



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – STRATEGIC PLANNING AND CHANGE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2026 @ 1000HRS

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

PRESENT:

Stuart Ballingall, Chair (SJB)
Angiolina Foster (AF),
Paul Stollard (PS)

Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
Mark McAteer (MMcA)	Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Communications
Deborah Stanfield (DS)	Interim Director of Finance and Contractual Services
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance, Strategy & Performance
Curtis Montgomery (CM)	Head of Portfolio Office
Heather Martin (HM)	Centre of Excellence Manager
Lynne McGeough (LMcG)	Head of Finance and Procurement (Item 17 only)
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People (Item 17 only)
Paul McGovern (PMcG)	Programme Manager (Item 17 only)
Amanda Jamieson (AJ)	Snr. Business Analyst (SSRP) (Item 17 only)
Mhairi Wylie (MW)	Chair of SFRS Board
Christopher Casey (CC)	Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Margaret Kyle (MK)	Minutes

OBSERVERS:

None

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2026 including those attending virtually via MS Teams.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D), Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)

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: 6 NOVEMBER 2025

5.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

- 5.1.1 **The minute of the meeting held on 6 November 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

6 ACTION LOG

- 6.1 The Committee considered the action log, noted the updates and agreed the closure of actions.

Action 8.1.5 Portfolio Summary Report (06/11/2026): The Chair requested further clarification in respect of position statements within the action log. CM explained this was due to considerations around coming out of contractual negotiations. Chair discussed the need for clarity and more narrative around project change requests and project closures, specifically clarifying why certain details are handled privately and the rationale for non-public disclosure.

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

7 PLANNING /STRATEGY

7.1 SFRS Strategic and Financial Planning Process

- 7.1.1 Long Term Business Plan - MMcA provided an overview on the 10-year planning horizon and the alignment of the project delivery phases with planning cycles. The planning structure flows from the Fire and Rescue Framework which establishes governance priorities and was expected to be revised after the upcoming election. The importance of revising the Fire and Rescue Framework and the Long Term Vision (LTV) was to reflect the current financial position and future priorities. The Service was at the midpoint of its current 10-year vision and review was underway involving sessions between the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Heads of Function (HoF) with plans to bring refreshed vision to the Committee and Board later this year. The refreshed LTV would consider the Service's financial position and anticipated challenges over the next few years, aiming to maintain a clear "North Star" for strategic direction.
- 7.1.2 Three-year Delivery Plan - MMcA described three-year strategies serving as a delivery vehicle for the LTV and government priorities. Annual priorities were collectively agreed by Directors, and HoF with rolling considerations for years two and three, including investment requirements.
- 7.1.3 Medium Term Financial Strategy – This was closely aligned with strategic and delivery planning, providing a better basis for medium and long-term investment planning, even within an annual budget cycle.
- 7.1.4 Directorate Plans and Performance Management – Directorate Plans were being standardised to ensure alignment with overall Service priorities.
- 7.1.5 Performance Management Framework (PMF) - revised annually, with updated indicators and ensuring Board and Committee engagement.
- 7.1.6 MMcA outlined timelines for strategy, renewal and publication, confirming the next major strategy review was August 2026, emphasising the intention would be to bring the strategy, delivery plan, and financial plan together for Committee and Board review.
- 7.1.7 RW agreed that once the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) completed, it would return to the Committee for review prior to Board submission, ensuring the Committee had adequate input and oversight.

ACTION: RW

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- 7.1.8 The Committee questioned why the strategy, three-year delivery plan, and medium-term financial plan were not developed as a single, integrated exercise with aligned timelines. There were concerns around “realism -v- idealism” which did not address the current realities, such as budget constraints associated with the Service Delivery Review (SDR). The Committee held the view that the strategy should better reflect the actual challenges facing the Service. The Committee expressed a strong preference to pause or adjust the planning process until there was clarity on how to cope with the budget situation and the SDR, as it was difficult to plan three years ahead without certainty on year one and noted that more detail on these efforts would be brought to the next Board Strategy Day session.
- 7.1.9 AW confirmed from April 2026, the Senior Management Board (SMB) would re-convene with HoF, jointly chaired by AW and SO'D, to regularly focus on aligning the three year delivery plan, financial plan and PMF, to support a more integrated approach across the organisation.
- 7.1.10 DS provided assurance that scenario planning and option development for strategy and three-year planning continued throughout the year - not limited to the formal planning timetable. DS emphasised the importance of maintaining a long-term strategic vision while assessing it against fiscal challenges, and clear roadmap for delivering and changing services within financial constraints.
- 7.1.11 The Committee sought clarity on the future Committee calendar, specifically how it aligns with Board meetings and planning milestones, so that members can provide input at the most strategic points. Committee also requested clearer narrative in public documents, particularly on sensitive issues such as firefighter safety, to ensure accuracy and avoid misinterpretation.
- 7.1.12 The Committee questioned whether they should be involved in all seven planning processes listed in section 3.1.12 within the Planning document, specifically suggesting that involvement in Local Fire and Rescue Plans and Service Directorate Strategies may not be appropriate and proposed the Committee's role should focus on higher level assurance rather than detailed involvement in operational detail.
- 7.1.13 Business plans were required to comply with Section 3.1.11 and Appendix B in order to adhere to integrated governance standards. The Committee suggested that firefighter safety should be clearly stated as a mandatory requirement, not simply a “nice to have” optional benefit.
- 7.1.14 The Committee further noted Appendix B refers to “low value” activity within Prevention, where “low cost” appears to be the correct intended meaning and stressed that precise language was essential in an integrated planning and budgeting context.
- 7.1.15 The Committee discussed convening an SPCC meeting in March 2026 as suggested in section 3.3.3 of the Financial Planning document. It was agreed in principle that the meeting would proceed if it could meaningfully add to the process. The Committee supported this, as long as there was sufficient time for feedback before presenting to the Board.
- ACTION: BST**
- 7.1.16 The Chair requested that the Strategic and Financial Planning paper be refreshed to reflect Committee feedback, including clearer alignment between the strategy, delivery plan, financial plan, and improvements in relation to process, language and real world challenges. The refreshed paper did not require further Committee discussion but should incorporate the requested changes for assurance purposes.
- ACTION: MMcA**

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- 7.1.17 Following circulation of the updated Planning Process Report, the Chair requested a review of SPCC meeting dates to ensure alignment with Board scheduling and key planning milestones.

ACTION: BST

- 7.1.18 **The Committee scrutinised the report with assurance as limited.**

7.2 DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL PLANS

- 7.2.1 The Chair advised that during the recent Integrated Governance Forum (IGF) meeting, questions had been raised regarding the Local Fire and Rescue Plans, specifically whether the Service was receiving sufficient value from these plans given the substantial effort invested in their development.

- 7.2.2 RW explained that the development of Local Fire and Rescue Plans is a statutory obligation, intended to show how national priorities were implemented at local level and to reassure local partners of continued Service responsiveness. These plans must be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect both national strategies and local partnership priorities, noting that the Service was currently out of compliance due to delayed updates. RW described the development and consultation process, stressing the importance of local relevance and the significant effort from local teams. RW clarified that producing and delivering the plan fulfils the statutory duty, even if a local authority does not formally approve it.

- 7.2.3 The Committee raised concerns that updating Local Fire and Rescue Plans in areas affected by the SDR could create confusion or negative perceptions, suggesting plans in those areas might need to be delayed until SDR decisions were finalised to avoid overlap or conflict.

- 7.2.4 AW clarified Local Fire and Rescue Plans focus on outcomes for communities and should proceed independently of SDR decisions, acknowledging there may be challenges but viewing the two as separate processes. RW advised that LSOs were keen to progress and were aware of the potential challenges. Plans could still be prepared while awaiting SDR decisions.

- 7.2.5 The Committee emphasised that whilst Local Fire and Rescue Plans were valuable for demonstrating national respect for local needs, their true usefulness depends on the level of agency and empowerment felt by local staff to adapt and respond to local arrangements. AW agreed, noting the need to better articulate the contribution of local teams through their daily work, emphasising the role of leadership, staff development and providing appropriate tools which are critical in strengthening local ownership.

- 7.2.6 RW proposed providing the Committee with ongoing updates on progress, statutory compliance, and local partner engagement throughout the development and consultation process.

ACTION: RW

- 7.2.7 **The Committee scrutinised the report on the development of the Local Fire and Rescue Plans.**

- 7.2.8 *(The meeting broke at 1120hrs and reconvened at 1130hrs)*

8 CHANGE -

8.1 Portfolio Summary Report

- 8.1.1 HM presented the Committee with an overview of the Strategic Change Portfolio in the following areas - risk, interdependencies, costs and capacity to deliver.

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- **Service Delivery Review programme** - timeline for decision now set, and work was ongoing to complete analysis.
- **Corporate Services Review** - marked Amber due to resource and funding challenges. Ongoing discussions around the development of the Outline Business Case (OBC) in relation to Corporate Business solutions.
- **Enabling Infrastructure Programme (EI)** - Integrated Command and Control System and payroll/availability modules for rostering were now successfully implemented; focus now shifts to computer aided dispatch (CAD) and also roster module. Delays have been experienced with user acceptance testing for the roster module which had dependency for the new mobilising system. The team were currently undertaking detailed planning for CAD and working closely with the rostering team to manage that risk. Change Request had been developed to address these issues, with details being finalised and close collaboration ongoing with the supplier and internal teams to minimise impact of delay. The Change Request will also confirm updated timelines for the roster module implementation.
- **Planning Risk** - Addressed in detail within the portfolio risk summary, focusing on the importance of having comprehensive plans that cover not just delivery schedules but also financial and communication plans, ensuring all are baselined for effective performance monitoring.
- **Resource and funding risk** - reflects the challenging budget situation, with ongoing discussions about how to deliver and fund change in future.
- **Portfolio risks and financial challenges** - actively monitored, with ongoing discussions about future, change, delivery and funding.

8.1.2 No specific new decisions or actions were recorded beyond continued monitoring, risk management, and assurance that delays and dependencies are being addressed.

8.1.3 CM confirmed six go-lives in respect of the rostering project, with payroll and availability now implemented nationally, marking the first national rollout for these modules. The current challenge was with the roster module, which involves complex crewing rules and some performance issues in development, but work was ongoing with the supplier to address these.

8.1.4 The Chair reflected on the contents of this paper, particularly his understanding on what "Closure of People, Payroll and Finance Project" means emphasising the importance not to lose sight of outcomes and ensure the topic is revisited when the Payroll PPF project is next discussed or reviewed.

8.1.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report with assurance as reasonable.**

9 PERFORMANCE – Curtis Montgomery

9.1 Portfolio Finance and Performance Update

9.1.1 CM summarised project costs and forecast for key programmes including Rostering, NMS, ESMCP and Corporate Service Review. Most projects are forecasting underspends against approved business cases, with explanations provided for variances (eg contingency not used, delayed supplier engagement, resource challenges).

- **Rostering Project:** under budget, with additional costs due to extended licensing and development work. The team were managing performance issues with the supplier and working on a Change Request for the roster module.
- **New Mobilising System:** Reporting significant underspend due to unused contingency and staffing efficiencies. Project on track, with dependencies on the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) component.

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- **ESMCP:** This long-running project was funded in cycles by the UK government, with ongoing spend and dependencies on other systems.
- **Corporate Service Review:** Underspend was expected due to slower than planned Scottish Government engagement and project resourcing.
- **Service Delivery Review:** Reporting small overspend due to uniformed staff costs without allocated budget.
- **Benefits Realisation:** Projects are developing benefits realisation plans and toolkits, with ongoing alignment to business cases.
- **Risk and Assurance:** Red risks highlighted for enabling infrastructure (dependency management) and the impact of the financial position on the service delivery review. The committee noted some risk ratings may need to be revisited to reflect current realities.

9.1.2 The Committee questioned the relationship between the overall forecast underspend figure in paragraph 3.8.1 and the totals within table 3.8.2, noting discrepancy between the reported 2.51% underspend and calculation of just over 4%. The Committee requested clarification on how these figures relate and what the correct interpretation should be.

ACTION: CM

9.1.3 CM noted that the appliance withdrawal project would be removed from future reports.

9.1.4 **The Committee scrutinised the report with assurance as reasonable.**

10 RISK

10.1 Portfolio Programmes Risk Summary Report

10.1.1 HM presented the heat map of risks across portfolio programmes, highlighting red risks and noting each programme had control actions in place to manage risks and bring them in line with target impact and probability - further explaining the depth of planning was rated as red, especially given the financial position. This includes not just delivery schedules but also financial, communication, and other plans, with a focus on ensuring all were baselined for effective performance monitoring. Actions were being taken to develop and baseline plans for each initiative, as listed in the report.

10.1.2 The Committee expressed concern about the red risk for enabling infrastructure, specifically noting that the key issue was the potential lack of understanding of dependencies, and found the high probability rating for this risk alarming.

10.1.3 The Committee observed the risk rating for SFRS's emerging financial position required changes to the SDR and appeared surprisingly low given the current situation therefore suggested the risk rating should be considerably higher.

10.1.4 CM acknowledged the Committee's observations and would present feedback to the Programme Board for further discussion.

10.1.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report with assurance as reasonable.**

11 GENERAL REPORTS

11.1 SFRS Project Lifecycle Report

11.1.1 CM presented the Committee with an overview of the SFRS Lifecycle Project, highlighting recent developments to standardise governance, documentation, assurance, and reporting across the portfolio. The Lifecycle process aligned with Scottish Government standards. HM provided in depth explanation of the Project Lifecycle process, detailing its phases: new demand intake (where initiatives were identified and assessed), intake (defining change and developing business cases), planning (detailed delivery plans), delivery, and closure, emphasising the use of stage gates for assurance, with relevant documentation and reports reviewed at each stage by the Design and Assurance Forum.

11.1.2 The Committee questioned, if proportionality was being achieved, whether the lifecycle process could create excessive bureaucracy and slow down delivery, and urged urgent implementation of the "T-shirt sizing" model to tailor governance to project scale. Discussion arose around balance between rigor and agility, and whether the process supports timely and efficient project delivery.

11.1.3 The Committee requested feedback from staff using the process to ensure it is practical and enabling, not burdensome, and requested that the Portfolio Office engage with staff about their experiences with the process. CM acknowledged mixed views among staff, emphasising that the process was being adapted for proportionality through the "T-shirt sizing" model ensuring smaller projects were not overburdened, highlighting the Portfolio Office provides support and coaching to staff, and that the process is continually refined to balance rigor with agility. CM assured the Committee feedback from project teams was generally positive when support was available, but inexperienced staff may find the process challenging without guidance.

ACTION CM

11.1.4 HM explained the Lifecycle was designed to be flexible, with documentation and governance scaled to project size and complexity, confirming that only medium to large projects follow the full lifecycle, while smaller projects have lighter requirements. Both HM and CM stressed that the process was not final and would continue to be improved based on feedback and practical experience, aiming for the correct balance between control and efficiency.

11.1.5 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12 COMMITTEE ROLLING FORWARD PLANNING

12.1 Committee Forward Plan

12.1.1 The Committee considered and noted the Forward Plan.

12.2 Items for Consideration at Future IGF, Board and Strategy Days Meetings

12.2.1 No items were identified.

13 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

13.1 There were six formal actions recorded during the meeting.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

14.1 Prior to today's SPCC meeting, the decision was made to stand down the Special Private meeting scheduled for 18 Mach 2026, however, this decision remains subject to review.

14.2 The next full Public Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday 14 May 2026.

14.3 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1220 hrs.

(The meeting broke at 1220 hrs and reconvened in private session at 1230hrs).

PRIVATE SESSION

15. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: 6 NOVEMBER 2025

15.1 The Committee approved the minute as an accurate record.

16. PRIVATE ACTION LOG

16.1 There were no outstanding actions.

17. PEOPLE, PAYROLL, FINANCE UPDATE

17.1 LMcG and LG presented the draft Outline Business Case (OBC) for Corporate Services Business Change; People and Finance to the Strategic Planning and Change Committee (SPCC) for scrutiny and feedback.

17.2 **The Committee scrutinised this report.**