



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2025 @ 1020 HRS

**CONFERENCE ROOM, MOTHERWELL COMMUNITY FIRE STATION, AREA
HEADQUARTERS, DELLBURN STREET, MOTHERWELL, ML1 1SE / VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Tim Wright, Chair (TW)
Madeline Smith (MS)

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
Chris Fitzpatrick (CF)	Business Intelligence and Data Services Manager (Item 10.1 only)
John Joyce (JJ)	HMFSI
Jim Quinn (JQ)	Area Commander, Local Senior Officer Lanarkshire (Item 7.1 only)
Marysia Waters (MW)	Head of Corporate Communications (Items 11 & 12 only)
Carol Wade (CW)	Information Governance Manager (Items 11 & 12 only)
Chris Casey (CC)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Iona Milne	Business Support Executive / Minutes

OBSERVERS

None

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 Angiolina Foster, Board Member
Paul Stollard, Board Member
Robert Scott, HMFSI

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 There were no declarations of interests.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 26 NOVEMBER 2024

5.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. The word 'instant' within bullet point 4 of paragraph 11.1 should be amended to read 'incident'.

5.2 MS queried paragraph 13.1.2 in relation to the Risk item. It was confirmed that Risk was a standing item on the agenda but would be considered as necessary for each meeting.

5.3 **The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024 were approved as a true record of the meeting subject to the above amendment.**

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 There were no outstanding actions on the action log.

8 SERVICE DELIVERY

8.2 Local Senior Officer Performance Overview

8.2.1 Due to technical issues and the delayed start of the meeting, agenda item 8.2 was taken at this juncture to enable JQ to attend other commitments.

8.2.2 JQ provided a verbal overview regarding Local Senior Officer (LSO) Performance in the Lanarkshire area and highlighted the following:

- JQ is the Area Commander for Lanarkshire which has 8 wholtime stations and 11 on call stations and covers 2 Local Authority areas.
- Good relationships with both North and South Lanarkshire Chief Executives.
- JQ, alongside a Police Scotland representative, Chairs and Co-Chairs the Strategic Leadership Board in North Lanarkshire. An outcome of this was a collaborative approach to water safety across Lanarkshire.
- The LSO team were keen to progress innovation.
- There were setbacks to the document conversion work in 2017, but this was now back on track and the team were looking at the document suite.
- 3 priorities for the LSO were On Call, Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) and introduction to the realistic training programme.
- A HFSV referral pathway in the Lanarkshire area has been produced which is now being rolled out across the Service.
- Realistic training programme ensures there is a realistic training space in a relaxed environment which also enables multi agency exercises to be undertaken.
- Innovation is key throughout the whole Service.

8.2.3 The Committee queried the amount of flexibility available to explore innovation. JQ advised that it had improved with support from the new Strategic Leadership Team who have asked LSO teams to look at areas that can be improved.

8.2.4 The Committee asked how innovation at a local level is percolated through the rest of the Service. JQ advised that structures are in place and it is disseminated through these processes. JQ provided an example of where innovation was rolled out.

8.2.5 The Committee asked how JQ liaised with other LSOs. JQ advised that the LSO's within the West Service Delivery Area attend fortnightly meetings where discussions take place to discuss good practices etc.

8.2.6 The Committee asked how JQ ensures the wider Service are made aware of innovative ideas that can be taken forward. JQ advised these would be captured through the LSO meetings.

- 8.2.7 The Committee noted the good partnership relationship and asked for further information around that. JQ advised that a meeting takes place every 4 weeks with Local Authority leads, Police Scotland and NHS where partners can discuss any challenges that they are facing and provide support to ensure initiatives such as the Wishaw event can be implemented.
- 8.2.8 DF noted that the Service recognised the need for innovation and highlighted the work undertaken around the realistic training environment which had now been rolled out across the Service.
- 8.2.9 The Committee asked how the Service makes sure that conversations with partners are taking place. RW advised there is a lot going on and there is an annual report that has been produced which highlights a summary of the significant volume of work that is undertaken. The Committee noted the time and effort that goes into making those partnerships. JH advised that conversations need to be made at all levels.
- 8.2.10 With regards to the partnership report and having to summarise the work ongoing, AW advised that conversations required to be held on how to use the data in regard to performance. RW advised that there is an audit recommendation in relation to this which relates to the CSET system. The intent is to improve the capture process to reach a richer narrative.
- 8.2.11 The Committee enquired as to the approach taken to maintain existing relationships when an LSO is replaced. JQ advised that partner organisations recognised the need to maintain positive relations and these were continued through the weekly meetings and regular conversations that take place.
- 8.2.12 With regards to mental health in the community, the Committee asked if JQ considered the role of the Service was evolving. JQ believed that recognition of mental health issues was improving and was an area of focus. JQ noted the mental health champions within the Service who were intrinsic to the organisation and the impact of fire risk and prevention. AW advised that work was ongoing around trauma to ensure that staff were prepared to deal with these types of incidents and this was being monitored through the People Committee. JH advised that this work was evolving and conversations were taking place with partner organisations.
- 8.2.13 DF thanked JQ for his contributions over the years ahead of his impending retiral.
- 8.2.14 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

7 INSPECTIONS/AUDITS

7.1 Update From HM Fire Service Inspectorate

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

- HMFSI currently has 3 ongoing inspections. The findings of these reports will be issued in summer and autumn 2025.
- The Chief Inspectors Plan would be published in April 2025.

7.1.2 The Organisational Culture report is due to be published in summer 2025 however the Chief Inspectors Plan referred to a publication date of December 2025 which the Committee queried. JJ confirmed the Organisational Culture report is anticipated for summer 2025 and would confirm the anticipated publication date for the Chief Inspectors Plan.

- 7.1.3 The Committee noted the external stakeholder interviews carried out in relation to the North Service Delivery Area (SDA) inspection and asked who took part in the interviews and if it had been the same for all the SDA inspections. JJ confirmed that it had been the same for all the SDA inspections and advised that a range of stakeholders had been interviewed such as local authorities, police, coast guard etc.
- 7.1.4 The Committee noted Group Commander Lynne Gow, who was seconded to HMFSI had returned to the SFRS and asked if HMFSI were able to carry out the inspections due to this. JJ advised that HMFSI have the capacity to deliver what has been set out in the Chief Inspectors Plan and thanked the SFRS for allowing secondments to HMFSI.
- 7.1.5 **The Committee noted the report.**
- 7.2 HMFSI Inspection Action Plans Update
- 7.2.1 RW presented the report to the Committee providing an update on the following action plans:
- 7.2.2 Firefighting in High Rise Buildings
At the last meeting there was one outstanding action which related to the standard operating procedure for high rise which is now closed. The overall action plan is now blue and complete.
- 7.2.3 Climate Change Impact
One remaining action which related to the delivery of vehicles, at the previous meeting it was proposed to close. Action plan now blue.
- 7.2.4 Contingency Planning for Industrial Action
The outstanding action related to an exercise of plans and was proposed to close the action.
- 7.2.5 East Service Delivery Area
No actions have been completed in the last period, the one remaining action is related to RAAC which has been discussed at previous meetings. Overall, the action plan rating is green.
- 7.2.6 West Service Delivery Area
Action 17 changed to amber due to a delay as a result of conflicting work priorities with a new timeline proposed. Action 20 marked green; however, it is linked to a long-term piece of work within the Service. A timeline due date has been proposed to change it to September 2026. Action 21 review of national recruitment standards and terms and conditions is progressing and marked green but is a long-term piece of work. Action 27 tactical ship firefighting has moved to amber due to a slip in the original timescale. A new timescale has been proposed.
- 7.2.7 The Committee asked what the Service's responsibilities were in relation to areas of water and shipping incidents. DF advised UK waters were not classified as SFRS area and only become involved in ship firefighting when a vessel is alongside land. DF explained why action 27 was developed and advised there were a different set of circumstances if it is within a military establishment.
- 7.2.8 Regarding ferries, DF confirmed that once a ferry sets sail from port is it no longer SFRS responsibility. DF noted that there was ongoing work around lithium ion battery technology and as part of this SFRS have a responsibility to assist agencies for them to be as safe as possible. SFRS are in dialogue with ferry operators to look at what the plans would be and how they would take a vessel into SFRS jurisdiction.

- 7.2.9 Regarding action 20 the Committee noted the revised due date would be September 2026 and asked if there were any milestones where if sufficient progress had been made, the action could be closed off. AW advised there were a number of actions that could be closed off rather than leave them open for an extended period of time. RW advised that he and CF had met with the HMFSI team around the issues of process and have agreed a new part of the process in terms of data flow and date capture. The BI team will be the point of contact rather than local contacts which will be easier in terms of quality control. RW and HMFSI would meet next week to discuss whether the process can be adjusted slightly to make it easier for HMFSI to see what actions are being taken and that due regard is being given which could lead to the action being closed.
- 7.2.10 The Committee were content for the proposed actions to be closed and to extend the recommended due dates.
- 7.2.11 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

8 SERVICE DELIVERY

8.1 Service Delivery Update

- 8.1.1 AW introduced the update report detailing relevant matters from an SFRS Service Delivery perspective, which comprised Operational Delivery, Prevention, Protection and Preparedness and Training, Safety and Assurance Directorates. The report covered the period from November 2024 to February 2025, albeit some issues may precede and extend beyond this period.
- 8.1.2 The Committee noted there were 9 candidates to commence the On Call migration course and asked if this would continue or if it was just a small pool of candidates and if the prep programme would be rolled out nationally. DF advised that migration was now a tool that would be used in terms of recruitment and would provide opportunity for existing employees to be transferred to areas of need and where gaps have been identified. DF advised the prep programme had been rolled out across the organisation however different areas were at different stages due to the various start dates of the process.
- 8.1.3 The Committee highlighted the critical faults linked to Airwave connectivity at Edinburgh Operations Control (OC) and queried if this was an area of concern or if it had been addressed. DF advised that the faults were not directly linked to Airwave and occurred within all OC's with peaks and troughs over time. It was noted that the system was working at full capacity and when work was being undertaken on the system it created faults, however, the faults had not escalated the risk and there was no indication that this was a long-term challenge. JH advised that teams were working together to make sure they understood the issues and did not make anything worse while implementing new systems.
- 8.1.4 The Committee enquired if a report would be provided in relation to the review of staff performance and working efficiencies within the Operational Intelligence Unit. JH advised that the review had been undertaken internally and completed in December 2024. The trial period had started in January 2025 however although there was no specific report available the review would inform future activities in this area to generate more efficiencies. In terms of assurances around this, JH advised that a formal review of the year would be undertaken at the end of 2025 and a further one in 2026 which would provide a full evaluation of how the team were performing and the efficiencies created by undertaking activities differently.
- 8.1.5 Regarding the activities application JH noted that data would be fed back through normal reporting structures for scrutiny by and assurance to the Committee.

8.1.6 The Committee asked for some clarification on the challenges around the impact of short term lets. JH noted the demand on resources and time to interpret the legislation and conversations were taking place with Scottish Government to convey the implications for the team. The Committee asked who was responsible for undertaking the work. JH confirmed it was the auditing officers. With regards to any increase in work around short term lets, JH noted the legislation was new however once it became more embedded as business as usual it should be more manageable moving forward. DF highlighted the pilot scheme being carried out within the Highland area to train some On Call firefighters to start the process of the short term lets. The Committee asked how the team educate those that are affected. JH advised that there was information on the SFRS website and support was offered to help individuals achieve what they need to do however as the Service was the enforcement body against the legislation it was the responsibility of the duty holder/owner to comply with legislation.

8.1.7 The Committee noted there had been multiple lithium-ion incidents in the same area and enquired how the incident debrief cascaded through and if it would potentially lead to asking Scottish Government for additional regulation. JH advised that the teams have visited the site multiple times in the last 10 years and issued notices of improvement which the site had followed up on and were for the large part compliant with the elements required. From an SFRS perspective it was considered that the Service were doing all that could be done. AW advised that an electrical infrastructure group had been established and was currently in the research phase. CMcG highlighted the Operational Assurance procedure.

8.1.8 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(C Fitzpatrick joined the meeting at 1135hrs)

9 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE REPORTING

9.1 Quarterly Performance Report for Q3 2024-25

9.1.1 AW presented the quarterly performance report for quarter 3 of 2024-25.

9.1.2 The Committee asked for assurance around the growing incident type pattern and requests for resources in relation to KPI30 Assist other agency incidents and KPI31 Effect entry/exit incidents. CF noted that KPI31 included call outs to assist with medical responses and incidents involving suicide. CF added that incidents of this type could be recorded by one crew as an assist other agency, whereas another crew may record it as a medical response. It was noted that incidents of this nature had increased significantly since 2009/10 and particularly during the period when the Service was involved in the Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest trials.

9.1.3 The following key points were highlighted:

- 60% of all calls received were interagency calls (40% originate from Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) and 20% from Police Scotland (PS)) compared to 15% and 16% respectively in 2009/10.
- 35% of all calls received originated from public landlines or mobile telephones compared to 57% in 2009/10, however the number of calls received had increased with the time of day an influencing factor rather than day of the week.
- For every 1,000 incidents recorded, there were 40 fatalities.
- Average of 100 casualties were recorded per 1,000 interagency incidents.
- The noted increases were being absorbed within workloads but demonstrated the changing role within communities.
- Started to deliver effective entry training and working with partners to understand what this looks and feels like and the relevant skill set required.
- SFRS may be deploying resources to non-traditional incidents and recording them under this category.

- RW highlighted that this sits within demand management within public services and that he and CF were starting to consider this area in terms of horizon scanning and would form part of the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) work however it would require resource and data.

9.1.4 Regarding KPI14 the Committee noted the rising response times within the West and queried the reason for this. DF considered that a number of complex factors could contribute to this however the situation was being monitored. JH advised that when previously attending UFAS calls these would be in built up areas and the response times would be good however taking those calls out of the system can naturally lead to increased response times. AW advised that there has been an increase in wildfires, flooding and severe weather incidents which could also have an effect on response times. CF agreed and advised that although response times appear to be increasing within the West the response times are reporting around 8 minutes whereas response times within the North were reporting at 10 minutes, therefore rurality was a factor. CF noted this was a UK wide issue and the Home Office was unable to pinpoint what was driving the increase in response times. RW shared the statistics from the research undertaken by the Home Office around this.

9.1.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(C Fitzpatrick left the meeting at 1215 hrs)

9.2 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal Report

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:

- Prior to 2023 there were approximately 28,000 UFAS incidents attended which equated to 31% of operational activity. Since the changes this now equates to 18%.
- When the policy was implemented, the goal was to achieve a 15% reduction however a 54% reduction has been realised with around 35 UFAS calls now received per day compared to 78 previously.
- This report reflects the last 12 months of work and is not a final report.

9.2.2 The Committee asked for clarity on some of the percentages provided within the report and advised that some caution be given when headlining numbers. JH provided clarity.

9.2.3 With regards to technological signs of fire the Committee enquired if there was any sanction or additional training that could be provided to help identify this type of incident. JH advised that the policy was built around engagement and education and the SFRS work with those responsible to try and minimise calls and take appropriate action where legislation allows.

9.2.4 The Committee noted that there had been 9000 hours released that could be focused on training and asked if there were other activities being undertaken with this time. JH advised it was difficult to classify as there had been an increase in training and the quality of training however it had freed-up time to undertake further prevention based activities. The next step would be to undertake a more detailed/academic evaluation of activities. The Committee intimated that future initiatives should be clear on how benefits are measured.

9.2.5 The Committee asked if savings had been quantified. JH advised that there were indicative costs for these incidents, which equated to approximately £300 per turn out, this included crewing, fuel etc and there have been around 5000 less calls which equates

to around £50,000. Looking at the pay budgets for On Call for the whole year there has been a saving of just over £1 million.

- 9.2.6 The Committee enquired if station level data had been captured around changes related to UFAS and if there were any developing trends or patterns. JH advised that station level data captured incident types however trends and patterns were dependent upon the area. It was noted that there was no significant impact from the UFAS changes to any particular station. With regards to how learning was capture, JH advised that it feeds into operational delivery through the performance reporting. JH noted this report was based on the end of the 12 month period and there was an expectation of a similar report in a further 12 months that would build on the next steps. JH referred to the recommendations contained within the report.
- 9.2.7 Regarding the peak times detailed within the report the Committee asked about any prevention activities connected to this. JH advised that the peak times were when there was higher electrical/cooking activity such as meal times and staff were engaging with care homes in order to try and reduce this. Care homes were high risk premises and received regular visits.
- 9.2.8 The Committee asked if the UFAS data was benchmarked with other services. JH advised he was one of the leads for UFAS in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). JH noted SFRS was a unique Service due to its size and received significantly more calls than other Services. It was noted that some Services were reluctant to expand into this work due to potential negative perceived impacts on their response times. There were Services at different stages but there was scope to learn from other Services.
- 9.2.9 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(JH left the meeting at 1235 hrs.)

10 SFRS COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

- 10.1 CW presented the report to provide the Service Delivery Committee with the 2023/24 complaints annual report and highlighted the statistics within the report.
- 10.2 The Committee asked if the team monitor social media for complaints. MW advised that the corporate accounts managed by the Comms team were monitored however affiliated accounts were not at present as there were too many. This would be considered as part of the social media review to be undertaken later in the year.
- 10.3 The Committee enquired if the benchmarking piece with New Zealand would progress. CW anticipated that the benchmarking piece would be progressed.
- 10.4 The learning which had resulted from the driving themes was noted and the Committee asked if there were any other areas of learning that could be picked up from emerging themes. MW advised that trends were examined and provided an example.
- 10.5 In regard to benchmarking the Committee enquired if the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) had been considered. MW noted that SFRS would need to have decades of data to obtain the same amount of data that SAS had to be able to benchmark against systemic issues.
- 10.6 The Committee enquired if SFRS Board members ever had the opportunity to look over the complaints and if not, would this be feasible. CW advised that GDPR required to be taken cognisance of to ensure individuals were not identified from a particular complaint, hence including examples within the annual reports could be difficult. RW suggested a discussion with the Chair of the Board in terms of the annual review process.

10.7 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

11 SFRS COMPLIMENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

11.1 CW presented the report to provide the Service Delivery Committee with the 2023/24 compliments annual report and highlighted the statistics within the report.

11.2 The Committee asked for assurance that compliments were passed to the relevant colleagues. CW advised that compliments received through the Information Governance team were passed to the LSO/Head of Function to pass to the relevant individual(s) and complimentary stories also appeared in the different staff communications.

11.3 The Committee asked if there were any additional measures than could be put in place to encourage compliments received being shared more widely. MW advised that stories were issued to local media, were included in the staff brief and posted on iHub. It was noted that work was ongoing to capture compliments received at station level via thank you cards etc, however, the challenge would be in capturing verbal compliments received by operational crews.

11.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(M Waters and C Wade left the meeting at 1310hrs)

12 DRAFT PREVENTION STRATEGY

12.1 As JH had left the meeting, the Chair proposed that Committee members send any feedback directly to JH.

13 OPERATIONAL USE OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

13.1 RW provided a presentation on Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) and a brief background on CivTech and examples of RDI activity within the Service.

13.2 The Committee asked how quickly an innovative idea such as smart helmets could be deployed and what the timeline would be. DF advised the research stage was important and being part of the NFCC was beneficial for contributing to developing new products. The timeline was not quick as testing was required and raised questions around whether the Service wanted to buy off the shelf or have input as to how the fire sector developed.

13.3 RW noted that the Service were being contacted by companies in relation to robotics and asking what solutions we would be interested in which had not happened previously.

13.4 The Committee were encouraged to see the prioritisation of innovation and future investment in it.

13.5 With regards to innovation social development becoming business as usual, RW advised that there is a strong sense of desire from colleagues across the Service and this would be embedded through providing structure and opportunity. RW highlighted that London Fire Brigade had recently started to build in elements of data literacy into the firefighter job description.

13.6 **The Committee noted the presentation.**

14 SERVICE DELIVERY RISK REGISTER

14.1 Risk Update Report

14.1.1 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:

OFFICIAL

- A new risk (PPP05) which was in relation to the risk of an insufficient level of qualified fire engineers. Control measures to address this were included within the paper.
- SD001 has 3 control actions in red due to timing. These were around the New Mobilising System which was progressing well, the implementation of the DSE1000 which was progressing and almost complete and the control action around disaster recovery system with a solution currently being worked on.

14.1.2 The Committee scrutinised the report.

15 FORWARD PLANNING

15.1 Committee Forward Plan

15.1.1 The following items were added to the forward plan:

- Marmot to be added tentatively for 12 months' time.

The following items would be removed from the forward plan:

- UFAS to be removed as a standing agenda item.
- XVR

15.1.2 The Committee noted the forward plan.

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

15.2.2 There were no items for consideration.

16 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

16.1 CC confirmed that there were no formal actions recorded during the meeting.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 28 May 2025.

17.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1340 hours.