SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – STRATEGIC PLANNING AND CHANGE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2025 @ 1000HRS

BRAIDWOOD SUITE, SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, WESTBURN DRIVE, CAMBUSLANG, G72 7NA / CONFERENCE FACILITIES

PRESENT:

Angiolina Foster (AF), T/Chair   Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)
Paul Stollard (PS)   Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Curtis Montgomery (CM)	Head of Portfolio Office
Heather Martin (HM)	Centre of Excellence Manager
Ijaz Bashir (IB)	Head of Asset Management
Lynne McGeough (LMcG)	Head of Finance and Procurement (Item 17 only)
William Lindsay (WL)	Decision Support Manager (Item 17 only)
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People (Item 18 only)
Paul McGovern (PMcG)	Programme Manager (Item 18 only)
Amanda Jamieson (AJ)	Snr. Business Analyst (SSRP) (Item 18 only)
Jon Henderson (JH)	Director of Prevention (Item 19 only)
Clare Adams (CA)	NMS Programme Director (Item 19 only)
Christopher Casey (CC)	Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Margaret Kyle (MK)	Minutes

OBSERVERS:

Brian Baverstock, Board Member
Scott MacRory, Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

1   CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1   AF opened the meeting, advising that Stuart Ballingall (SJB) could not attend due to other commitments, therefore she would Chair the meeting instead. AF reported having taken SJB's thoughts on some of today's papers and would share later in the meeting. AF welcomed Scott MacRory, FBU, and Brian Baverstock both observers participating via MS Teams.

2   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1   Stuart Ballingall (SJB), Chair
        Deborah Stanfield (DS), Interim Director of Finance and Contractual Services
        Craig McGoldrick (CMcG), Director of Training, Safety & Assurance

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

3.1   With the exception of the draft minute from the previous private meeting and private action log, there were no other items identified.

4   DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
4.1   There were no declarations of interest noted.

5   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 29 JULY 2025
5.1   The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

5.1.1   **The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2025 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   CC presented Strategic Planning and Change Committee (SPCC) Rolling Action Log for consideration. The Committee were asked to review and approve the removal of 3 actions noted as complete, note 1 action categorised as green status, and note 2 actions categorised as yellow status. It was noted that the recurring theme of delays was due to capacity issues within teams.

6.1.1   **Agenda Item 8.2.3 Closing Report – Web/iHub Design Project (07/11/2024):**
6.1.2   The Committee questioned the value of continuing with Action 8.2.3 which had been ongoing for some time and suggested this be handled internally rather than returning to this Committee.

6.1.3   CM emphasised the importance of tracking benefits and conducting lessons learned for future projects. CM advised delays were associated with the Service Delivery Review (SDR) and ongoing absences.

6.1.4   MMcA considered there was value in continuing this work as the exercise itself was useful for internal purposes.

6.1.5   MMcA and CM would liaise with Marysia Waters, Head of Communication and Engagement to ensure lessons learned from the web design evaluation were complete and would only bring back to this Committee should something of significance arise.

6.1.6   TO'D sought assurance that the staffing concerns within the communications team was now resolved and that the team was back to full complement. AW acknowledged current vacancy and workload challenges within the team, particularly due to SDR public consultations but noted this was being treated as a priority.

6.1.7   The Committee agreed that action 8.2.3 would be managed internally and not referred back to this Committee unless specifically required. This action would now be closed.

6.1.8   **The Committee noted the updated Action Log and approved the removal of completed actions.**

7   PLANNING /STRATEGY
7.1   Strategic and Financial Planning Process
7.1.1   MMcA introduced the long-term planning strategy, emphasising the need to align the Service's 10-year vision, 3-year strategy, and annual delivery plans. The approach aims to ensure that strategic priorities were not developed in isolation but were integrated across Directorates, with a focus on resource planning and practical deliverability. The planning process was designed to provide clarity on when and how the Committee could add value through scrutiny and input.

7.1.2 The new process involves early engagement with Heads of Functions to identify investment needs, resource requirements, and dependencies between Directorates. This was intended to break down silos and ensure that initiatives are prioritised based on their alignment with strategic priorities and available resources. The process also includes mapping out which other functions are needed to support specific actions, aiming for a more holistic and realistic approach to planning.

7.1.3 The planning horizon is structured around a 10-year vision (with a planned midpoint review), a 3-year delivery plan, and annual updates. Local area plans were refreshed in line with the main strategy, and Directorate strategies were scheduled for review and would be refreshed as needed. The Committee discussed the importance of using the end of the current strategy period (2027-2028) as a key milestone for assessing progress and making decisions about which projects should be completed or deferred. There was a call to move the "phase 1/phase 2" decision point forward, to better align with the strategy cycle and provide clearer prioritisation.

7.1.4 The Committee emphasised clarity was essential for effective resource planning and for the Committee to understand what would be achieved within each phase, especially regarding the SDR.

7.1.5 Committee members expressed a desire for explicit guidance from the Executive team on when the Committee should be involved in the planning process. Rather than leaving it to the Committee to define its own touchpoints, members asked the Executive to propose specific points for input and scrutiny. The Committee's main focus should be on ensuring plans are integrated, resource constraints are acknowledged, and that initiatives are realistically deliverable within the available budget and capacity.

7.1.6 The Committee noted that whilst the visual timelines were helpful for understanding chronological relationships, they lacked sufficient narrative detail about how financial and strategic planning were integrated. There was a request for a more detailed narrative to accompany the visuals, explaining the conceptual connections between different planning horizons and how larger policies and change initiatives fit into the overall strategy. The Committee requested clarity on which projects were prioritised for completion within the current strategy period, and which would be deferred to later phases.

7.1.7 The Committee questioned the purpose and benefit of the "blueprint" mentioned in the three-year planning cycle. The Committee highlighted the need for practicality, suggesting that whilst a 10-year plan was useful, the first three to five years were the most relevant and actionable. The Committee emphasised the importance of focusing on tangible, manageable planning rather than overly high-level or abstract documents and supported the idea that the "blueprint" should be a living, simple, and workable document.

7.1.8 MMcA explained the "blueprint" was part of the long-term vision refresh, not a separate document, and that he and CM were working with their teams to detail components similar to a change "blueprint", which would drive the long-term vision.

7.1.9 Discussion arose around the finalisation of the Long-Term Vision (blueprint) which would happen after the budget was announced when the financial context would be known. SO'D reported the government intends to provide an indicative 3-year budget, but the actual details would only be clear after the official announcement and highlighted the importance of connecting the budget, delivery plan and strategy, and suggested that the Committee's scrutiny would be most valuable after the budget was set, to ensure priorities and resources were properly aligned.

7.1.10 Committee cautioned against creating excessive documentation or a "cottage industry" of plans. The goal should be to produce a simple, practical, and living document that

links strategic aspirations to resource realities and change initiatives. There was consensus that the planning process should remain focused on actionable priorities and avoid unnecessary complexity.

7.1.11   The Committee suggested "blueprint" was the wrong term for a 10-year strategic document, as it implied rigidity and control, which were unrealistic for such a long timeframe. There was a recommendation to use terminology that aligns with the organisation's need to respond to change, rather than suggesting a fixed, detailed plan.

7.1.12   AF shared SJB's disappointment with the planning/strategy paper, as it did not sufficiently explain how the 1-year, 3-year, and 10-year plans fit together or clearly articulate how major policies and change initiatives mapped across these planning horizons. SJB considered the change component was not sufficiently highlighted or integrated within the overall planning framework.

7.1.13   AF highlighted section 3.5 of the covering paper as particularly valuable, noting its focus on improved integration and connectedness between financial and strategic planning processes, and requested that the narrative in 3.5 be expanded to give more narrative on how these integrations would work in practice, suggesting this would help the Committee identify where it can add the most value and support more effective Committee scrutiny.

7.1.14   PS recorded his non consent of the positioning of the phase 1/phase 2 decision point and requested it be moved.

7.1.15   MMcA and the executive team agreed to expand the narrative in Section 3.5 of the paper, adjust the timeline to better align with the current strategy period, bring a draft three-year delivery plan to the next meeting, adjust the phased split in strategic planning diagrams, moving the Phase 1/Phase 2 line to align with the end of the current strategy 2027/28 and clarify which projects would be prioritised for Phase 1.

ACTION: MMcA

7.1.16   The Committee would review these materials with a focus on integration, prioritisation, and resource alignment, ensuring that the planning process remained both strategic and practical.

The Committee scrutinised the report.
7.1.17

8   CHANGE -
8.1   **Portfolio Summary Report**
8.1.1   HM provided updates on the Change Programme, highlighting a period of significant change and delivery, with several major projects reaching critical stages.
- New Mobilising System (NMS) is set to go live in a phased rollout starting imminently, followed by the Rostering system, which is also scheduled for go-live mid-November.
- SDR Consultation has closed, with a Board decision expected 18 December 2025.
- Several Business Cases currently in development, including for People, Payroll and Finance and Breathing Apparatus, indicating ongoing investment in key operational areas.

8.1.2   CM reported 11 separate go-lives planned across the next three months, covering areas such as NMS, Rostering, Payroll, and multiple Control rooms, making this a particularly complex period for the organisation.

8.1.3   HM assured the Committee that robust business readiness and implementation plans are in place, with clear go/no-go criteria for each stage to manage risk and ensure successful delivery.

8.1.4 The Committee questioned why the demand-based duty system project status changed from amber to green, asking if the change request was a valid amendment or simply made to improve the status. HM explained the change request was a timeline adjustment, reflecting ongoing discussions and agreed upon by stakeholders. The amendment did not affect the overall delivery of the SDR programme and was considered a valid adjustment to project planning. HM and AW clarified the change was about integration and dependencies with other portfolio activities. The Committee requested that more detail be provided in future reports about the significant change requests and project closures, including rationale.

8.1.5 The Committee scrutinised the report and noted the progress with the 11 go-lives within the next three months.

9 PERFORMANCE
9.1 Portfolio Finance and Performance Update
9.1.1 CM took the paper as read and focused on summarising key tables and metrics, rather than providing a full verbal update.

9.1.2 CM discussed the value of tracking benefits and conducting lessons learned for Action 8.2.3, stating it was important for internal records and future project improvement, despite delays due to service delivery issues. CM suggested the lessons learned exercise should be completed internally, even if its relevance to the Committee was now limited.

9.1.3 CM highlighted the status of project costs against whole life business case targets, noting that most projects were on time. NMS is reporting an underspend of 7.89%, which is outside the 5% tolerance (hence a red status), but this is seen as positive. The SDR shows a small variance. People, Payroll and Finance project is excluded due to the absence of an agreed Business Case.

9.1.4 All projects are within the 10% tolerance for baseline completion dates. Both Rostering and NMS are tracking toward their go-live dates on time.

9.1.5 The benefits profile would still capture appliance withdrawal until a permanent solution was in place. The appended NMS Benefits Report details benefits identified in workshops, with descriptions and potential measurements. The next step was to further develop the Benefits Realisation Plan for each benefit.

9.1.6 CM acknowledged the complexity in tracking costs for People, Payroll and Finance project due to the evolution from the PTFAS programme and ongoing cost extraction and closure activities. CM was committed to providing more clarity on these costs in future reporting, including to the Scottish Government.

9.1.7 The Committee raised the importance of capturing all incurred costs (including those without a formal business case) and understanding what had been spent and achieved, especially for People, Payroll and Finance. CM agreed and indicated this would be addressed in future updates.

9.1.8 The Committee scrutinised and noted the position as comprehensively described in the report.

10 RISK
10.1 Portfolio Risk Summary Report
10.1.1 HM explained the report was split into two sections. The first element related to risks identified at programme level that apply to multiple programmes and were added to the Portfolio Risk Register. The second section looked at key risks to the overall portfolio, with CM's focus on the latter due to time constraints.

10.1.2 HM reported there was a red risk in relation to the SDR regarding the achievability of the timeline for the Board decision in December 2025, citing the large volume of information and papers that needed to be developed, read, and understood in preparation.

10.1.3 HM highlighted optimism bias in relation to planning, explaining it was common to underestimate the time required for tasks. To mitigate this, the team was developing detailed plans and recently held an integrated Portfolio Planning Session focused on dependencies, resource, and financial planning. This aimed to proactively manage budgets and flag potential under or overspend early.

10.1.4 HM addressed a third risk in respect of single points of failure, which could relate to critical infrastructure or the absence of key knowledge/expertise. The team was working to identify these points and ensure contingency plans were in place to minimise risk and maintain delivery schedules.

10.1.5 The Committee acknowledged there were no further questions or concerns raised by the Committee after HM's update, and it was agreed to note the current risk position.

10.1.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

11 GENERAL REPORTS
11.1 <u>Provision of Training Systems</u>
11.1.1 In CMcG's absence, the Chair invited Committee members to signal whether they had significant issues requiring the paper's deferral or if they were content to proceed, emphasising flexibility based on the depth of discussion needed.

11.1.2 The Committee expressed concern about de-coupling the training system from other systems, worrying that procuring a separate training solution could lead to a collection of systems that would not integrate well, potentially causing issues.

11.1.3 AW responded by assuring the Committee that integration remains a priority and clarified that while the training system was being decoupled, the project specification would require integration with people and finance systems. AW emphasised that the original business case was about integration, not a single system, and the team was fully aware of the need to avoid a multiplicity of disconnected systems.

11.1.4 After discussion and receiving assurances, the Committee agreed to note the paper, with the understanding that it would return for further updates as delivery progressed.

11.1.5 AF conveyed the Committee's thanks to CMcG for this helpful paper.

11.1.6 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12 COMMITTEE ROLLING FORWARD PLANNING
12.1 Committee Forward Plan
12.1.1 The Committee agreed to holding a virtual meeting on 17 December 2025 to review the expanded 3.5 section, NMS updates and discuss Strategic Planning.

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

13 REVIEW OF ACTIONS
13.1 Several formal actions were recorded during the meeting.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.
14.1 A Special Private meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 December 2025.

14.2 The next full Public Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday 5 February 2026.

14.3   There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1120 hrs.

(The meeting broke at 1120 hrs and reconvened in private session at 1130 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION

15   MINUTE OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 29 JULY 2025
15.1   The Committee approved the minute as an accurate record.

16   PRIVATE ACTION LOG
16.1   There were no outstanding actions.

17   EMERGING MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL AND DELIVERY PLAN
17.1   LMcG presented the emerging Medium Term Financial and Delivery Plan 2026/27 strategy, highlighting the approach taken, key messages from the Scottish Government's financial strategy, and the Resource Budget Assumptions for 2026-2027.

17.2   **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

18   CORPORATE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS: PEOPLE AND FINANCE – OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE (STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CASES)
18.1   SO'D presented the draft strategic and partial economic cases of the Outline Business Case (OBC) for Corporate Business Functions: People and Finance to the Strategic Planning and Change Committee (SPCC) for early scrutiny and feedback.

18.2   **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

19   NEW MOBILISING SYSTEM PROJECT, DIGITAL ASSURANCE OFFICE GO LIVE REVIEW
19.1   JH and CA provided an update on the NMS project, focusing on the upcoming go-live for Edinburgh Operations Control. CA detailed a step-by-step transition plan, including hardware installation, staff briefings, go/no-go decision points, and the process for switching over to the new system, emphasising careful preparation and risk management.

19.2   **The Committee noted the report.**

There being no further matters to discuss, the private meeting closed at 1315 hrs.