



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

**PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD**

**THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025 @ 1000 HRS**

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

**PRESENT:**

Kirsty Darwent, Chair (KD)  
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)  
Angiolina Foster (AF)  
Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)  
Andrew Smith (AS)  
Tim Wright (TW)

Paul Stollard, Deputy Chair (PS)  
Brian Baverstock (BB)  
Neil Mapes (NM)  
Malcolm Payton (MP)  
Madeline Smith (MS)  
Mhairi Wylie (MW)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Stuart Stevens (SS)	Chief Officer
Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
Liz Barnes (LB)	Interim Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Jon Henderson (JH)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Director of Finance and Contractual Services
Fiona Ross (FR)	Director of People
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
Stuart Free (SF)	Asset Governance and Performance Manager (Items 13 & 14 only)
Elaine Gerrard (EG)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/Projects Manager (Item 18 only)
Gillian Clark (GC)	People Manager Reward (Item 19 only)
Lucy Begley (LB)	People Adviser Reward (Item 19 only)
Kate Whitelaw (KW)	Senior Project Manager (Item 20 only)
Chris Casey (CC)	Group Commander Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

**OBSERVERS:**

Seona Hart, Fire Brigades Union  
Brian McKenzie, HMFSI

**1 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting welcoming those present and those attending/observing via MS Teams.
- 1.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed Fiona Ross to her first meeting since taking up her role as Director of People and Sarah O'Donnell, in anticipation of her taking up her new role as Deputy Chief Officer Corporate Services.

- 1.3 Attendees were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question.

**2 APOLOGIES**

- 2.1 David Farries, Assistant Chief Officer Director of Operational Delivery

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

- 3.1 The Board agreed that the *Liability Claim Against Scottish Fire and Rescue Service* would be taken in private due to the matters which are subject to legal proceedings (Standing Order 9D).

**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 19 December 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 19 December 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 19 December 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Engagement events in Shetland which included meeting the Local Authority Chief Executive, local staff/station visits and a Long Service Good Conduct event.
- Recent engagement relating to the Marmont Review Report and attendance at the launch of the Collaboration for Health Equality in Scotland (CHES).
- Attendance at the National Joint Council (NJC) meeting in February. Further meetings (Employers side) to be scheduled within the next 2 weeks to discuss pay offer which will be made in advance of July 2025.
- Board appraisal interviews process had been completed. Common themes document to be updated, and several items would be taken forward with the Chief Officer.
- Successful recruitment process for the Director of People resulting in the appointment of Fiona Ross.
- Various Scottish Government (SG) meetings including the mid-year review.
- Reform Collaboration Group (RCG) meeting held on 19 February 2025, verbal

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update to be provided at Agenda Item 10.5. Ongoing collaboration work with Police Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service to progress public sector reform. Attended SUMMIT meeting, led by Ivan McKee, which relaunched and reinvigorated the work to be taken forward and SG's approach.

### 8.2 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

## 9 **CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**

9.1 SS presented the Chief Officer's report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 19 December 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Appointment of Fiona Ross, Director of People following a competitive process.
- Sarah O'Donnell pending commencement in her new role as Deputy Chief Officer Corporate Services.
- Second Strategic Managers Development Session held on 12 March 2025. Sessions included Q&A with Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), leadership, budget and challenges, guest speaker Paul Johnston, Public Health Scotland and an SDR update.
- Welcomed the opportunity to undertake a Day on the Run with Polmadie Fire Station, great to see professionalism, skills and dedication of all the crew members.
- Attending Cheapside Street Memorial event tomorrow (28 March 2025) to mark the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

9.2 In regard to themes emerging from meeting local authority Chief Executives, SS advised that close working relationships, shared resources, Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP) and impact on local area, positive support and work of Local Senior Officers (LSO) and partnership arrangements were the key areas raised. It was noted that local authorities regarded the Service as a reliable partner and were keen to pilot work with the Service. LSOs would be the pathway to progress these requests, through Community Planning Partnerships, where the Service would have the opportunity to share and promote prevention activities.

9.3 Brief discussion took place on the SSRP and the need to avoid contradictory messages during the consultation. It was noted that Chief Executives were aware and understood the need for change and were generally supportive. Requests for advance notice had been made and the Service would need to maintain regular engagement with local authorities and political leaders.

### 9.4 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

## 10 **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

### 10.1 **Strategic Planning and Change Committee (SPCC)**

10.1.1 SJB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 6 February 2025 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes.

10.1.2 The next meeting was scheduled for 1 May 2025 and new reports were in development. Two substantive items being presented at this meeting were the 3-Year Delivery Plan and a deep dive on People, Payroll, Finance and Training project (PPFT).

### 10.1.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

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

10.2.1 BB reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 23 January 2025 and referred the Board to the attached draft minutes, noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting. The following key points were highlighted:

- Future Internal Audit services would be provided by BDO. Due to a delay with Azets final report, there would be a slight overlap to allow completion of same.
- Cyber Security Maturity Assessment Report was discussed within the private

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session. The Service were rated within the mid to high range with other organisations when compared against best practice. Weaknesses were identified in relation to developing written policies and procedures in alignment with technical development.

- Discussion on Freedom of Information performance and measures being taken by the Service to address the issue.
- Risk spotlight on the pension remedy from an internal controls' perspective.

### 10.2.2 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

### 10.3 **People Committee (PC)**

10.3.1 MW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 5 December 2024 and referred the Board to the attached approved minutes, noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting.

MW reported that the Committee held a subsequent public meeting on 6 March 2025 and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Update on Standardisation of RDS Terms and Conditions with regular updates going forward.
- Update provided on talent identification and succession planning provided moderate assurance.
- Informative presentation on firefighter currency and competency.
- Risk spotlight on Operations Control staffing levels.
- Updates from RANSC and EPF.
- Prioritisation of wellbeing recovery plan and the impact on performance reports, etc.

### 10.3.2 **The Board noted the approved minutes and verbal update.**

### 10.4 **Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**

10.4.1 TW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 26 November 2024 and referred the Board to the attached approved minutes, noting that a full verbal update had been provided at the previous meeting.

TW reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 25 February 2025 at Motherwell Fire Station and provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- Informative update provided by Local Senior Officer on his role and local issues.
- Presentation of the Annual Complaints and Compliments report with encouragement to consider more benchmarking information for next year.
- Update on operational use of research, development and innovations.

10.4.2 Brief discussion took place on the potential use of drones, recent demonstration and consideration of how drones could be practically used and the opportunity to gain understanding/learn lessons from other UK fire and rescue services in this area.

### 10.4.3 **The Board noted the approved minutes and verbal update.**

### 10.5 **Reform Collaboration Group (RCG)**

10.5.1 MMCA provided a verbal update to the Board on the priorities discussed at the RCG Programme Board meeting held in February 2025. The following key points were highlighted:

- Update on programme of work including shared assets.
- Approved minutes to be submitted to future SFRS Board meetings and this approach would be considered by the Chairs of Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) and Scottish Police Authority (SPA). Both Chairs of SAS and SPA were not present at the last meeting to make this decision.
- Discussion held on the next phase of the Collaboration Group, pending the transfer

of Chairing to SAS following the next meeting (May 2025).

- Discussions held on possible future resourcing of the RCG with a bid being submitted to the Public Service Resource Fund.
- Meeting to be scheduled with Ivan McKee, Minister of Public Finance, to highlight work undertaken.

10.5.2 In regard to the performance reporting on the workstreams activities, it was noted that this would be reported into the SLT. However, should a strategic decision be required, then this would be brought to the Oversight Board and then onto individual Boards for resource/funding.

10.5.3 It was agreed that an item would be taken to the Integrated Governance Forum (IGF) to discuss and identify the appropriate Committee(s) for additional scrutiny on workstream activities and MMcA would attend this meeting.

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

## **11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE 2024/25 Q3**

11.1 MMcA presented the Board with the third quarter performance for fiscal year 2024-25 for scrutiny. The following key points were highlighted:

- KPI's relating to statutory or regulatory requirements were highlighted red for ease of reference.
- Positive trending for both non-domestic fires and total number of incidents.
- Downward trend in Subject Access Requests (SAR) due to reprioritisation in response to the Information Commission's notice.
- Upward trend in attacks on firefighters during this reporting quarter. The Service would be commencing work with Dr Colin Richardson, Northumbria University who has undertaken research in this area. Staff survey to be launched and run for 12 weeks. The Service had provided support for a funding application to develop a predictive model software.
- Continued improvements relating to deliberate fires and accidental dwelling fires.
- Fire fatalities and fire casualties remain consistent.
- Continued close monitoring of Freedom of Information requests. Completion rates for January 2025 were 90% and February 2025 were 85% (part month).

11.2 In relation to attacks on firefighters, AW provided a brief overview of SG's support and potential investment in youth activities within specific targeted areas which would be progressed. AW noted that there were no firefighter injuries during the bonfire period which was a positive indication that firefighters were aware of how to react in these situations.

11.3 In relation to SAR, MMcA advised that the downward trend was due to resources being reprioritised to FOI. MMcA noted that the Service received an average of 200 FOI requests per month, which was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest organisation in Scotland. MMcA outlined the issues with the current FOI recording system, which had impacted the situation and the interim measures taken.

11.4 In regard to the positive progress of the BA recovery plan, the Board queried whether there was any correlation with changes in UFAS response. CMcG advised that there was correlation between UFAS and on station activities, however the planning and arrangements in place for BA recovery were the main factors. CMcG outlined the changes in delivery of BA courses which aided this progress and that the next phase would be a return to business-as-usual delivery.

11.5 In regard to KPI30 (assisting other agencies), the Board queried how the value of this collaborative work would be captured and how this increasing demand on resource



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would impact on any future target operating model. AW noted that further work was required, and consideration would be given to this through the PMF planning process.

- 11.6 In relation to KPI8 (partner referrals), the Board noted the reason for the slight decrease was due to the transition to the revised HFSV scheme and the requirement for partners to sign a new data sharing framework. JH offered his assurances that the new App provided a more streamlined and efficient system and the change over process had been completed successfully with all partners. JH reminded the Board that overall numbers may be impacted due to the process becoming more targeted and focused on at-risk individuals.
- 11.7 In relation to KPI47 (vacancies rate), the Board noted that the vacancy percentages within this report was different from the assumed percentage reported within the financial report. SO'D noted that the challenge remains to maintain the vacancy factor at 10%. SO'D to review and consider how this information is reported within separate reports.
- 11.8 In relation to KPI14 (median response times), the Board commented on the continuing decrease in response times within the East. It was noted that this was a complex area as there were several factors which impacted on each other. The Board were reminded that the Service Delivery Committee continued to monitor this area, and a report was being prepared for a future meeting.
- 11.9 **The Board scrutinised the performance report.**

## 12 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER 3

- 12.1 MMcA presented a report providing the Board with a quarterly progress report on how we are performing against the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2024/25 for the period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024. The following key points were highlighted:
- Total of 39 actions of which 9 actions were reporting Blue, 12 actions were Green, 13 actions were Amber, and 5 actions were Red.
- 12.2 In regard to the prioritisation of the wellbeing recovery plan and the impact on performance and activity levels, the Board requested to be kept apprised of the situation to ensure that a balanced approach was being taken.
- 12.3 In regard to Green RAG status against SSRP Corporate Services Review, the Board referenced the previous concerns that the scope was not sufficiently focussed and queried whether the situation had changed. MMcA offered his assurance that the Board's concerns were noted and had been discussed at the recent Service Review meeting. The revised scope would be shared with the Board in due course.
- 12.4 In regard to Outcome 4 Climate change, the Board sought clarification on the technical issue causing the delay and any potential cost implications. SO'D advised that the Internet of Things was the approach being taken to keep things separate from the network. The teams involved were working closely to progress this. SO'D noted that there were no negative cost implications as this was funded through the Capital budget, therefore, adjustments in timings could be made to accommodate this delay.
- 12.5 In regard to the health assessments action due for completion by 31 March 2025, the Board sought an update on progress. CMcG noted that an update had been provided in private session to the People Committee. CMcG provided a brief overview of work undertaken to date such as changes within the management structure, continued reliance on external providers and ensuring that the Service builds back stronger. Further update to be presented at a future Strategy Day (July 2025).
- 12.6 In regard to the issues with the Community Resilience Hub (CRH) at Portree, the Board

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queried whether other locations had been considered. SO'D noted that discussions with alternative landowners were ongoing regarding the CRH in Portree. SO'D further noted that the outcomes of SSRP were awaited and would help identify suitable locations for other CRHs.

- 12.7 In regard to outstanding actions from previous AOPs, the Board emphasised the need to either complete, close or transfer to the new plan. MMcA noted the comments and would address this within the 3-year rolling plan.
- 12.8 In regard to the New Mobilising System, JH advised that configuration and testing formed part of the implementation phase which remains on target. Further update to be provided at Agenda Item 20.
- 12.9 The Board commented on the use of the word “*slip*” or “*slippage*” and that consideration should be given to using alternative language.
- 12.10 **The Board scrutinised the Annual Operating Plan Progress Update Q3 Report.**

*(Meeting broke at 1120 hrs and reconvened at 1130 hrs)*  
*(S Free joined the meeting at 1130 hrs)*

### 13 RISK BASED CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2025

- 13.1 SO'D presented a report to the Board with the draft Risk Based Capital Investment Plan (RBCIP) for approval. The following key points were highlighted:
- Aspirational 10-year investment figure of £818 million in order for the current portfolio of assets to be brought up to standard. This figure provides a baseline to assess the investment and impact on both the asset portfolio and decision making.
  - Developed using the Asset Management Policy and various Strategic Asset Management Plans (SAMP).
  - Opportunities arising from Community Resilience Hubs.
  - Acknowledgement of HSE Enforcement Notices served and consideration being given on how services are provided and the assets in these areas.
  - Framework of risk decision criteria relative to property and set out the condition, suitability, age profile, backlog of investment and costs to bring up to standard.
- 13.2 The Board queried whether there was a clear articulation of priorities for capital spend. SO'D noted that the Asset Management Policy and Strategy set out the framework and context for prioritisation. SF stated that the Asset Management Policy and SAMPs lead to the prioritised spend on assets which included firefighter safety, contaminate controls, dignified facilities, deliverability, etc. SF noted that the challenges within fleet, property and equipment and the financial spend was split proportionally. SF further noted that the risk based capital investment plan informs the capital programme in terms of prioritisation. The Board were reminded that the plan outlined the recommended approach and priorities for the Service and was being presented for approval.
- 13.3 The Board queried whether the Service were clear on the areas that could be deferred/stopped to focus on priorities. SF noted that SSRP would assist by identifying areas for, or a reduction of, capital investment, reduce resource costs and ensure that appropriate resources were in the correct location.
- 13.4 SF outlined how the Service would collate and measure improvements and returns on investment in capital assets. Brief discussion took place on where and how decisions on capital investment were being made and how SSRP would influence these decisions. It was noted that the capital investments were scrutinised by SLT and aligns with the SAMPs which had been previously presented to the Board.
- 13.5 The Board commented on the reference to 355 stations within the Service and queried

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whether this was the correct terminology. SS noted the comments and advised that consideration would be given on this nomenclature.

- 13.6 In regard to the Impact Assessment, the Board commented on the missed opportunity to highlight how inequalities were key drivers and the positive impact being made.
- 13.7 Typographical error was highlighted within the infographic (page 10) which related to the actual number of fire stations with physical contaminant control measures.
- 13.8 In relation to the level of risk attributed to FCS021 (insufficient funding), the Board queried whether the level (high) was accurate. SO'D noted that funding had increased in recent years and there was the potential to reduce the overall aspirational figure through SSRP/partnership working. SO'D further noted that the Service would continue to seek funding from SG.
- 13.9 The Board commented on the reference to being a 21<sup>st</sup> century fire service and the inference that the Service was currently sub-standard and asked for consideration to be given to this.
- 13.10 The Board commented on whether the approach had given enough thought to rationalisation and utilisation of assets and asked for consideration to be given to include some narrative on this.
- 13.11 In regard to standard station design, it was noted that this would form part of the discussions taken to the IGF and had recently been discussed by the SLT.
- 13.12 The Board commented on the outcomes of SSRP impacting on capital investment. SO'D reminded the Board that the Service had to make decisions on prioritising and effectively using the 2025/26 capital funding whilst taking cognisance of the potential outcomes of SSRP.
- 13.14 SO'D outlined the purpose of the document which details the aspirational figures in relation to the current asset base, provides a baseline to measure improvements, demonstrates reduction in the capital backlog through investment and good decision making, and would continue to be an iterative document. Consideration to be given to include narrative on the intention of the document within the summary.
- 13.15 SO'D confirmed that a paper relating to Service vehicles would be submitted to a future IGF.
- 13.16 **Subject to amendment and consideration of the Board's comments, the Board approved the Risk Based Capital Investment Plan.**

**14 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 – 2027/28**

- 14.1 SO'D presented the Board with the Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2027/28 for approval. The following key points were highlighted:
- Annual funding requirement of £82.00 million required to address backlog of investment.
  - Annual budget for 2025/26 was £47.00 million with the same level of assumed funding for 2026/27 and 2027/28.
  - Anticipation of significant receipts within the next 3 years and would seek SG's approval to retain this.
  - Ongoing commitment to identify and secure funding grants where possible.
  - Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP) would not be funded from the proposed capital budget.
  - Breakdown of expenditure for property major and minor works, fleet, ICT and operational equipment.



- 14.2 The Board queried the risk of not realising the retention of future capital receipts and noted that this was not contained within the risk register. SO'D noted that there was a risk until the monies had been received, however the Service had been consistent with SG in their request to retain any receipts. SO'D noted the comment relating to risk register and would review as appropriate.
- 14.3 Brief discussion took place on the review of station nomenclature, associated timescale, and how this would impact on future capital investment. It was noted that this was both a language and significant substance issue. Strategy Day session to be scheduled in July 2025 for further discussion/clarity.
- 14.4 The Board acknowledged the benefits of forecasting and the quality of asset management work within the organisation. This has enabled the Service to raise awareness and understanding within SG on the issues facing the Service. The Board commended the Minister and SG officials for their support in this area.
- 14.5 **The Board approved the Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2027/28.**

*(S Free left the meeting at 1215 hrs)*

**15 RESOURCE BUDGET 2025/26**

- 15.1 SO'D presented the Board with the Resource Budget 2025/26 for approval. The following key points were highlighted:
- Background on the evolution of the resource budget and the significant savings generated over the years.
  - Details of the 2025/26 resource (cash) budget confirmed by Scottish Government.
  - Additional funding of £3.42 million has been secured against the increased cost of National Insurance contributions, which total approx. £6.00 million.
  - Additional funding of £1.00 million has been awarded to support the ongoing work of the Strategic Service Review Programme.
  - Budget correction in relation to accounting treatment would be rectified in the spring or autumn budget revision.
  - Immediate priorities within the draft Strategy were the focus of discussions on the budget. Challenging decisions had been made to achieve a balanced budget. Any further savings required would impact on frontline resources.
  - Where applicable, budgets have been uplifted for anticipated inflation.
  - ESMCP remains separate and outwith the budget.
- 15.2 The Board recognised the previous discussions and scrutiny in shaping the budget and the work required to present a balanced budget.
- 15.3 In regard to On Call budget, SO'D noted that the 19% increase was attributable to the increased retainer fees due to standardised terms and conditions and National Insurance contributions. This had been offset by the reduction in the On Call Activities budget.
- 15.4 The Board sought clarity on the financial value of a material over/underspend. SO'D advised that an overspend greater than £1.00 million would be subject to parliamentary committee review. SO'D iterated the importance of delivering a balanced budget, the consequences of not achieving this and the financial risks to the Service. SO'D noted that the Service would continuously monitor, report and engage with SG throughout the year to evidence how the Service were working to deliver a balanced budget.
- 15.5 SO'D agreed to recirculate the sensitivity analysis information which was presented at the recent Strategy Day.

**ACTION: SO'D**

- 15.6 With reference to earlier discussions, the Board sought assurance that the risk associated with the backlog had been reflected in the property repair and maintenance budget. SO'D noted that a deliberate decision to overspend on property repairs and maintenance was made within the current financial year as there was opportunity to do so. SO'D further noted that in previous years, the Service had been required to undertake emergency repair activities which were directly correlated to insufficient capital investment.
- 15.7 The Board asked for consideration to be given to introduce more specificity in terms of the risk, impact and actions.
- 15.8 In regard to the Reasonable assurance being offered, SO'D noted that due to the risks involved, the assurance being offered has been reduced from Substantial.
- 15.9 In regard to Resource risks relating to On Call costs, the Board commented on the potential impact on the On Call Improvement Programme. It was noted that this programme would consider a variety of options including better use of existing contracts as well as recruitment.
- 15.10 SS noted that further discussions were required relating to the alignment of the Delivery Plan and Strategy, and the management of expectations on what could be delivered within the organisation.
- 15.11 SS commented on the difficulties in managing this budget and noted that the SLT's approach had been both collegiate and strategic. SS offered his thanks to all those involved across the organisation for the work undertaken to date. SS extended his thanks to the Minister and SG officials for their efforts and support throughout.
- 15.12 **The Board approved the Resource Budget 2025/26.**
- 16 RESOURCE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**
- 16.1 SO'D presented a report advising the Board of the resource budget position for the period ending 28 February 2025. 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 overspend of £0.757 million and a forecast year-end underspend of £0.223 million.
- 16.2 In relation to holiday pay accrual, SO'D noted that this differed annually due to the watch shift patterns and had been identified early within this financial year to allow monies to be reallocated. Cross directorate work is ongoing to review and improve the situation going forward.
- 16.3 **The Board scrutinised the resource budget position for the period ending 28 February 2025.**
- 17 CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**
- 17.1 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 28 February 2025. It was currently anticipated that the revised budget of £43.575 million would be spent out by 31 March 2025. The following key points were highlighted:
- Budget increased by additional funding of £0.300 million for the ESN project and capital receipts of £0.249 million.
  - Reallocation of underspend remains on track.
- 17.2 The Board noted their thanks to all those involved in ensuring the budget was fully spent in the best manner.

- 17.3 **The Board scrutinised the level of actual and committed capital expenditure for the period ending 28 February 2025.**

*(The meeting broke at 1236 hrs and reconvened at 1315 hrs)  
(E Gerrard, G Clark and L Begley joined the meeting at 1315 hrs)*

**18 MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY REPORT**

- 18.1 LB introduced EG who presented the annual Mainstreaming Report for scrutiny and highlighted the continuation of the current corporate Equality Outcomes. The following key points were highlighted:

- Statutory report capturing the steps taken to mainstream and embed equality across the Service and demonstrate evidence of same.
- Format of the report has to be accessible and easily consumed by a broad audience.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance requires the Service to mainstream and embed equality outcomes into corporate reporting. Outline of the work undertaken through the business partnering model and equality partnerships.
- Introduction of the new Scottish Government's Equality Mainstreaming Toolkit.
- Pending review of Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

- 18.2 In regard to the format of the spotlight information, the Board noted that additional details would be helpful and clarity on whether the comments were related to the snapshot or spotlight section.

- 18.3 In regard to the spotlight on the wellbeing and inclusions calendar, the Board queried whether a stronger example could have been used and referenced the Endometriosis Friendly Employer Scheme and the recent Highland Women in the Fire Service event held in Dingwall.

- 18.4 The Board noted the introduction of SG's toolkit would be useful and would be helpful in capturing and demonstrating the mainstreaming of equalities.

- 18.5 EG noted the Board's comments and advised that the finalised version of the report would be published on the SFRS website in the next few weeks.

- 18.6 **The Board scrutinised the report.**

*(E Gerrard left the meeting at 1325 hrs)*

**19 EQUAL PAY AND GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2025**

- 19.1 GC presented the bi-annual Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report for scrutiny. The following key points were highlighted:

- Positive progression of females within the Wholetime Group Commander staffing group.
- Overall some promising areas of slow progress with many areas remaining unchanged.

- 19.2 The Board queried how the overall negative percentage gender pay gap could be reconciled with the positive percentage of all employee groups except for control staff. GC advised that the difference when considering the pay gap for employee groups compared to the overall workforce was the differing representation of males and females within each group across all levels within the Service. GB expanded on how this ratio of male/females at various levels impacted on the financial aspects.

- 19.3 In regard to the increased numbers of female volunteers, GC noted that this could be attributable to the recruitment process, flexibility commitment and work life balance this role offers.

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- 19.4 The Board commented on the photographs within the report and noted that they did not fully capture a wider diversity within the Service.
- 19.5 In regard to those seeking promotions, the Board sought to understand whether this was predominately the same cohort or multiple cohorts. GC advised that this was dependent on the individual and their desire and ability to continue to progress.
- 19.6 The Board noted that some data provided did not include historical data which would help to identify trends. GC noted the comment and agreed to provide the historical data outwith the meeting.

### ACTION: FR/GC

- 19.7 In regard to the retention of female staff, the Board queried the level of support offered to unpaid carers. LB noted that the Service could be more proactive in this area and there was still work to be undertaken to improve this.
- 19.8 Brief discussion took place on the rigidity of the shift patterns and that potential flexibility/alternative duty system could be considered.
- 19.9 The Board commented on the potential to capture the percentage of females applying to join the Service as this would be helpful in identifying whether the recruitment campaign had been successful.
- 19.10 The Board commented on the lack of benchmarking data within this report. Benchmarking data to be provided to the People Committee for consideration and reported back to the Board in due course.
- 19.11 The Board noted that there were no female (wholetime) uniformed staff above Group Commander level. The Board queried how the Service compared to other FRSS, whether this was the highest level of achievement by a female and the estimated timescale for progressing into an Assistant Chief Officer (SLT) position.
- 19.12 SS advised the Board that previously the Service had one female Area Commander, plus one female OC Area Commander. It was noted that it could take several years to progress through the promotion process, however, external recruitment becomes an option for senior roles. Strategy Day session on female recruitment/retention was scheduled for May 2025.
- 19.13 The Board commented on incomplete personal information/protected characteristics data and queried the reasons for this. LB advised that various attempts have been made to encourage the workforce to provide such information and offered her hopes that the evolving culture would improve response rates.
- 19.14 The Board highlighted the product placement (back of monitor) on the photograph on the first page.
- 19.15 **The Board scrutinised the report.**

*(G Clark and L Begley left the meeting at 1355 hrs)*  
*(K Whitelaw joined the meeting at 1355 hrs)*

## 20 NEW MOBILISING SYSTEM UPDATE

- 20.1 JH presented a report providing an update on the New Mobilising System (NMS) Project delivery and progress to date for scrutiny. The following key points were highlighted:
- Summary of recent project activity.
  - Overview of delivery milestones.

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- Highlighted risk and issue were no longer reporting Red due to the mitigation/actions being progressed.
- Delivery of the Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) by December 2025 and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) by October 2026 remains on track.

20.2 The Board were informed that due to the financial scale of this ICT change programme, this project was now reportable to the Public Audit Committee and quarterly reports would be submitted for scrutiny.

20.3 It was agreed that future NMS updates would be presented at the Strategic Planning and Change Committee and would only be brought to the Board by exception.

20.4 **The Board scrutinised the report.**

*(K Whitelaw left the meeting at 1400 hrs)*

## 21 RISK THEMES

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

## 22 FORWARD PLAN

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

## 23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23.1 The next full public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 24 April 2025.

23.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chair expressed her thanks to Liz Barnes, for her support, guidance and hard work throughout her tenure and wished her well for her retirement.

23.3 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1400 hrs.

*(The meeting broke at 1400 hrs and reconvened in private session at 1405 hrs)*

## REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

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

- Corporate Parenting Update

## PRIVATE SESSION

## 24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING:

### 24.1 Thursday 19 December 2024

24.1.1 The minute of the meeting held on 19 December 2024 was approved as a true record of the meeting.

### 24.2 Thursday 30 January 2025 (Special)

24.2.1 The minute of the special meeting held on 30 January 2025 was approved as a true record of the meeting.

### 24.3 Thursday 27 February 2025 (Special)

24.3.1 The minute of the special meeting held on 27 February 2025 was approved as a true record of the meeting.

### 24.4 Matters Arising

24.3.1 There were no matters arising.

## 25 PRIVATE ACTION LOG

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



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

**26 LIABILITY CLAIM AGAINST SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

26.1 SO'D presented the report to the Board seeking approval in relation to an insurance liability claim intimated against the Service.

26.2 **The Board approved the recommendation in relation to the claim.**

There being no further matters to discuss in private, the meeting closed at 1420 hrs.