PUBLIC MEETING - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

THURSDAY 30 APRIL 2026 @ 1000 HRS

VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)

PRESENT:
Mhairi Wylie, Chair (MW)
Angiolina Foster, Deputy Chair (AF)
Stuart Ballingall (SJB)
Neil Mapes (NM)
Therese O'Donnell (TO'D)
Malcolm Payton (MP)
Andrew Smith (AS)
Madeline Smith (MS)
Tim Wright (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah O'Donnell (SO'D)	Deputy Chief Officer (Corporate Services)
Jon Henderson (JH)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Prevention
Craig McGoldrick (CMcG)	Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Training, Safety and Assurance
Deborah Stanfield (DS)	Interim Director of Finance, Digital and Infrastructure
Lyndsey Gaja (LG)	Head of People
Richard Whetton (RW)	Head of Governance and Compliance
Chris Fitzpatrick (CF)	BI and Data Services Manager (Item 11 only)
Louise Patrick (LP)	Strategic Planning and Partnerships Co-ordinator (Item 12 only)
Asha Narsapur (AN)	Legal Services Manager (Item 20 only)
Christopher Casey (CC)	Group Commander, Board Support Manager
Heather Greig (HG)	Executive Officer Board Support
Debbie Haddow (DJH)	Board Support/Minutes

OBSERVERS:
Graeme Fraser, HMFSI

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting welcoming those attending and observing via MS Teams.

1.2 Attendees were reminded to raise their hands, in accordance with the remote meeting protocol, should they wish to ask a question. Due to the volume of business, the Board were requested to keep questions concise to allow sufficient time for all agenda items.

1.3 The Chair advised that approval had been given to accept an additional agenda item within the private session of the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

2.1 Brian Baverstock, Board Member
Paul Stollard, Board Member
Stuart Stevens, Chief Officer
Andy Watt, Deputy Chief Officer
David Farries, Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Operational Delivery
Mark McAteer, Director of Governance, Strategy and Change

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

3.1 The Board agreed that the *Draft Private Minutes* and *Private Action Log* would be taken in private. A late additional item had been accepted for the private session which related to *Civil Action – Settlement Proposal*; this would be taken in private due to the subject matter being the subject of legal proceedings (Standing Order 9D).

3.2 No further items were identified.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 For transparency, the following standing declarations of interests were recorded:

- Madeline Smith, Board Member of Scottish Ambulance Service
- Paul Stollard, Chair of Board of Institute of Fire Engineers

4.2 TW declared his recent appointment as a Trustee of Dementia Heroes Charity.

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

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

5.1 **Thursday 26 March 2026**

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

5.1.2 **The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2026 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 The Board considered the action log and noted the updates.

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

7 DECISION LOG

7.1 The Board considered the Decision Log noting the impact assessments provided for decisions made 12 months ago.

7.2 **Members noted the updated Decision Log.**

8 CHAIR'S REPORT

8.1 MW presented the Chair's Update report which noted events that had occurred since the Board meeting held on 26 March 2026 and highlighted the following:

- Conclusion of competitive recruitment process for new Board Members. Announcement of appointments were expected in June 2026, after the upcoming elections. Thanks were extended to all applicants involved in the process.

8.2 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

9 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

9.1 In the Chief Officer's absence, SO'D presented the report noting events which had occurred since the Board meeting held on 26 March 2026 and highlighted the following:

- Recruitment for Director of Finance, Digital and Infrastructure position had concluded. James Wallace had accepted the position and would commence on 3 August 2026.
- Recruitment for Director of People, Communications and Engagement position had concluded. Penny McIntyre had accepted the position and would commence on 3 August 2026.
- Update to the written report noting the Scottish Land and Environment Agency (meeting on 21 April 2026) should read Scottish Land and Estates however this meeting had now been cancelled.

9.2 **The Board noted the report and verbal update.**

10 COMMITTEE UPDATES

10.1 **Strategic Planning and Change Committee (SPCC)**

10.1.1 Verbal Update of Special Meeting: 16 February 2026

TO'D reported that the Committee held a special public meeting on 16 February 2026 to scrutinise the Three-Year Delivery Plan ahead of presentation at today's Board meeting. TO'D noted that the Committee offered constructive criticism and suggested improvements to help the process.

10.1.2 The next public meeting was scheduled on Thursday 14 May 2026.

10.1.3 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

10.2 **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)**

10.2.1 Verbal Update of Meeting: 9 April 2026

MP reported that the Committee held a public meeting on 9 April 2026 and highlighted the following:

- Internal Audit progress report noting final report for PPE and Budget Management audits were delayed.
- Internal Audit Plan 2026/27 had been recommended for Board approval (agenda item 13).
- External Audit report on the Audit Plan for 2025/26 and discussion on the Service's status as a going concern.
- Accounting Policies presented and approved.
- Fraud Risk report presented and a request had been made for a breakdown of completion levels for mandatory training across the Service.
- Operations Control Cyber Risk Assessment was presented in the private session, and reassurance was provided on the depth of knowledge on the issues.

10.2.2 Brief discussion took place on the Service's going concern status. It was noted that the Service continued as an ongoing business. The audit would focus on the immediate 12-18 month period following audit sign off. It was important to note that the financial settlement and associated risks had to be managed. They would continue to be reviewed annually and continue to be discussed with Scottish Government.

10.2.3 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

10.3 **People Committee (PC)**

10.3.1 Draft Minutes of Meeting: 5 March 2026

MS presented the draft minutes from the public meeting held on 5 March 2026, noting that a verbal update had been provided at the last meeting.

10.3.2 MS highlighted the Committee's approach to gaining assurance on health and safety matters, including recording RIDDOR incidents, and commented on the importance of Committee's reporting in providing assurances to the Board.

10.3.3 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

10.4 **Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**
10.4.1 Draft Minutes of Meeting: 24 February 2026
TW presented the draft minutes from the public meeting held on 24 February 2026, noting that a verbal update had been provided at the last meeting.

10.4.2 **The Board noted the draft minutes.**

10.5 **Reform Collaboration Group (RCG)**
10.5.1 MW noted that no further meetings had taken place. The next meeting was scheduled on 30 June 2026.

10.5.2 **The Board noted the verbal update.**

(C Fitzpatrick joined the meeting at 1015 hrs)

11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
11.1 RW presented the report to the Board seeking approval of the finalised Performance Management Framework (PMF) and the associated suite of Strategic Performance Indicators (PIs) and wider sources of assurance. The following key points were highlighted:
- Significant redesign of PMF with refreshed strategic and functional indicators. Providing alignment to the Strategy, overview of progress against strategic outcomes, supporting evidence-based decision making, and strengthened scrutiny arrangements.
- PMF would remain iterative to allow development as reporting matures.
- New structured performance Q1 reports would be available from circa August. Board Members would have access to interactive dashboard which would provide detailed and dynamic performance data as well as additional narrative and assurance reporting.

11.2 In regard to culture barometer and indicators, RW confirmed that there were already people related indicators within the PMF and the intention would be to develop these further.

11.3 In regard to partnership assurance and stakeholder voices, RW noted that strategic delivery could not be fully understood through metrics. RW outlined the actions being taken to provide guidance to local areas on partnership expectation and statutory consideration, accurate recording of partnership activity, development of local plans and the future national partnership assessment exercise to be undertaken in 2026.

11.4 In regard to the next iteration of the PMF, RW advised that the intention would be to commence the process during the development of the next Strategy and added that the Board would be kept updated.

11.5 During discussions, it was noted that consideration would be given to:
- Local Fire and Rescue Plans diagram could be improved within future iterations.
- Within the acronyms section, PICT acronym to be included.
- Correction of typographical error on page 3, permanence to performance.
- On page 18, the sentence "Scottish ministers agree the budget and associated Grant in Aid requirement to be paid to the SFRS". It was suggested that the word

requirement be amended to "amount".
- Within Appendix B, reference to the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform Strategy being "due in June 2025", be amended to reflect current timing.

ACTION: RW

11.6 In regard to mental wellbeing and wellbeing champion data, the Board noted that this was reflected within the current indicator sets for Board level strategic measurement.

11.7 In regard to community safety work and concerns re administrative burdens, JH provided clarification on the need to accurately record this activity and stated that it does not create additional administrative burdens. JH noted that he was comfortable with the current position and with the planned improvements.

11.8 The Board acknowledged the redesign of the PMF and welcomed the intention to introduce Strategic PI's supporting more longitudinal oversight and assurances. The Board further welcomed the clearer scrutiny responsibilities, move toward a decision-making tool and development of a set of high-level headline indicators.

11.9 In regard to building regulations measures, JH advised that this reflected statutory requirements to respond within set timescales and that the team would also track associated workloads and resource allocation. JH noted that the wording could be improved and confirmed this could be reviewed.

11.10 In regard to culture and leadership indicators, SO'D advised that these would be brought forward in future iterations.

11.11 Brief discussion took place on the imbalance between the core approach and primary high-level performance information and the section relating to additional sources of assurance. The Board commented on the golden thread not being clear and that a clearer line of sight would be beneficial. The Board further commented on the need for clearer cause and effect understanding, explanation of targets and a baseline for indicators. RW noted the comments and confirmed that these would be reviewed in future iterations.

11.12 The Board commented on strengthening the read-across between Board-level indicators and the risk register, to reinforce the golden thread and that future iterations include staff insight eg pulse surveys, as part of evidence for people/culture deliverables.

11.13 The Chair and RW to have an off-table discussion relating to strengthening the narrative around assurance within Board reporting.

ACTION: MW/RW

11.14 **Subject to the proposed amendments, the Board approved the Performance Management Framework with reasonable assurance.**

(C Fitzpatrick left the meeting at 1115 hrs)
(L Patrick joined the meeting at 1115 hrs)

12 THREE-YEAR DELIVERY PLAN 2026/27

12.1 RW presented the Board with the Three-Year Delivery Plan (2026/27) and sought approval for its release for publication. The following key points were highlighted:
- Second year of the Three-Year Rolling Delivery Plan, which set out key priorities aligned to the Chief Officer's priorities and the five strategic objectives.
- Impact of timing and level of budget allocations on the planning process.
- Actions had been prioritised to focus on firefighter safety, service delivery, statutory compliance, development and training, and system development wherever possible.
- Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) had assessed priorities based on finance, budget allocation and resource requirements and remained committed to deliver the plan

while actively managing and closing unallocated savings requirements for 2026–2027.
- Inclusion of milestone timelines to provide visibility of sequencing, dependencies and delivery.
- Details on the proposed planning cycle for the development of Year Three actions.
- Potential timescale for the review of the Fire Framework by Scottish Government.
- Reasonable level of assurance had been provided regarding the process undertaken and quarterly monitoring and reporting would be presented to the SLT and Board.

12.2 In regard to postponed or removed actions, RW reminded the Board that no specific year two actions had been agreed in advance. Proposed actions were identified through Head of Function workshops before being considered by the SLT.

12.3 In regard to language used within the plan, RW reminded the Board that the statements had been taken from the published SFRS Strategy document.

12.4 During discussions, the Board suggested the following amendments:
- Within the Our Resource section, a reconciled explanation of the confirmed resource budget and net expenditure figure should be included.
- Within the Budgetary Content and Financial Challenges section, reference to "the Service's assessed funding requirement" be amended to "the Service's assessed uplift funding requirement".
- Inclusion of high-level Year One Summary to demonstrate continuity.
- The section title "Measuring our Performance" should be amended to "Tracking our Progress."
- Clarification to be provided on the term "business as usual" activities particularly regarding public service reform, prevention, etc, for external audiences.

ACTION: RW

12.5 Brief discussion took place on the closer alignment of the Delivery Plan and the Performance Management Framework.

12.6 The Board noted the commitment to provide year one performance information later in the year.

12.7 **Subject to the proposed amendments, the Board approved the Three-Year Delivery Plan with reasonable assurance.**

(L Patrick left the meeting at 1137 hrs)
(Meeting broke at 1137 hrs and reconvened at 1143 hrs)

13 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2026/27

13.1 MP presented a report to the Board to advise and seek the approval of the internal audit activity planned for 2026/27. MP advised that the proposed plan, having been considered by ARAC on 9 April 2026, was recommended for approval.

13.2 DS confirmed that the internal audit plan for 2026-27 had been deliberately shaped around the Service's risk based approach which underpinned the approved budget and three-year delivery plan. DS outlined the key audit areas prioritised which included health and safety, workforce capacity, development and performance management, financial controls, procurement and change management.

13.3 The Board sought reassurance whether the internal audit schedule sufficiently triangulates with ongoing or planned inspections and other external compliance work. DS confirmed that the assurance framework explicitly considers external audits, such as those by HMFSI and Audit Scotland.

13.4 It was noted that ARAC discussed several areas, including legal and compliance, AI etc, which had not been identified within the audit plan. The Board were advised that ARAC had requested that AI be considered as part of all future audits.

13.5 The Board tasked the ARAC to scrutinise other sources of assurance where gaps exist in the internal audit plan, particularly for AI and digital risks, and to report back confirming that these areas would be addressed.

ACTION: BB (ARAC)

13.6 Consideration would also be given to use future development days to review assurance mapping, identify further gaps, and inform governance and Committee structures.

13.7 **The Board approved the Internal Audit Annual Plan 2026/27 with an adjusted assurance level of Reasonable.**

14 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

14.1 RW presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the Annual Governance Review of Board and Committee related items, thereby ensuring the continued effectiveness of governance arrangements. RW acknowledged future changes to Board membership and Committee remits and noted that these would be addressed at the appropriate time.

14.2 RW noted that Appendix A provided a summary of key amendments made. RW advised that the review confirmed the Service's governance arrangements remained mature and effective with minor amendments made to strengthen and provide clarity. As such, a substantial level of assurance had been offered.

14.3 It was confirmed that, with the exception of ARAC, the Chair was either a member or ex-officio member of every Committee.

14.4 During discussions the following amendments were proposed:

- Within all Committee terms of reference, a clear description of Committee reporting, including draft minutes being presented, at next available Board meeting to be added.
- Minor typographic errors within the Code of Conduct's Selflessness paragraph. *(Post meeting note: Issue found to be with the PDF process, no typographical errors were found within the document).*

ACTION: BST

14.5 In regard to the Employee Partnership Forum and Partnership Advisory Group, it was noted that the intention would be to consider these terms of reference as part of the wider Working Together Framework discussions.

14.6 Brief discussion took place on the importance of distinguishing between equality, human rights, and island assessments. RW agreed to discuss further with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Manager and would update the Board. RW outlined how the EDI team support colleagues to meet statutory obligations and raising awareness of relevant considerations. It was noted that efforts were being made to streamline the assessment process and provide better support.

14.7 **Subject to minor changes, the Board approved the Annual Governance Review with substantial assurance.**

15 RISK THEMES

15.1 There were no new or emerging risks identified during this meeting.

15.2 It was noted that the Board discussed risks in relation to the Three-Year Delivery Plan, Performance Management Framework, AI and the need for further assurance.

16 FORWARD PLAN

16.1 The Forward Plan was noted and would be kept under review and subject to change.

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 A special public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16 June 2026.

17.2 The next public meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 25 June 2026.

17.3 There being no further matters to discuss in public, the meeting closed at 1225 hrs.

(The meeting broke at 1225 hrs and reconvened in private session at 1235 hrs)

PRIVATE SESSION

18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS PRIVATE MEETING:

18.1 Thursday 26 March 2026

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

18.2 **Matters Arising**

18.2.1 There were no matters arising.

18.3 **The minutes of the private meeting held on 26 March 2026 were approved as a true record of the meeting.**

19 PRIVATE ACTION LOG

19.1 The Board considered the action log and noted the updates.

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

20 CIVIL ACTION – PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

20.1 AN presented a report to the Board seeking approval of the recommendations in relation to a civil action raised against the Service.

20.2 **The Board approved the recommendations within the report.**

There being no further matters to discuss in private, the meeting closed at 1345 hrs.