



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – PEOPLE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2025 @ 0930 HRS

**CLYDESMILL FIRE STATION, WESTBURN DRIVE,
CAMBUSLANG, G72 7NA / VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)**

PRESENT:

Mhairi Wylie (Chair) (MW)
Neil Mapes (NM)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Fiona Ross (FR)	Director of People
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Deputy Chief Officer Corporate Services
Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
Ross Robison (RR)	Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Head of Training
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People
Teresa Kelly (TK)	Deputy Head of Safety and Assurance
Ceri Dodd (CD)	Deputy Head of People (Item 9.2 only)
Jen Kidd (JK)	Lead People Advisor (Item 9.2 only)
Chris Casey (CC)	Group Commander Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS

John McKenzie, Fire Brigades Union

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 The Committee Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present, in particular Fiona Ross and Sarah O'Donnell to their first formal meeting in their new roles, and those attending 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 FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Madeline Smith, Board Member
David Farries, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Jim Holden, Head of Safety and Assurance

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

3.1 The Committee discussed and agreed that the *Key Case Update* verbal report would be heard in private session due to the small number of individuals involved and confidentiality and in line with Standing Orders (Item 9D). The *Volume of Calls to Safecall Confidential Reporting Line and Analysis of Themes* report and draft minutes/verbal update of the *Remuneration, Appointments and Nominations Sub Committee* would be taken in private due to the confidential nature of the issue (Item 9G).

3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

4.1 No conflicts of interest were declared.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: THURSDAY 6 MARCH 2025

5.1 Subject to a minor typographical error, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5.2 **Subject to a minor typographical error, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.2 Matters Arising

5.2.1 No matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6 ACTION LOG

6.1 The Committee considered the Action Log noting the updates and agreed the closure of completed items.

Action 8.1.4 Culture Action Plan – Update Paper (06/03/25): SO'D advised that a further update to be provided under Agenda Item 10.1 and that this action should remain open.

Action 10.1.4 Safety and Assurance Performance Report Quarter 3 2024/25 (06/03/25): CMcG requested amendment to the position statement due to Jim Holden's absence and asked for the action to be closed, subject to the Committee's satisfaction of the revised report (Agenda Item 12.1).

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

7 COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2024-25

7.1 The Chair presented the annual Statement of Assurance 2024/25 for the People Committee (PC), outlining evidence of how the Committee supports the effective functioning of the Board for scrutiny.

7.2 The following amendments were agreed:

- Section 3, 3rd bullet point – October 2025 to be amended to October 2024.
- Section 4, 5th paragraph – This paragraph to be amended to read "*In agreement with the staff representative bodies, we have revised the approach for EPF...*".

ACTION: BST

7.3 **Subject to the agreed amendments, the Committee approved the contents of the Annual Statement of Assurance 2024/25.**

8 PMF QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE 2024/25 Q4

8.1 The PMF Quarterly Performance 2024/25 Q4 report was presented to the Committee for scrutiny of the KPIs 22-29 (Training), KPIs 46-49 (People) and KPIs 50-56 (Safety and Assurance). In addition, 3 annual performance indicators KPIs 62, 63a and 63b were also contained within the report.

- 8.2 The Committee commented on the inaccurate figure for female Wholetime staff and sought assurance that the revised figures were now accurate. LG to review and provide an update off table.
- 8.3 The Committee requested a future update on the impact of the new terms and conditions for On Call staff on staffing figures. It was proposed that this would be appropriate after a period of 12 months (captured under Item 16.1).
- 8.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

9 PEOPLE: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING

9.1 People Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25

- 9.1.1 FR presented the People Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25 to the Committee for scrutiny of the People KPIs from the Performance Management Framework and the further details within the People Performance Report. The following key areas were highlighted from the Executive Summary:
- Overall vacancy rates reduced from 16.3% to 15.4% which included a significant reduction in Operations Control (OC) vacancies from 10.5% to 4.7%.
 - Staff turnover and absence levels remain broadly consistent with previous quarters with a slight reduction in staff turnover.
 - 12 Wholetime Trainee Firefighters graduated in May 2025 and a further 58 were scheduled to graduate in June 2025. Future intakes, including migration courses, were scheduled to commence in August through to November 2025.
 - Planning and arrangements were being progressed ahead of the launch of the new recruitment campaign.
 - Successful recruitment processes for various strategic level positions.
- 9.1.2 LG advised the Committee that work had been undertaken to identify and engage with both community and underrepresented groups to provide a more holistic overview of a Firefighters role. LG noted that consideration was being given to potential PREP programmes which had been used for other recruitment campaigns. LG further advised that the Service had held early conversations with further education colleges regarding emergency service courses and the potential to promote careers within the Fire Service.
- 9.1.3 In relation to capping recruitment numbers, LG noted that this would allow the Service to undertake a short recruitment process and introduce improvements in a timely manner. LG confirmed that the application deadline would be adjusted should the identified number of applications be reached.
- 9.1.4 In relation to forecasting recruitment levels, LG outlined the various factors that were considered when developing the recruitment plan. These included the target operating model, forecasted leaver/retirals and resource budget.
- 9.1.5 In relation to staff turnover, LG noted that retirals were the main driver for uniformed personnel. LG outlined how the Service closely monitored and forecast uniformed staffing levels down to station level to maintain operational availability levels across the Service. Support staff recruitment was managed by individual Directorates and turnover levels were monitored.
- 9.1.6 In relation to the decrease in wellbeing referral to Heales, FR advised that investigations were ongoing to identify the reasons and noted that inhouse referrals had increased. Ongoing regular discussions were being held with Heales relating to contract and case management. It was noted that in-house physio services were being monitored and an evaluation would be undertaken.

- 9.1.7 In relation to the SafeCall Reporting line, the Committee noted that no reports had been received during this quarter and that the last report was received in November 2024. The Committee queried how effectively the Service were acting on the reports previously received. FR advised that additional reports had been received during Q1 and that a fuller update would be provided under Item 22.
- 9.1.8 In relation to long term sickness, the Committee commented on the high number of days lost which averaged at 36 days lost per person. FR noted that long term sickness was classed as 28 days or above and that further analysis would be required to determine the actual breakdown on this figure. LG noted that short term sickness was managed and monitored through the Absence Management Policy.
- 9.1.9 In relation to in-house physio provision, LG advised that there were only 2 in-house physiotherapists therefore capacity was limited. The Service would continue to monitor the situation and the option to use external physiotherapy remained in place.
- 9.1.10 The Committee queried the accuracy of the number of vacancies reported for the Resource Based Crewing (RBC) staffing group. LG provided a brief explanation and would review for future reports.
- 9.1.11 The Committee noted and welcomed the improving absence levels within OC. LG outlined the work undertaken and support measures in place within OC.
- 9.1.12 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(J Kidd and C Dodd joined the meeting at 1005 hrs)

9.2 Learning and Development Annual Update 2024/25

- 9.2.1 CD introduced JK, who presented a report providing an overview of the Service's Learning and Development (L&D) 2024/25 approach, provision and impact. The following key points were highlighted:
- Key deliverables, which support and enable the seven strategic outcomes, including Service Improvement Foundation Course, fire safety/investigation qualifications.
 - Approach to L&D initiatives would continue to be informed by the principles of prioritisation and would take cognisance of the 6 immediate priorities and 5 strategic objectives.
 - Improvements in forecasting and budget management realised an underspend of £18,000. The main reasons for this underspend were noted.
 - Inclusion of learner's testimonials highlighting the value of the management development programmes.
- 9.2.2 In comparison to previous years, JK advised that the demand for learning needs had increased, and this could be attributable to the residual impact of Covid. JK noted increased course costs, changed nature of demand and the establishment of the learning development group. This had resulted in a higher demand on the centralised learning development budget and significant pressure on prioritising and supporting succession planning and wider development opportunities.
- 9.2.3 In relation to the capacity for change related work, JK noted that this was considered as part of the wider work on organisational priorities or was externally facilitated. SO'D reminded the Committee of the increasing capacity within the Portfolio Office to support change and the need for cross functional connections to maximise this resource.
- 9.2.4 JK provided a brief overview of how the L&D needs and provisions were monitored to ensure that they met the needs of the Service. It was noted that the Service worked closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and other external organisations, which offered access to learning programmes, benchmarking opportunities, etc.

- 9.2.5 In relation to the management development programme, CD outlined the challenges and work being undertaken to prioritise the delivery of the leadership training to enable the culture development programme. Brief discussion took place in relation to the pace of delivery, level of training already delivered and potential future refresher training needs.
- 9.2.6 CD provided a brief overview of the NFCC's Supervisory and Middle Manager Management programmes noting the licence costs, support offered, and final review and consolidation sessions.
- 9.2.7 CD outlined the robust learning needs analysis process, noting engagement with functional learning partners to regularly consider learning needs and opportunities available through liaison with trade unions. AW commented on the need for SLT to understand and support the budget setting process to prioritise culture and leadership.
- 9.2.8 In regard to completion of the Inclusive Leadership course, CD advised that this was partly due to availability and the limited time to access the programme.
- 9.2.9 Brief discussion took place on how the Service would measure the impact of our various learning/development programmes through the new Performance Management Framework and how this would be scrutinised by the Committee.
- 9.2.10 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(J Kidd and C Dodd left the meeting at 1040 hrs)

10 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, CULTURE AND FAIR WORK

10.1 Culture Update

- 10.1.1 FR presented the report providing an update on progress of pathway activities detailed within the Culture Action Plan and delivered via the Culture Development Group (CDG). The report included an overview of the current 'Reset & Review' strategy to inform the future direction of the Service's culture and leadership activity. The following key points were highlighted:
- The Reset and Review strategy commenced with a SLT workshop and focussed on current state, recognising work undertaken to date and opportunities to create future state and aspirations.
 - Next stage would be engagement with wider staffing groups.
 - Collated information would be shared with managers to raise awareness and understanding.
 - Further workshops would be scheduled to agree and prioritise actions, key focus to remain on culture and leadership, as well as a review of the CDG.
 - Programme has transitioned into the Portfolio Office.
 - HMFSI Organisational Culture report would be published in summer 2025 and would be taken into consideration.
- 10.1.2 SO'D acknowledged the Board's previous focus on the culture work, and that it was now appropriate for the Service to strategically refocus and reset this work.
- 10.1.3 It was noted that the future Strategy Day session relating to diversity within the wholetime workforce, was specifically related to articulating and recording the risk associated with this.
- 10.1.4 Brief discussion took place on timescales for reporting back to the Committee; it was proposed that a future workshop could be arranged in the summer. It was noted that the revised action plan would be available by autumn 2025, however, progress would continue to be made in the meantime.

10.1.5 In relation to the HMFSI Organisational Culture report, it was noted that this would be taken to the Integrated Governance Forum to discuss and confirm the Committee oversight required (captured under Item 16.2).

10.1.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

10.2 Employment Law Horizon Scan

10.2.1 LG presented the report providing an overview of forthcoming changes to employment legislation, highlighting the main impacts and considerations for the Service and a summary of the planned next steps. The following key points were highlighted:

- Employment Rights Bill:
 - Unfair Dismissal: Expected Autumn 2026. Potential increase in ET claims, amendments required to contracts of employment and appropriate management of Initial Period of Employment (IPE).
 - Zero/Low Hours Contracts: Potential impact for On Call personnel.
 - Industrial Relations: Potential lowering of industrial action threshold.
 - Redundancy Consultation: Anticipated minimal impact due to current measures in place.
 - Flexible Working: Anticipated increase in requests, updating guidance for managers and requirement for appropriate reasons for any refusals.
 - Protections Against Harassment: Increased duty of prevention. Requirement for training and awareness to be raised.
 - Dismissal and Re-Engagement: Potential impact on amending terms and conditions.
 - Statutory Sick Pay: Minimal impact due to current measures in place.
 - Family and Bereavement: Amendments required to policies and potential increase in costs due to the pay/overtime.
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups: Updating of joiners, leavers and redeployment processes and documentation.
- Neonatal Care: Updating of Family Leave policy.
- For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers – Supreme Court Ruling: Awaiting guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission - Comms issued on how the Service would support and keep staff informed.

10.2.2 **The Committee welcomed and scrutinised the report.**

11 TRAINING

11.1 Training Function Update and Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25

11.1.1 CMcG, introduced RR who presented the newly formatted high-level overview of the Training function activity and performance over Quarter 4 2024/25 and highlighted the following key points:

- Firefighter safety improvements included additional PPE requested for both Cambuslang and Newbridge, installation of BA sets cleaning machines at Portlethen and Cambuslang and contaminants control in place across the estate.
- Quality Management System (QMS) continuing assessment site visit resulted in a no non-conformities outcome.
- Progress continues to be made on the use of XVR, notably the first CPD events scheduled for August 2025 and future training proposals.
- Function development day scheduled to share and gather feedback on the capital investment within the function, pace of change and adoption of the Training Strategy and Framework.
- KPI22 (Completion of Core Skills) and KPI23 (Completion of Specialist Skills) have remained static with a slight decrease in advanced modules. Reporting mechanisms were currently under review.
- KPI24 (Completion of Flexi Duty Officer Modules) was reporting a decrease. Changes have been made to the sharing of these modules from a monthly to quarterly basis.

OFFICIAL

- KPI25 (Incident Command Course Currency) continues to report above target. Outline of the reasons and mitigations in place for individuals currently out of competency.
- KPI26 (Core Skills Courses currency): Disaggregated and comparable information provided with the report to aid understanding.
- KPI27 (Specialist Rescue Currency): Disaggregated and comparable information provided with the report to aid understanding. Anticipated increase in mass decontamination in the next quarter.
- KPI28 (Training Courses Delivered) remain consistent with previous quarter.
- KPI29 (Customer Satisfaction Rate) reported a slight decrease but remained above target.

11.1.2 The Committee queried whether the Service were collaborating with other organisations, ie Scottish Ambulance Service, in order to gain any learning to assist with incidents involving mental health related issues. RR noted that the Service were fully engaged with the NFCC and the Reform Collaboration Group's sub group Emergency Services Training Collaboration Group (ESTCG). CMcG advised that the Service remained focused on maintaining the safety and wellbeing of staff at all times. CMcG noted that the focus needs to move into understanding and supporting staff on what they may encounter when attending incidents.

11.1.3 The Committee noted and welcomed the positive direction of both KPI26 and 27 and asked whether consideration should be given to increase the target. To manage expectations, CMcG outlined the reasons for current targets to remain unchanged at this time.

11.1.4 The Committee scrutinised the report.

(Meeting broke at 1135 hrs and reconvened at 1145 hrs)

12 SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

12.1 Safety and Assurance Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25

12.1.1 TK presented the Safety and Assurance Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25 to provide an update on key projects of works across the function to support Safety and Assurance Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The following key areas were highlighted:

- Three structured debriefs were undertaken by Operational Assurance during Q4 with recommendations progressing to the Organisational Learning Group.
- During Q4, 57 guidance reviews were completed with 65% requiring no further action, 19% required further research and development and 16% being referred to business partners.
- Initiatives undertaken during Stress Awareness Month (April).
- KPI50 (Verbal attacks on SFRS Staff) reported a decrease from the previous quarter.
- KPI51 (Physical Attacks on SFRS Staff) reported a 22% decrease from the same quarter last year. All incidents occurred during operational events with no injuries reported. Continue to engage with partner agencies to support the reduction in these types of incidents.
- KPI52 (RIDDOR) reported a 50% increase from the same quarter last year.
- KPI53 (Accidents/Injuries) reported a 10% decrease from the previous quarter.
- KPI54 (Near Miss Events) reported a 12% increase from the previous quarter.
- KPI55 (Vehicle Events) reported a slight increase from the previous quarter.
- KPI56 (H&S Improvement Plans) reported 100% completion of Q4 actions and 98% completion for year to date.
- Updates provided in relation to contaminants, Driving Safety Group and Organisational Learning Group.

12.1.2 In relation to robustness of near miss reporting, CMcG noted that assurance could be taken on the level of reporting, increased awareness within the Service and importance placed on investigating/actions being taken.

12.1.3 In relation to BA near misses, CMcG explained that these incidents occurred in a controlled environment ie training or testing/inspection. Any incident during operational use would be reported through a different process. CMcG provided further details on the example contained within the report relating to an extended period before the issue was identified and noted the learning being taken from this.

12.1.4 In relation to KPI50 and 51, the Committee queried the appropriateness of the target figure against these. CMcG noted that for comparison reasons, these were included and reported an improvement from previous years. AW commented on the focus for these indicators and the potential for these to be revised during the performance management review.

12.1.5 In relation to manual handling training, it was confirmed that this required to be completed by all staffing groups every 3 years.

12.1.6 The Committee scrutinised the report.

12.2 Fire Contaminants Spotlight Presentation

12.2.1 CMcG introduced TK, who presented the report detailing the financial spend undertaken in 2024/25 to support the implementation of the Fire Contaminants Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The following key areas were highlighted:

- Partnership working and engagement with Scottish Government, FBU, NFCC, etc.
- Research and biomonitoring which links to Civ Tech Project.
- Development of SOP's, Management Arrangements, Safe Systems of Work and generic risk assessments.
- Development of LCMS modules.
- Arrangements and availability of reserve PPE, airing racks/cages, external storage, provision of hygiene products, BA washers.
- Implementation of station zoning arrangements.
- Specialist asbestos medicals and study of exposure to contaminants and risk of cancers/disease.
- Overview of CivTech project including funding from Scottish Government and support by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- Prevention and protection measures on incident ground, stations and through external providers.
- Overview of 9 NFCC Containments Groups and their remits.
- Overview of the next steps including continual monitoring/reviewing new research, NFCC Fire Contaminants Guidance, etc

12.2.2 In relation to anticipated new research, TK advised that the HSE's "How Clean is Clean" research was the next main focus. TK further advised the Committee that a recent request to review breastfeeding contamination had been received.

12.2.3 The Committee noted that this important work had involved all of the Service's values and queried how this would be communicated externally, particularly with the Minister. It was noted that this was an area of focus of Scottish Government and briefings were provided to the Sponsor Unit. The Service would continue to engage with Scottish Government and through NFCC, the wider UK FRSs.

12.2.4 The Committee scrutinised the report.

13 AUDIT/INSPECTIONS

13.1 Internal Audit Updates

13.1.1 LG provided a verbal update to formally advise the Committee that all Internal Audit People Directorate action plans have been closed and confirmed by Azets.

13.1.2 LG updated the Committee on the replanning of the action plan relating to the HMFSI's thematic inspection of Mental Health and Wellbeing. This remains on track for presenting at the next meeting (September 2025).

13.1.3 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

14 PEOPLE COMMITTEE RISK REGISTER

14.1 Committee Aligned Directorate Risk

14.1.1 FR and CMcG presented the Risk Report, identifying Directorate risks and controls pertinent to the business of the Committee. It was noted that there were 13 risks reporting risk ratings of 15 or above.

14.1.2 The Committee commented on the maturing approach to risk and risk appetite within the Service and the improvements being made.

14.1.2 A potential spotlight was not identified for the next meeting.

14.1.3 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

15 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

15.1 Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)

15.1.1 MW provided the Committee with a verbal update on the EPF meeting held on 15 May 2025 noting the following key areas of discussion:

- Proposed different approach to EPF and the potential not to schedule future PAG meetings, however with the agreement that these would be stood up within 8 weeks, if required. Feedback was still awaited from Rep Bodies.
- Fight for 52 Campaign which would be taken forward to the RANSC.

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

15.2 Partnership Advisory Group (PAG)

15.2.1 The Committee were advised that the next scheduled meeting on 12 June 2025 had been stood down due to no items being tabled.

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

16 FORWARD PLANNING

16.1 Committee Forward Plan Review

16.1.1 The Committee considered and noted the Forward Plan. The following item was identified:
- On Call Staffing Levels – Impact of new T&Cs (June 2026)

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

16.2 Items for Consideration at Future IGF, Board and Strategy Meetings

16.2.1 The following item was identified to be taken forward to the Integrated Governance Forum:
- Pathway for HMFSI Organisational Culture

16.2.2 There were no other items identified.

17 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

17.1 CC confirmed that one formal action was recorded during the meeting.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 11 September 2025.

18.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1238 hrs.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

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

- People Policy Review Update
- Training Continuous Improvement Programme – Update Report
- Training Function Policy Review Schedule
- Safety and Assurance Documents Forward Planning Schedule
- Follow Up on Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap Report 2025

(Public meeting broke at 1238 hrs and reconvened in Private session at 1320 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION

19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 6 MARCH 2025

- 19.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 6 March 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

20 PRIVATE ACTION LOG

- 20.1 The Committee noted that there were no outstanding actions.

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

- 21.1 The draft minutes of the RANSc meeting on 6 March 2025 had been circulated to the Committee and advised that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on 16 June 2025.

- 21.2 **The Committee noted the draft minutes and verbal update.**

22 VOLUME OF CALLS TO SAFECALL CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING LINE AND ANALYSIS OF THEMES

- 22.1 FR provided a verbal update on the volume of calls to the Safecall Confidential Reporting line during its first year and the analysis of the themes.

- 22.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**

23 KEY CASE UPDATES 2024/25 – QUARTER 4

- 23.1 LG provided a verbal update to the Committee providing an overview on employee relations cases which have resulted in claims to the Employment Tribunal. LG confirmed that written reports would be presented at future meetings.

- 23.2 **The Committee noted the verbal update.**

There being no further matters to discuss, the private meeting closed at 1352 hrs.