committee asked for assurance that occupiers were replacing batteries. JH advised that it was not possible to determine compliance as the Service does not have any legislative power and it was the duty of landlords and housing associations to ensure linked detection to carbon monoxide detectors. Regarding the detectors, it was noted that the batteries are integrated and have a 10-year life span and that Home Fire Safety guides were available on how to test alarms.

7.1.5 The Committee noted the reference to Drug and Alcohol Partnership and asked how the Service is assured of the effectiveness of our interventions, training and colleagues safety. JH advised that alcohol dependency and alcohol use was one of the key criteria's

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around the safe person concept and would place those individuals at high risk and targeted for Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV). The Service work with a range of partners to ensure the necessary referrals are made to the relevant organisations. There is a guidance document for local area personnel which outlines some current causes and issues and reaffirms the referral pathways. It was noted that there were 31 alcohol dependency partnerships in Scotland with the Service being involved in the Alcohol Dependencies Forum.

- 7.1.6 The Committee enquired about funding for the National Resilience Resources and Assets and Commonwealth funding. DF advised that there was still a great deal of uncertainty regarding the National Resilience funding package. There have been some decisions internally around this and there are some crossovers between national fire resilience assets and domestic usage. Regarding Commonwealth funding, AW advised that conversations were ongoing and it was still in the early stages.
- 7.1.7 The Committee were pleased to see the joint training with Stirling University and student paramedics and commented on the wider partnership opportunity. AW noted this was a good example of partnership working and in terms of the wider opportunities work was ongoing through the Emergency Services Training Collaboration Group and the Reform Collaboration Group (RCG).
- 7.1.8 Regarding virtual reality (VR) training and the use of VR, CMcG advised it was a new technology and there has been a number of training courses to ensure SFRS colleagues and partner agencies were equipped with the latest skills and knowledge. AW noted the collaborative work undertaken with Police Scotland (PS) around this.
- 7.1.9 Regarding drones, the Committee asked how the learning can be joined up with the work being undertaken by PS and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). DF noted there had been significant research and development regarding drones, however, due to the amount of collaboration work in this field, the Service would assess the situation and the approach to be taken going forward.
- 7.1.10 RW highlighted discussions at the RCG which focussed on innovation between the Blue Light Services in the next few years. RW advised that the innovation accelerators being used related to situational awareness through CivTech and a bid for developing drone technology by the emergency services collaboration group.
- 7.1.11 In regard to section 7.3 of the paper it was acknowledged that the wording relating to industrial action was historical drafting.
- 7.1.12 The Committee referred to the liaison with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to identify fire safety risks and queried if it would be appropriate to explore falls risks and the demographics within that area. JH confirmed that this was one of many aspects within prevention that would be explored further and evolved going forward.
- 7.1.13 With regards to the references to appraisals AW advised that these were related to individual's personal development and overall responsibility of this area sat with the People Directorate.
- 7.1.14 The Committee noted the launch of the FireSkills Employability Award (FEA) and the handbook available to support young people while learning about fire safety and asked if a copy could be made available. AW would arrange for a handbook to be provided to the Committee.
- 7.1.15 With the Service having been unsuccessful in obtaining a provider for a Fire Engineering Degree Course, the Committee asked how this gap would be filled and the solutions being explored. JH advised that options to source courses were being investigated, including

with Edinburgh University, and how to encourage development of these. AW noted this was on the risk register.

7.1.16 The Committee asked for clarification on some of the report titles. CMcG provided some clarity.

7.1.17 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

7.2 **Local Senior Officer Performance Overview**

7.2.1 MP provided a verbal overview regarding Local Senior Officer Performance and highlighted the following.

- MP is the LSO for the Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders area. (MELSB). The LSO is the largest area in the East and covers 3 Local Authorities and manages 21 community fire stations which are a mix of full time, retained and dual crewing duty systems. There are 4 wholtime 5 watch duty system stations, 2 are full time on call and 17 are standalone on call stations.
- The specialist resources for the area were water rescue, urban search and rescue and a rapid response unit with Musselburgh in the process of providing wildfire capability level 2.
- Regular reporting of key performance indicators takes place through various forums, Local Scrutiny Committees and SFRS Boards.
- 5000 HFSV have taken place in the last three years in MELSB area.
- Deliberate fires were down 37% from 591 to 373 since 2022/23 reporting period.
- Non-Domestic fires were down 47% from 97 to 54.
- Fire Casualties and fire fatalities were down.
- Special services such as RTCs and special rescues down 47%.
- MELSB Management Team have built effective relationships with Chief Executives, Local Authorities, Community Planning Partnerships and Police Scotland which supports tactical partnership work such as preparation for the bonfire period etc.
- In terms of innovation, the team continually look to find smarter, better ways of working such as finding a way to support local stations maintain breathing apparatus resilience.
- Staff development was ongoing.
- A new Group Commander had been recruited and would start in February 2025 and three new Station Commanders had also been confirmed.

7.2.2 The Committee asked how the LSOs managed and prepared for the scrutiny received from local authorities. MP advised that face to face meetings with the Chief Executives take place and provide an opportunity to talk openly about where the Service sits, identify successful partnership work and to understand the shared priorities. The feedback from the Scrutiny Committees had been positive.

7.2.3 Regarding the Colleague Experience Survey the Committee enquired if MP received the results for the MELSB LSO area. MP advised that the report on the MELSB area had not yet been received as it was still being progressed through the Culture Development Group. AW advised that it was the intention for directorate action plans to be produced as the process matured.

7.2.4 In terms of managing Community Planning Partnerships (CPP's), MP advised that the 3 Group Commanders regularly update and provide support to the CPP's which maintains an open relationship. DF added that SFRS structures had evolved over the years and now provided more flexibility at a local level, prevented silo working and utilised resources more effectively.

- 7.2.5 The Committee noted MP was new in his role and asked if the Service had provided sufficient training and preparation for the role. MP advised that he was prepared for the Area Commander element of the role however the LSO role was more specific to the area. MP had benefited from personal relationships with colleagues who had previously been in the role, from speaking to people in the area to understand the expectations and the on-the-job learning.
- 7.2.6 With regards to flooding response within the MELSB area, MP advised there were 2 water rescue stations and every other station had a level 2 flood response, with the continual improvement development team looking at multi pump exercises and case studies on widespread flooding.
- 7.2.7 MP advised that initiatives within the area were identified through KPIs, Community Action Teams and partnership activity with other stakeholders.

7.28 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(M Pincombe left the meeting at 1103hrs)

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:

- Fieldwork within the North Service Delivery Area (SDA) was being completed before moving to drafting of the report. The report would be with the Service at the end of the financial year for consultation and then published in summer 2025.
- Organisational Culture fieldwork is almost completed and relates to policy and procedures. The report would be with the Service in spring 2025 and published before summer.
- Operational Assurance inspection had commenced with significant engagement being undertaken with the Service. Aiming to have the report published in the early half of 2025.
- HMFSI were in the process of creating the Chief Inspectors plan for 2025–28. The early draft had been shared with the Chief Officer for some initial feedback and would subsequently be shared more widely thereafter.

- 8.1.2 Regarding Organisational Culture the Committee noted that HMFSI would be reaching out to a random sample of staff via email and asked if this had started and if so, had any responses been received. RS advised around 10% of the organisation would be contacted and some responses had been received.

8.1.3 **The Committee noted the report.**

8.2 Independent Audit/Inspection Action Plan

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

8.2.2 Firefighting in High Rise Buildings

- 8.2.3 RW advised one action remained outstanding which related to work around the High Rise SOP. Although the work was not complete the procedure had been updated and reflected the recommendations, including those from Grenfell, it was fit for purpose and was accessible on tablets. Work was ongoing with the NFCC Fire in Tall Buildings working group and when that was completed the SOP would be reviewed again.

8.2.4 The Committee enquired if this could be classed as ongoing business and marked as complete. RS was content that the actions taken had been satisfied to a reasonable extent and due regard had been given. DF was supportive of the approach.

8.2.5 Climate Change Impact

8.2.6 RW advised the action plan had not been signed off due to delivery of the final vehicles being awaited which was outwith the Service's control, however, delivery was expected by the end of March. RW proposed this action be closed which the Committee agreed and were content that due regard had been given.

8.2.7 HMFSI Review of Contingency Planning Arrangements.

8.2.8 RW noted there were 3 actions that had been completed in the last period. One outstanding action related to development of an annual tabletop training exercise with SMARTEU but was expected to be completed within the time frame set out in the action plan.

8.2.9 West Service Delivery Area

8.2.10 RW advised that the action plan had been produced and would be submitted to SLT in December 2024 and then to the next Service Delivery Meeting in February 2025.

8.2.11 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(C Fitzpatrick joined the meeting at 1110hrs)

9 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE REPORTING

9.1 Quarterly Performance Report for Q2 2024-25

9.1.1 The Chair advised to move onto questions as members had read the report.

9.1.2 The Committee highlighted the slight increase in call handling times and requested a brief report be submitted to a future meeting to gain an understanding of the pressures and significant effects on the whole range of capabilities.

9.1.3 The Committee enquired about the next steps in redesigning of the KPI's. RW advised that conversations were ongoing at Committee level about what's important and what can be measured with a possible focus on outcomes. RW confirmed this work was continuing and was on the work plan for next year.

9.1.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(C Fitzpatrick left the meeting at 1122 hrs)

9.2 UFAS Update

9.2.1 JH 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:

- High level report will be available in January 2025.
- Initial target ambitions in relation to UFAS was to reduce these by 15%, however, there has been a 54% reduction which was an average of 53 non-attendances in a 24-hour period, totalling 19,332 incidents of non-attendance.
- 53% of UFAS can be attributed towards the care sector.
- UFAS now account for 18% of all incidents which is down from 30%.
- Operations Control (OC) still receive a high volume of calls, however this is due, in part, to Alarm Receiving Centres (ARC) who pass the initial information on and then recontact OC, at our request, to advise of the outcome following an inspection of the premises. This provides the Service with additional assurance over and above the standard expected across the UK.

- A procedure has been established to identify occasions where SFRS have attended an incident near to where there has been a UFAS incident within a 12-hour period. 68 occasions had been identified which equated to 0.35% of the initial non-attended UFAS incidents. More detail around this would be included within the high level report.
- Duty holder engagement at local level is still ongoing.
- The UFAS model frees up valuable time that can now be used for higher quality training without disruption. More detail around this would be included within the high level report, including a look back and a look forward.

9.2.2 In regards to cost savings, the Committee requested further information around reductions with On Call staff and earnings. JH confirmed this information would also be included within the high level report, however, noted that many UFAS incidents tended to be in built up areas with wholetime station responses rather than rural areas with On Call stations.

9.2.3 The Committee referred to the full review of risk detailed within the report which was scheduled for September 2024 and asked for further detail as to what this would entail. JH would clarify this off table.

9.2.4 DF highlighted the relevance and connection between this report and the performance report discussed earlier in the meeting, noting the impact of UFAS changes required to be looked at holistically.

9.2.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

10 GRENFELL TOWER FIRE – PHASE 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 JH presented the report to the Committee to provide an update on the recommendations of Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI). The following key points were highlighted.

- There are 58 substantive recommendations from Phase 2 of the GTI.
- There was one outstanding action from the Phase 1 recommendations which related to the New Mobilising System and is an ongoing project.
- There are 2 Scottish Government working groups set up to manage the ongoing actions and SFRS have representation on both.
- Recommendations have been grouped by themes such as regulations, Government building standards, design compliance and housing etc.
- The UK Government timeline for responding to the report (paragraph 3.1.3 of the report).
- The SFRS High Rise Continual Improvement Group (HRCIG) meet on a monthly basis and have discussed the 58 recommendations and highlighted 12 specific points that directly affect London Fire Brigade and potentially the SFRS. The current position and proposed actions in relation to these 12 points.
- Some recommendations that are not directly about fire but have a bearing on fire.
- Recommendation 23 states due to the size and structure of London Fire Brigade it has tended to adopt an insular approach and be reluctant to learn from others. This was highlighted due to the size of SFRS.

10.2 The Committee advised that the Service should be proactive and provide response to the recommendations even if they don't entirely align with SFRS to shape the discussions with the sponsor groups. AW provided an example where SFRS have provided feedback to influence decision making. The Committee noted that there would be an election in 2026 and there could be an opportunity to influence policy proposals that are coming forward. JH advised that SFRS have representation on the working groups and there is a dedicated member of staff who has been involved from the start giving a real opportunity to have influence. SFRS are imbedded with the NFCC, and conversations are continually

evolving and moving forward. KB provided assurance that there is an embedded officer (Group Commander) seconded from the PPP Directorate that engages with the Fire and Rescue Unit in the Scottish Government to support the production and discussions relating to policy decisions.

- 10.3 The Committee queried where Scottish Government would receive advice from if not from SFRS. RS advised that Scottish Government obtained advice from HMFSI. RS asked to be informed of the Service's position should they consider taking a wider approach to influencing decision making/policy proposals to ensure any advice given to Scottish Government is consistent.
- 10.4 The Committee noted the report provided the Service Delivery Committee with a good deal of assurance on how the recommendations were being addressed.
- 10.5 The Committee noted in recommendations 2 and 3 it relates to an expectation that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will undertake an inspection of OC in LFB and enquired what the expectations are that HMFSI undertake the same process in SFRS. RS advised the recommendations are for HMICFRS in relation to London but that this did not necessarily mean that there have been similar things identified in SFRS and therefore HMFSI wouldn't necessarily have to carry out the inspections. HMFSI have already carried out an inspection of Firefighting in High Rise Buildings and plan to look at training and operations control as part of the planned inspection programme, two areas that HMICFRS were asked to consider.
- 10.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

11 OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE OVERVIEW

- 11.1 CMcG presented an Operational Assurance (OA) presentation to the Committee to provide an overview of the OA function. The following key areas were highlighted.
- The OA function is a dedicated resource responsible for creating policies, procedures and supporting the organisation to deliver a safe, effective and efficient operational response.
 - SFRS have a legislative requirement to comply with Health and Safety at Work 1974 and also the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This is achieved by adopting the principles that are laid out through the Health and Safety Executive publication HSG65 Cycle.
 - An OA model has been designed to capture the key inputs and outputs for OA processes. There are three key areas which are audit, review and debrief.
 - The daily routine of the OA team includes viewing incident activity to ensure policy and procedures are effective and identify any trends.
 - There is a large library of shared learning.
 - An example of an OA led Structured Debrief.
- 11.2 The Committee asked about the life cycle of a review process for an incident that was not as significant as the Stonehaven incident. CMcG advised that it tied into KPI19 and was dependent upon the complexity of the incident but very few resulted in a quick process due to the size and scale of the organisation. However, it was noted that any critical information that emerges during the process would be actioned. AW advised of the 21 day turn around.
- 11.3 With regards to learning of working with partner agencies, CMcG advised that both the partner agency and the Service would work to review this. AW advised the debrief would run through SMARTEU.

- 11.4 The Committee sought assurance around the measures in place to determine the impact of the OA function. CMcG advised that stakeholder engagement was undertaken annually to look at the documentation they are asked to complete and whether it is fit for purpose, capturing the right information etc. These stakeholder relationships informed the learning and training materials by highlighting emerging issues or areas that required more focus.
- 11.5 The Committee commented on the small size of the OA team and asked if there were sufficient resources. CMcG advised that there had been conversations about benchmarking roles, however, noted it was the nature of the organisation and how we operate in Scotland. It was further noted that there were points of contacts based within the LSO areas with responsibility for driving safety and assurance as well as the focus within key corporate groups.
- 11.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**
- 12 SERVICE DELIVERY RISK REGISTER**
- 12.1 Committee Aligned Directorate Risks**
- 12.1.1 AW 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:
- SD001 around the New Mobilising System and Procurement and Implementation of Vision 5 Disaster Recovery System was red due to a time issue.
 - FCS019 related to Operations Control systems contracts and the relevant contracts had been extended to March 2025 and would therefore be completed in 2025.
- 12.1.2 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**
- 12.2 **Risk Spotlight: SD006 Statutory Duties**
- 12.2.1 DF presented the risk spotlight to the Committee to provide an update on the Operational Delivery Statutory Duties. DF provided an overview of the issues and challenges faced and the mitigating actions.
- 12.2.2 The Committee asked if the current data available to the Operational Delivery team was sufficient and appropriate. DF advised it could be improved in terms of systems, for example, the introduction of the new rostering system would provide more live time information on the crews and their skills and competencies and more manual processes could also potentially be picked up through the new system. CMcG provided further information and assurance.
- 12.2.3 The Committee enquired how many staff worked in central staffing. DF advised that there were 2 teams who worked shifts and a third team who co-ordinated the administration and training courses. DF would report back with exact numbers of personnel within the teams.
- 12.2.4 The Committee enquired if finance was a factor. DF advised finance would be a factor in the establishment of business rules and there was a framework which was updated on a regular basis based on the current situation within the Service. The Committee asked if there were financial implications for over time. DF provided an example of how this was taken into account and the planned approach on taking appliances off the run.
- 12.2.5 The Committee enquired what the skill sets were within central staffing. DF noted that there was a combination of uniformed staff and central staffing assistants. There would also be subject matter experts when working on projects such as the rostering project.

12.2.6 The Committee noted there were some challenges in attitude towards central staffing and asked what actions were being undertaken to diminish this. DF recognised the challenges and advised that work was ongoing to try and address this cultural view and emphasised the importance of colleagues understanding each other's role and responsibilities.

12.2.7 **The Committee noted the report.**

13 FORWARD PLANNING

13.1 Committee Forward Plan

13.1.1 The following items were to be added to the forward plan:

- Response Times
- XVR
- Grenfell Report

13.1.2 It was agreed that Risk would continue to be a standing item of the agenda, however, this would be considered as appropriate prior to each meeting.

13.1.3 The Committee agreed that alternative options for the Annual Governance Review should be explored, for example adding to the end of a formal meeting rather than having a standalone workshop.

13.1.4 **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 The following items were proposed for a future IGF meeting:

- Policy Issues
- Performance Management Framework

14 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

14.1 CC 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 25 February 2025.

15.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1257 hours.