



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

PUBLIC MEETING – PEOPLE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2026 @ 1300 HRS

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

PRESENT:

Madeline Smith, Chair (MS)
Angiolina Foster (AF)
Malcolm Payton (MP)

Andrew Smith, Deputy Chair (AS)
Neil Mapes (NM)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
David Farries (DF)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Deputy Chief Officer Corporate Services
Andy Watt (AW)	Deputy Chief Officer
Jim Holden (JH)	Head of Safety and Assurance
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People
Ross Robison (RR)	Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Head of Training
Ceri Dodd (CD)	Deputy Head of People (Item 10.1 only)
Ian McMeekin (IM)	Deputy Assistant Chief Officer, Head of Service Delivery (West & Islands) (Item 14 only)
Leslie Mason (LM)	Group Commander, On Call Improvement (Item 14 only)
Chris Casey (CC)	Group Commander Board Support
Heather Greig (HG)	Board Support Executive Officer
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS

None

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present, in particular Angiolina Foster to her first meeting.
- 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 There were no apologies.

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* report would be heard in private session due to matters relating to legal proceedings and matters relating to confidential consultation/negotiations in line with Standing Orders (Item 9E and 9F). The draft

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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 For transparency, the following declarations of interests were recorded:

- Neil Mapes, due to family member applying for an On Call position.

4.2 There were no other declarations or conflict of interests made.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025

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

5.2 **The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

5.3 Matters Arising

5.3.1 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.

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

7 PEOPLE COMMITTEE RISK REGISTER

7.1 Committee Aligned Directorate Risk

7.1.1 The Chair explained the reason for the risk report being taken earlier on the agenda was that it would identify Directorate risks and controls pertinent to the business of the Committee. The report contained information on risks rated above and below 15 and their aligned risk appetite.

7.1.2 CMcG commented on the revised approach to the paper and acknowledged the work of David Johnston to achieve this. LG noted that there had been several adjustments to control measures/ratings since the report had been published.

7.1.3 The Committee commented on the limited correlation between risk appetite and target risk. LG noted that work was ongoing to ensure alignment of risk appetite and targets, as well as robust rationale for any variances.

7.1.4 The Committee queried whether risks were informing investment decision. LG noted that the new risk (POD027) had been added following previous Committee discussions. This was driving investment in the Corporate Business Systems Outline Business Case.

7.1.5 In regard to increased use of AI and associated risk, the Committee questioned the positive and negative impact this may have on different roles within the Service. The Committee comments were noted and would be considered further. It was noted that an AI Policy was being developed and formed part of the DDaT Strategy.

7.1.6 In regard to TSA020 and the implications for the Service, CMcG advised that the recent legislative changes regarding face mask compliance had been introduced at short notice leading to the Service being non-compliant. However, the Service had since developed a robust plan, including mitigations, procurement and delivery plans.

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- 7.1.7 In regard to TSA018, the Committee commented on the misalignment between the risk description and control actions. CMcG explained the TSA's approach to risk management and the reason for these specific control actions being presented within this high level report.
- 7.1.8 The Committee noted that several risks referred to lack of resources, capacity or investment. The Committee queried how the Service would be addressing these issues. LG advised that the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) had recently discussed the approach to strategic or emerging risks. The SLT recognised the risks relating to capacity and technology within certain areas of the Service and were considering the mechanism to capture these risks at a corporate level.
- 7.1.9 In regard to risk FSC008 and FSC017, SO'D confirmed that these risks would remain separate.
- 7.1.10 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE 2025/26 Q3

- 8.1 The PMF Quarterly Performance 2025/26 Q3 report was presented to the Committee for scrutiny of KPIs 22–29 (Training), KPIs 46–49 (People) & KPIs 50–56 (Safety & Assurance). The Committee noted that fuller reasons for KPI performance would be covered in subsequent papers The report was taken as read.
- 8.2 **This report was taken as read.**

9 PEOPLE: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING

9.1 People Performance Report Quarter 3 2025/26

- 9.1.1 LG presented the People Performance Report Quarter 3 2025/26 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:
- Update on Culture Action Plan later on agenda.
 - Corporate Services structure review update was provided at the earlier RANSC meeting.
 - Information on the development to competent ratio for Wholetime staff would be included within future reports.
- 9.1.2 The Committee commented on the high absence rates within Operations Control (OC) and queried the support available to this staffing group. LG reminded the Committee of the recent risk spotlight and presentation from Area Commander Jacqui MacDonald on this issue. DF commented on the OC Enhancement plan and the improvements due to introduction of the new mobilising system. JH commented on the wellbeing support of OC and recent engagement with the University of Hull regarding a research study on stress and mental wellbeing within OC rooms.
- 9.1.3 The Committee noted that the level of OC Full Time Equivalent (FTE) regularly dropped within Q3. LG to review and provide feedback.

ACTION: LG

- 9.1.4 In regard to support staff vacancies within the Finance and Contractual Services Directorate, LG advised that these vacancies were across the IT, Assets, Finance and Procurement functions. Only one vacancy was specific to the finance function.

- 9.1.5 In regard to the leadership and management development programme, the Committee queried their impact and drop out levels. LG advised that the drop out levels were low and noted that a presentation of evaluation findings had been provided to the Committee in December 2025. LG to recirculate this presentation.

ACTION: LG

- 9.1.6 In regard to grievances in directorates and disciplinary cases in Service Delivery, LG noted that uniformed staff numbers accounted for the higher disciplinary distribution. LG advised that further analysis would be required to understand grievance patterns, different contributing factors, etc. LG further noted that it was not uncommon for cross organisational investigations to be undertaken.
- 9.1.7 The Committee sought clarity on the differing definition of FTE and headcount. LG to review for accuracy and consideration to be given to clearer narrative in future reports.
ACTION: LG
- 9.1.8 The Committee requested that information be included within future reports on the Target Operating Model (TOM) for Watch and Crew Commanders and how this recruitment directly impacts on firefighter numbers.
ACTION: LG
- 9.1.9 In regard to the impact of changes to On Call contracts, LG noted that the 12-month review had commenced and would be brought to the Committee in due course. DF noted that an update on the On Call Improvement Programme would be provided later in the agenda.
- 9.1.10 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

(A Smith left the meeting at 1400 hrs)

(C Dodd joined the meeting at 1400 hrs)

10 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, CULTURE AND FAIR WORK

10.1 Organisational Culture and Leadership Update

- 10.1.1 LG/CD presented the report which provided an update on the Organisational Culture and Leadership (OCL) Programme, including programme documentation, an overview of Phase 1 projects, and HMFSI Organisational Culture within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) inspection activity. The following key points were highlighted:
- Values Review Options: Options were to undertake a full review and refresh or to retain existing values.
 - Inclusive Value-Based Recruitment: Improved recruitment and selection process including the introduction of the ALICE system (AI tool) which has enabled a consistent value-based approach to recruitment and assessment. Intake of female firefighters in the March 2026 trainee course was noted as 15.3% with ongoing analysis through the various recruitment stages.
 - Employee Voice and Advisory Structures: Efforts being made to strengthen employee voice through various networks, engagement with external bodies, and establishment of an advisory panel.
 - Leadership and Management Development: Continued rollout and delivery of leadership essential programme and participation in NFCC leadership programmes at both supervisory and middle management levels. Development of draft milestone plan.
 - Improving Female Firefighter Experience: Areas of focus were facilities, equipment, PPE, as well as enhancing retention and attraction.
- 10.1.2 In regard to the value review options, the Committee commented on the potential for a third light touch review option and that consideration should be given to this. LG commented on the importance of reviewing values, considering outcomes and measures such as throughput and organisational performance impact. LG noted that the staffing group involved were not static.
- 10.1.3 In regard to the leadership and management development, the Committee sought clarification on the resource required and dedicated to this. CD advised that there were approximately 2,000 within the supervisory cadre. CD commented on the need to understand different delivery approaches for new and existing manager workstreams.

- 10.1.4 LG confirmed that the development of the leadership framework was progressing well and noted that it would be presented to the next meeting (June 2026).
- 10.1.5 Brief discussion took place on reasons for and against the Service adopting the NFCC leadership and management framework. CD advised that a full range of options were being considered including NFCC by the Executive Team.
- 10.1.6 In regard to female firefighters, the Committee queried the stages where applicants dropped out. LG noted analysis of specific stages through the selection process had been undertaken and would allow the Service to consider the assessment methods used to ensure fairness. LG noted the different reasons for successful candidates not yet being placed onto a course.
- 10.1.7 Brief discussion on the potential to rename the Improving Female Firefighter Experience workstream.

10.1.8 The Committee scrutinised the report.

(C Dodd left the meeting at 1421 hrs)

11 TRAINING

11.1 Training Function Update and Performance Report Quarter 2 2025/26

- 11.1.1 CMcG introduced RR who presented the high-level overview of the Training function activity and performance over Quarter 3 2025/26 and highlighted the following key points:
- KPI22 (Core Skills Completed) and KPI23 (Advanced, Support & Emergency Risk Completed): Increased across all duty groups, attributable to improved relationships within LSO areas and planning processes.
 - KPI26 (Core Skill Courses Currency): Overview of the benefits of delivering breathing apparatus training at training venues by instructors. Current number of personnel who still require training was less than 100. Thanks were extended to all personnel involved in this area.
 - Driver training: Significant work undertaken in recent months to update terms and conditions for driving instructors, progressing recruitment and maintaining driver numbers.
 - KPI28 (Training Function Currency): This relates to training courses scheduled and delivered. Noting that these can be dependent on weather conditions.
- 11.1.2 In regard to prioritisation of non-core skills, RR noted that these wider training elements were captured through the PDR Pro and Workforce Pro platforms for the relevant staffing groups.
- 11.1.3 In regard to the new breathing apparatus regulations, RR outlined the main impact on the training function and noted that work continued to be progressed.
- 11.1.4 In regard to KPI22, the Committee were reminded that all station based-training was subject to operational activities.
- 11.1.5 In regard to the pilot for delivering external driving training, RR noted that it was still unclear when the new legislation would come into force. However, the Service would continue to deliver training to maintain resilience.
- 11.1.6 The Committee scrutinised the report.**

12 SAFETY AND ASSURANCE

12.1 Safety and Assurance Performance Report Quarter 3 2025/26

- 12.1.1 JH presented the Safety and Assurance Performance Report Quarter 3 2025/26 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:

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- Slight increase in verbal attacks and significant decrease in physical attacks.
- Due to other significant events, opportunity to communicate risk and issues around violence within the investigation process.
- Health and wellbeing compliance rates for medical and fitness assessment were reporting 96% and 97% respectively.
- Seven RIDDOR events were reported during this quarter.

12.1.2 In regard to the Firefighters Charity, JH commented on the various partnership activities undertaken and planned including roadshows, Fire Rox, etc.

12.1.3 In regard to wellbeing champions, the Committee noted the lower numbers within the East. JH advised that this would be a focus for the re-established Mental Health and Wellbeing Group. CMcG reminded the Committee of the progress and positive position within the West and North.

12.1.4 The Committee scrutinised the report.

12.2 Contaminants Update

12.2.1 CMcG presented the report to the Committee to provide an update on the management of contaminants. The report was taken as read.

12.2.2 In regard to the airing cages installation programme, CMcG advised that this remained on target.

12.2.3 In regard to the laundering of PPE, CMcG advised that there had been a 119% increase to circa 53,000 items per year, since 2021 which demonstrates the Service's focus towards contaminants control. It was noted that the strategic stock reserves had increased by 20%. A brief overview of the asset tracking process to record and monitor the number of washes of individual items of PPE and its condition. Estimated lifespan of assets were five years with the expectation of 40-55 washes, however, it is common for assets to be removed prior to these measures being achieved.

12.2.4 In regard to CivTech Project, the Committee asked how the volunteers would be recruited. JH advised that volunteers would be sought from a cross section of staffing groups who were exposed to a wide range of incidents.

12.2.5 The Committee scrutinised the report.

13 AUDIT/INSPECTIONS

13.1 HMFSI Inspection Action Plans Update

13.1.1 LG/JH presented the report updating the Committee on the progress on HMFSI inspection action plans for scrutiny. Progress updates were provided for action plans relating to HMFSI reports on Organisational Culture – Volume 1 and Mental Health and Wellbeing Provision.

13.1.2 In regard to Organisational Culture – Volume 1, LG outlined the development of the action plan which was presented within the appendix.

13.1.3 In regard to Organisational Culture – Volume 2, LG advised inspection outline had been received and that the desktop exercise had commenced. LG further advised that discussions were still ongoing with HMFSI on the practicalities of the fieldwork and interviewing personnel.

13.1.4 The Committee commented on the benefits of including links between organisational culture, leadership and management programmes and HMFSI recommendations within future reports. This would help the Committee's understanding of progress and oversight.

13.1.5 In regard to the Mental Health and Wellbeing action Plan, JH advised that 21 actions remained live however the majority were now nearing completion and were on track for being

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closed within the next reporting period. JH noted that good progress had been, and would continue to be, made.

13.1.6 In regard to the Code of Conduct, LG confirmed that this was due for review and that consideration would have to be given on how this was progressed. Due to the ongoing values and behaviours work within the Service and the NFCC core code of ethics, there was a need for alignment and clear articulation of the expected standards.

13.1.7 The Committee scrutinised the report.

(J Holden left at 1452 hrs)

(Meeting broke at 1452 hrs and reconvened at 1500 hrs)

(I McMeekin and L Mason joined the meeting at 1500 hrs)

14 PEOPLE COMMITTEE RISK REGISTER

14.1 Committee Risk Spotlight

14.1.1 IM, introduced LM who presented the Committee with an update on the On Call Improvement Programme. The key areas highlighted were the development of a TOM, the impact of new contract bandings, dual contractor arrangements, volunteer integration, and strategies to address recruitment and retention challenges in rural and changing communities. It was noted that the challenges facing the Service were similar to other European and UK fire and rescue services. SFRS is seen as a leader in on-call innovation within the UK, sharing best practice with other Services.

14.1.2 In regard to the new flexible contracts, the Committee queried whether this was impacting on the recruitment numbers. LM noted that new recruits, under the new banding, were still undertaking their initial training. LM further noted that existing personnel were also utilising the new flexibility. IM advised that there were improvements in recruitment numbers due to flexibility, however the focus remained on meeting operational needs and productivity, rather than just increasing the headcount.

14.1.3 In regard to Volunteers, LM confirmed that this staffing group were working to the legacy arrangements and had a TOM. Work was ongoing to standardise their terms and conditions.

14.1.4 Brief discussion took place on the changes in population demographics across Scotland and that this should be considered for strategic decisions and future planning. IM commented on the benefits of a cluster-based model for the wider communities.

14.1.5 LM updated the Committee on the review of eyesight standards noting that this would help reduce barriers to recruitment and widen the pool of candidates.

14.1.6 In regard to joint mobilising, LM noted that this worked effectively between the Anstruther and St Monans stations and that a pilot was ongoing within the North Highlands area.

14.1.7 Brief discussion took place on the challenges and benefits for employers to support on call personnel.

14.1.8 The Committee welcomed the update and scrutinised the report.

(I McMeekin and L Mason left the meeting at 1540 hrs)

15 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

15.1 Employee Partnership Forum (EPF)

15.1.1 MS advised the Committee that the last scheduled meeting was stood down.

15.1.2 The Committee noted the verbal update.

15.2 Partnership Advisory Group (PAG)

15.2.1 LG advised the Committee that a meeting was held on 2 March 2026 with a single agenda item related to Attraction, Recruitment and Progression of Female Firefighters and discussions relating to the Fight for 52 (maternity leave). SO'D noted it was agreed that the broader work would be progressed under the auspices of organisational culture and leadership programme.

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.

16.1.2 It was noted that Succession and Talent Planning featured on both the forward plan for this Committee and RANSC. Discussion to be held outwith the meeting to clarify what and where the information would be presented.

16.1.3 It was suggested that future Committee meetings would alternate between online and in-person meetings at different locations to enhance knowledge and engagement opportunities.

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

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

16.2.1 The following items were noted:

- Early discussions on refresh of Target Operating Model (IGF)
- Review of Risk Appetite (Strategy Day)

17 REVIEW OF ACTIONS

17.1 CC confirmed that there were four formal actions recorded during the meeting.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 18 June 2026.

18.2 There being no further matters to discuss, the public meeting closed at 1545 hrs.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

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

- People Policy Review Schedule Update
- Training Continuous Improvement Programme – Update Report
- Training Function Policy Review Schedule
- Safety and Assurance Documents Forward Planning Schedule
- Learning and Development Update Q3 2025-26

(Public meeting broke at 1545 hrs and reconvened in Private session at 1547 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION)

19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING: THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025

19.1 The minutes of the private meeting held on 11 December 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 11 December 2025 had been circulated to the Committee and a verbal update from the meeting on 5 March 2026 was provided

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

(A Smith joined the meeting at 1600 hrs)

22 KEY CASE UPDATES

22.1 LG presented a report to provide the Committee with an overview of employee relations and employment litigation cases against the Service, including insight from case trends and case reviews.

22.2 **The Committee scrutinised the report.**

There being no further matters to discuss, the private meeting closed at 1600 hrs.