



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 28 MAY 2025 @ 1000 HRS

**PORTLETHEN TRAINING CENTRE, PORTLETHEN,
ABERDEEN, AB12 4RR / VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Tim Wright, Chair (TW)
Angiolina Foster (AF)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
David Farries (DF)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Organisational Delivery
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Jonathan Henderson (JH)	Director of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness
Gregor Welsh (GW)	Business Intelligence and Data Services Manager (Item 10.1 only)
David Young (DY)	HMFSI
Andrew Wright (AWr)	Local Senior Officer, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray
Andy Buchan (AB)	Group Commander, Prevention (Item 14 only)
Chris Casey (CC)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Iona Milne	Business Support Executive / Minutes

OBSERVERS

Dawn Forrest, Fire Brigades Union

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 Madeline Smith, 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 other items to be taken in private.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 4.1 No declaration of interests were declared.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 25 FEBRUARY 2025

- 5.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the undernoted amendments.

- Spelling of Board member Angiolina Foster's name.
- Paragraph 9.2.5 – JH referred to the cost per turnout and reinforced the indicative amount was £300 and therefore the word 'around' should be removed.

5.2 **Matters Arising**

- 5.2.1 There were no matters arising.

- 5.3 **The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting subject to the above amendments.**

6 ACTION LOG

- 6.1 There were no outstanding actions on the action log.

7 COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

- 7.1 TW presented the Committee Statement of Assurance 2024/25 which outlined evidence of how the Committee supports the effective functioning of the Board.

- 7.2 **The Committee approved the Committee Statement of Assurance 2024/25.**

8 SERVICE DELIVERY UPDATE

- 8.1. AW introduced the update report which details relevant matters from a Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Service Delivery perspective, which comprises of Operational Delivery, Prevention, and Training, Safety and Assurance (TSA) Directorates. The report covered the period for the quarter February to May 2025, albeit some issues may precede and extend beyond this period.

- 8.2 The Committee noted that there were 4 students planned to attend the Fire Engineering (FE) course and asked the reason why there were only 4 candidates and what background did the students come from. JH advised there were a number of factors such as course availability and funding that influenced the number of students. JH advised the 4 students were Auditing Officers within the FE section.

- 8.3 With regards the Young Farmers Initiative engagement sessions, the Committee considered that an additional line would be helpful to explain the benefits/expectations from the sessions. AW advised that the engagement sessions taking place in the Moray area were about prevention, recruitment and sharing of assets particularly in relation to wildfires. DF noted that On Call recruitment was also discussed at these sessions. New initiatives were evaluated and rolled out across the country with mechanisms in place to share best practice.

- 8.4 The Committee asked for a brief update on the new Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) process and likely timescales for feedback. JH advised the Committee of the new process and highlighted that it focused on higher risk groups. As the process was taking longer than anticipated there was no timeline set for feedback however an evaluation would commence at the start of the next financial year and would look at the wider prevention activity, not just the HFSV process, and the impact of the prevention strategy.

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- 8.5 The Committee noted there was a significant reduction in total incidents attended compared to the previous quarter and queried the correlation between this and UFAS. DF assured the Committee that although the language in the report was cautious it was clear where the reductions in incidents were however there were a combination of factors that could impact the final outcome.
- 8.6 With regards data for 2025/26 activity, JH advised that raw data was being recorded and activities were ongoing, however, the issue was with the transfer of data but work was ongoing to resolve this. The Committee expressed their disappointment at this ongoing issue with the introduction of new systems.
- 8.7 The Committee noted the reference to the Bank Working Policy staffing tools and asked what arrangements were in place to monitor the operational impact of that for On Call appliance availability. DF explained the Bank Working Policy was now called the On Call Availability Resilience Scheme. The procedure was currently under consultation and would be managed locally. The scheme was not intended to replace or override other work that was being undertaken around the core objectives.
- 8.8 Regarding the On Call Improvement Team pilot the Committee asked if there were any notable findings. DF advised that there were a number of pilots ongoing and information in relation to these was currently being gathered. DF provided an example of other pilots that have taken place and the outputs from these.
- 8.9 The Committee enquired if there had been any noticeable impact since the changes to the On Call terms and conditions were introduced. DF advised that it was too early to ascertain, however, there hadn't been a significant decrease in availability but this continued to be monitored.
- 8.10 With regards specific contamination risks attributed to wildfire incidents, DF advised that protection was worn but Breathing Apparatus (BA) was not typically worn outdoors which could potentially increase the chances of inhalation. Burnt vegetation was also a risk as contaminants could enter up through the leggings. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) took into account the control measures related to contaminants and was constantly reviewed.
- 8.11 Regarding animal rescue capabilities the Committee asked what SFRS responsibilities were and the key partnerships for this type of incident. DF advised that firefighters provide a humanitarian service to people in need and this type of incident would come under that category especially where public safety may be affected. The Service works with British Animal Rescue and Trauma Care Association to support the national standards operational learning and with the Chief Veterinary Officer for Scotland Animal Health to share learning.
- 8.12 The Committee asked what constituted supplementary structural firefighting PPE and the criteria used to prioritise where to deploy it. CMcG advised the structural firefighting PPE was what a firefighter was expected to wear in buildings. There was a delay identified in certain areas but there had been around an 80% role out. The delays were related to external storage and the ability to host and the ongoing delivery
- 8.13 Regarding National Fire Resilience Scotland, DF advised that this related to the UK National Fire Resilience versus what we do in Scotland and the timing of this piece of work would be dependent on funding.
- 8.14 With regards local fire plans, AW advised of the process and that a review of the content of the local plans would be undertaken going forward, taking cognisance of public service review.

8.15 With regards the Youth Volunteer Scheme, JH advised there were a variety of youth volunteer schemes and the intention was to continue to keep people engaged through these.

8.16 JH provided an update on the NMS project.

8.17 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

8.2 **Local Senior Officer Performance Overview**

8.2.1 AWr provided an overview of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray (ACAM) LSO area and highlighted the following.

- ACAM area covers 3 Local Authority areas and AWr has positive relationships with the Chief Executives, Scrutiny Committees and members of each area.
- There are 5 wholtime stations, 2 of which were Wholtime/On Call stations. There are 34 On Call stations and 1 Volunteer Station at Gordonstoun.
- Specialist resources in the area are water rescue at Elgin and Central Fire Station, USAR and Heavy Rescue at North Anderson Drive, rope rescue at Altens Fire Station (all Aberdeen) and new wildfire units at Elgin and Ballater.
- Priorities align with those of the Service and across the area endeavour to ensure that communities feel as safe as possible by developing resilient teams, upholding the highest standards of safety and professionalism, with firefighter safety at its core and ensuring operational readiness at all times.
- Ensure all staff have completed relevant training, maintain their core competencies and have the correct PPE and equipment to allow them to respond safely and effectively to incidents. To do this the team liaise with Assets and Training and utilise KPI'S 22 to 28 highlighting training courses completed and maintenance of skills at all levels. Locally produced information and reports are held and a representative from training attends Performance meetings so that any concerns can be highlighted and work together to produce practical solutions to ensure continued competence of staff.
- ACAM has seen a 20% reduction in the number of overall calls received.in the last 3 years.
- UFAS in the ACAM area have fallen from 3800 to 2556 when comparing the reporting period to the 3-year rolling average.
- Deliberate fires across ACAM are down by 16%.
- Non-domestic fires are down by 29%.
- Accidental Dwelling fires have seen a slight increase by 5%.
- There has been a 25% increase in Effective Entry and a 45% increase in assisting other agencies.
- There has been an increase of incidents involving fatalities and welfare support is provided as required.
- There are a number of key initiatives in ACAM such as breakfast clubs and brew with a crew. The team have been successful in securing funding through the Rural Poverty Initiative for Aberdeen Council in the form of a £9,000 grant which has allowed the team to acquire additional equipment and essential items such as fridges, urns, kettles and jackets, blankets and bedding.
- In partnership with NHS Grampian and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnerships, Fire Stations across ACAM have been used as vaccination clinics delivering COVID-19 and flu vaccines.
- Aberdeen City has seen a spate of wilful fires in multi-storey properties. The team have held engagement sessions and inspections and suggested an information poster be displayed in all entrance ways of multi-storey buildings. Aberdeen Council has agreed to produce the posters and these are currently being distributed.
- The main challenges across ACAM are wholtime operational availability with a number of staff on long term sick leaving the area slightly under target. Another challenge is delivering the current training delivery programme to maintain the

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competency of all staff due in part to personnel retiring, however local solutions are being looked at as a priority.

- 8.2.2 In terms of the funding for the £9,000 grant the Committee asked who was responsible for making the application. AWR advised that the Service was represented on the Aberdeenshire and Partnership Board where the opportunity to apply for grants was highlighted.
- 8.2.3 The Committee enquired if the team had connections to the Social Landlord Sector. AWR noted that there was no direct link but there was a connection through the local authority.
- 8.2.4 Regarding the competency issues the Committee asked if this was just local to the ACAM area. AWR advised that previously it was a more Service wide issue as there were a number of contributory factors such as large numbers of trainees, however, work was ongoing to address this.
- 8.2.5 The Committee noted that ACAM had large fishing ports and asked if there were any issues regarding preparation and training programmes relating to ship based incidents. AWR advised that there were regular visits and information was passed onto crews. An exercise also took place with Northern Ferry last year which tested procedures and heightened awareness of them.
- 8.2.6 With regards capacity for change, AWR welcomed any efficiencies and improvements brought about by change that also provided additional capacity. AWR advised that staff across the area openly propose potential changes.
- 8.2.7 AWR advised that there was a wholetime intake in August 2025 and an On Call migration process starting in September 2025.
- 8.2.8 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

9 INSPECTIONS/AUDITS

9.1 UPDATE FROM HM FIRE SERVICE INSPECTORATE

- 9.1.1 DY presented the report to the Committee to provide an update on HMFSI inspection and reporting activity. The following key points were highlighted:
- Regarding the North SDA Inspection and the Organisational Culture Report the formal consultation has concluded and feedback has been considered and incorporated. Both are on target for publication.
 - The informal consultation on the Operational Assurance report has concluded and engagement with the Safety and Assurance Function will take place in early June regarding the formal consultation.
 - Operational Training and Development inspection has been agreed, and field work will commence in June.

9.1.2 **The Committee noted the report.**

(G Welsh joined the meeting at 1131hrs)

10 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE REPORTING

10.1 Quarterly Performance Report for Q4 2024-25

- 10.1.1 The Chair advised that the report would be taken as read by the Committee members and subsequently moved straight to questions.
- 10.1.2 The Committee enquired about KPI11 as it sustained a slight increase over time and asked how the service defined high severity fires and what the key factors were for the sustained increase. DF advised the severity model used was the Cheshire Model which assigns points based on responses to key questions to operational incident data collection and

explained the factors that contribute towards the classification severity. A fatality, regardless of the type of incident or nature of the fire would be classed as high severity.

- 10.1.3 DF continued that the long-term decrease in low/medium severity fires contributed heavily towards the reduction of accidental dwelling fires. The total number of high severity fires each quarter was smaller and varied substantially. Annual totals have been decreasing, however, the rate of decrease was smaller and did not clearly identify a trend in quarterly totals. Therefore, as a percentage of accidental fires, high severity makes up a bigger share over time.
- 10.1.4 In order to understand the influencing factors related to KPI14 and KPI15, and also any connection to KPI16, the Committee requested a briefing paper on median response times be presented to a future meeting. DF noted a previous presentation provided to the Committee which looked at call response times and the associated component parts and agreed it would be useful to revisit this.
- 10.1.5 The Committee noted there was not a KPI relating to wildfires and the resources used to deal with this type of incident and proposed that this be considered within the framework. It was agreed that this would be taken to IGF for further discussion.
- 10.1.6 The Committee considered that KPI14 required further narrative to provide some context. AW agreed that some additional narrative would be helpful and this would be provided within the next iteration.
- 10.1.7 TW referred to section 3.10 of the report which noted 'Targets Not Known' in relation to audits completed and requested some clarification on this. GW advised that the target for these audits was 100% of the premises defined within the local area plans being visited within the year of the plan. However as this was defined locally the BI Team were unable to confirm the actual numbers completed on the enforcement system database.
- 10.1.8 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(G Welsh left the meeting at 1155hrs)

11 SERVICE DELIVERY RISK REGISTER

11.1 Committee Aligned Directorate Risks

- 11.1.1 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:
- 5 risks highlighted in the report aligned to the SDC.
 - 2 risks, FCS019 and SPPC001, have had increased risk ratings.
- 11.1.2 The Committee noted risk PPP005 (fire engineering resources) and asked what the completion date of 31 March 2026 related to. JH advised the potential completion date was related to providing solutions such as further course offerings. Engagement was ongoing with NFCC who were looking at a variety of academic providers from across the sector to develop a more consistent course offering, however, this would take some time to progress. JH assured the Committee that actions were being taken to address this and working towards a more structured and robust product that links into the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower inquiry phase 2. The Committee asked if any agreement was in place to recover costs from candidates should they leave the organisation within a certain period of time following completion of the training. JH confirmed this measure was not in place and would be considered.
- 11.1.3 Regarding risk OD001 the Committee asked what short term controls had been considered. AW advised that there were 5 or 6 control actions relating to this and 3 or 4 had now been closed, however, only existing control actions were included within the

report. DF provided examples of the closed control actions and also details of the lengthy process to change the risk rating.

11.1.4 The Committee scrutinised the report.

12. FIRESTORM REPORT UPDATE

12.1. The Chair advised the Firestorm Report Update was on the agenda 'for information' however a decision was required to support the progress against the remaining recommendations being scrutinised through existing executive and board governance arrangements.

12.2. AW provided an update and advised that the actions had been considered and given due regard. The actions that were currently open were aligned to business as usual and key pieces of work within the Service.

12.3. The Committee agreed to ongoing scrutiny of the progress being made through existing arrangements and to remove the Firestorm Update from the SDC agenda.

12.4 The Committee noted the report

(A Buchan joined the meeting at 1213hrs)

13 ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP PRESENTATION

13.1. JH provided a brief background and introduced AB who delivered a presentation on the Electrical Infrastructure Working Group (EIWG) explaining the structure, timeline, how the working group address Lithium-ION battery risks, and the EIWG vision, challenges and opportunities.

13.2. The Committee enquired if the incident reporting system had the ability to record these incidents. JH advised that there was currently the ability to record numbers for the narrative but once the new incident reporting system was embedded there would be more functionality for reporting.

13.3. The Committee asked AWr if electrical fires were becoming more common in the ACAM LSO area. AWr recounted one incident of this type, however, taking cognisance of the oil industry and the promotion of renewable energy related to Aberdeen, along with concerns from elected members and members of the public, the ongoing work in this area was welcomed.

13.4. With regards to government influence around adherence and legislation, AW advised that the NFCC had produced a change position statement and currently the Service could only provide advice on a case-by-case basis in relation to sites and legislation. It was noted that the NFCC was developing a position on the role of the fire service in terms of legislation.

13.5 The Committee noted the report.

14 FORWARD PLANNING

14.1 Committee Forward Plan

14.1.1 The following item would be added to the forward plan:

- Median Response Times

14.1.2 The Committee noted the forward plan.

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- 14.2 **Items for Consideration at Future Integrated Governance Forum, Board and Strategy/Information and Development Day Meetings**
- 14.2.1 The following item would be raised at the next IGF meeting:
- Consideration of KPI Relating to Wildfires
- 15 **REVIEW OF ACTIONS**
- 15.1 CC confirmed that there were no actions arising during the meeting.
- 16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- 16.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 21 August 2025.
- 16.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1250 hours.

PRIVATE SESSION

- 17 **FRONTLINE UPDATE – BREADALBANE STREET, EDINBURGH**
- 17.1 CMcG presented the report to inform the Service delivery Committee (SDC) of the Operational Assurance Frontline Update publication which details the operational learning relating to the *Breadalbane Street* high rise incident that occurred in Edinburgh on 14 March 2024. McG explained the legal process that was ongoing in relation to this incident and the rationale for it being taken in private session.
- 17.2 **The Committee noted the report.**
- There being no further business to discuss, the private meeting closed at 1308hrs.